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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES.

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

29° VICTORIÆ, 1866.

VOL. CLXXXII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE TWELFTH DAY OF MARCH 1866,

TO

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF APRIL 1866.

Second Volume of the Session.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY CORNELIUS BUCK,
AT THE OFFICE FOR HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,
23, PATERNOSTER ROW [E.C.]

1866.

BIBL.

LONDON : PRINTED BY CORNELIUS BUCK, 23, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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DRIVERS OF HACKNEY CARRIAGES—Question, Mr. Crawford; Answer, Mr. Baring 840

INTERNATIONAL COINAGE—Question, Mr. Watkin; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 840

ITALY—BRIGANDAGE IN THE PAPAL STATES—Question, Mr. O'Reilly; Answer, Mr. Layard 841

ARMY—ROYAL ENGINEER DEPARTMENT—Question, Mr. Scourfield; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 842

NAVY—THE "LORD WARDEN"—Question, Mr. Laird; Answer, Lord C. Paget 842

MERCHANT SERVICE—QUALIFICATIONS OF MASTERS AND MATES—Question, Mr. Laird; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson 842

THE FRANCHISE—INCREASE OF ARTIZAN VOTERS—Question, Lord Elcho; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 843

CASE OF EMILY JANE BALLARD—Question, Mr. Sherriff; Answer, Sir G. Grey 845

CASUAL POOR—CLERKENWELL WORKHOUSE—Question, Lord Burghley; Answer, Viscount Enfield 846

IRELAND—PROBATE COURT DUBLIN—Question, Mr. Serjeant Armstrong; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland 847

Ireland—Armagh Roman Catholic Cathedral—Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland 847

Ireland—Registry of Deeds, Dublin—Question, Mr. Serjeant Armstrong; Answer, Mr. Childers 848

The Cattle Plague—Question, Mr. Gathorne Hardy; Answer, Sir George Grey:—Short debate thereon 848

The Easter Recess—Order of Public Business—Statement, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 856

Moved, "That this House at its rising adjourn to Monday, the 9th April."

Electoral Statistics—Observations, Mr. Banks Stanhope .. 856

Waterworks Reservoirs—Observations, Mr. Ferrand; Reply, Mr. Milner Gibson 886

Motion *agreed to*:—House at rising to adjourn till *Monday*, the 9th day April next.

COMMONS, MONDAY, ARPIL 9.

London Gas Bill (*Lords*)—

Bill read a second time:—*Moved*, "That the Bill be committed to the Select Committee on the London (City) Corporation Gas Bill,"—(*Mr. Alderman Lawrence*) 888

After short debate, The House *divided*; Ayes 73, Noes 36; Majority 37.

Court of Probate—Question, Mr. Locke; Answer, Mr. Childers .. 889

Army—Surgeons in the Guards—Question, Mr. O'Beirne; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 890

The Cattle Plague—Question, Mr. Read; Answer, Sir George Grey .. 891

Supply—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

Report of the Sea Fisheries Commissioners—Oyster Culture—Observations, Mr. Hunt; Reply, Mr. Milner Gibson 891

Motion *agreed to*:

SUPPLY—Civil Service Estimates—Class I. Public Works and Buildngs—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

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(1.) £40,925, to complete the sum for Royal Palaces.

(2.) £85,437, to complete the sum for Public Buildings.—After long debate, Vote *agreed to* 894

(3.) £9,000, to complete the sum for Furniture of Public Offices.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 910

(4.) £78,769, to complete the sum for Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 910

(5.) £49,090, to complete the sum for the New Houses of Parliament.—After long debate, Vote *agreed to* 912

(6.) £485, to complete the sum for British Embassy Houses, &c., Paris and Madrid.

(7.) £2,000, to complete the sum for British Consulate and Embassy Houses, &c., Constantinople.

(8.) £5,525, to complete the sum for Westminster Bridge.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 929

(9.) £48,500, to complete the sum for New Foreign Office.

(10.) £38,000, to complete the sum for Public Offices, Site.

(11.) £20,500, to complete the sum for Probate Court and Registries.

(12.) £17,070, to complete the sum for Public Record Repository.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 930

(13.) £4,000, to complete the sum for Nelson Column.

Supply—Committee *continued.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £6,600, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1867, for the extension of the Buildings of the Patent Office" 931

Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again:"—(*Mr. Bovill:*)—After long debate, Question put, and *negatived:*—Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

On the Chairman leaving the Chair, the Clerk informed the House, that Mr. Speaker was advised by his medical attendant that he was not in a condition to return to the House at this late hour:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th of July, 1855.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

Crown Lands Acts—

Acts read; *considered* in Committee:—Certain Resolutions *agreed to* .. 958
To be reported *To-morrow.*

Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland) Bill—

After short debate, Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 93] 956

Labouring Classes' Dwellings (Ireland) Bill—

Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Childers, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 94] 966

Drainage Maintenance (Ireland) Bill—

Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Childers, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 95] 966

Local Officers Superannuation (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Sir John Gray*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 92] 967

Contagious Diseases Bill—Select Committee:—Committee *nominated:*—(*List of the Committee*) 967

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 10.

Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker.

Contempt of this House—Nottingham Town Election Petition—After short debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker *ordered* to issue his warrant that James Pringle be taken into custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms 968

Metropolis—Inclosure in Leicester Square—Question, Mr. Waldegrave-Leslie; Answer, Mr. Cowper 969

Wreck of the Ship "St. Abbs"—Question, Mr. Baillie Cochrane; Answer, Mr. Layard 969

Income of the Working Classes—Question, Mr. Banks Stanhope; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 971

The Cattle Plague—Questions, Lord Robert Montagu; Answer, Sir George Grey 972

Army—Nottingham Barracks—Question, Mr. Locke; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 972

Established Church (Ireland)—Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the position of the Established Church in Ireland is a just cause of dissatisfaction to the people of that country, and urgently demands the consideration of Parliament."—(*Sir John Gray*) 973

After long debate, Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday.*

[*April* 10.] Page

Finsbury Estate Bill—
After short debate, Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Locke*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 97] 1070

Boundaries of Boroughs, &c. — Observations, Mr. Oliphant; Reply, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer 1072

Supply—Resolutions [April 9] *reported*, and, after short debate, *agreed to* .. 1074

Crown Lands Acts—Resolutions [April 9] *reported*, and *agreed to.*
Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 98] 1075

Superannuation (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards) Bill [Bill 52]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Harvey Lewis*) 1076
After short debate, Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Friday.*

Marriages (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Serjeant Armstrong, Mr. Bryan*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 99] 1076

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11.

Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker.

Postmaster General Bill [Bill 25]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Darby Griffith*) 1077
After debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Friday.*

Valuation of Lands and Heritages (Scotland) Bill [Bill 73]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Dunlop*) .. 1083
Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Adam.*)
After debate, Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—The House *divided;* Ayes 33, Noes 80; Majority 47:—Words *added*:—Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *put off* for six months.

Inns of Court Bill [Bill 83]—
After short debate, Second Reading *deferred* till *Wednesday* next .. 1092

Vaccination Bill [Bill 33]—
Order for Committee read: —*Moved,* "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. H. A. Bruce*) 1093
Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the Bill be *committed* to a Select Committee:" — (*Mr. Harvey Lewis:*) — Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived*:—Words *added*: — Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *committed* to a Select Committee.

SUPPLY—Civil Service Estimates—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

£660,000, New Courts of Justice 1113

After short debate, Vote *agreed to*:—Resolution to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again upon *Friday.*

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LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 12.

Attorneys and Solicitors (Ireland) (1866) Bill (No. 60)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*Lord Chelmsford*) .. 1114

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

County Courts Bill (No. 55)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*) .. 1115

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 12.

TURNPIKE TRUSTS—Question, Mr. Whalley; Answer, Mr. Baring .. 1118

INFRACTION OF THE GAME LAWS—WILLIAM ROWE—Question, Colonel Sykes; Answer, Mr. Childers 1118

ARMY—SURGEONS IN THE GUARDS—Question, Sir Robert Anstruther; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1119

THE REBELS IN CHINA—Question, Colonel Sykes; Answer, Mr. Layard .. 1119

ARMY—ARTILLERY—ARMSTRONG GUNS—Question, Mr. White; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1120

INDIA—PASSAGE WARRANT OF JANUARY, 1865—Question, Captain Gridley; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1120

THE CATTLE DISEASES PREVENTION ACT, 1866—Question, Mr. M'Lagan; Answer, Sir George Grey 1121

INDIA OFFICE—FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT—Question, Mr. Hunt; Answer, Mr. Stansfeld 1122

FISHERMEN ON THE COAST OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA—Question, Colonel Annesley; Answer, Mr. Cardwell 1122

CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS—Question, Major Dickson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1123

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—

SECOND READING—[FIRST NIGHT.]

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1124

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor*,)—instead thereof 1152

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

After long debate, Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 13.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION—Motion for an Address for

"Copies of the Declaration against Transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass, as required by Law to be taken by certain Protestants holding office under the Crown, and of any other Oaths bearing on religion to be taken by Persons in any Civil Office."—(*The Marquess of Westmeath*) 1222

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*.

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ARMY—ARTILLERY—ARMSTRONG GUNS—Question, Mr. Henry Baillie; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1225

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THE CATTLE PLAGUE—IMPORTATION OF DISEASED DUTCH CATTLE—Question, Mr. Du Cane; Answer, Sir George Grey 1227

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—

SECOND READING—DEBATE RESUMED—[SECOND NIGHT] 1227

After long debate, Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 16.

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill (No. 54)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*Earl Russell*) 1322

After long debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

Protest against the Second Reading 1354

County Courts Bill (No. 55)—

House in Committee; and after short time spent therein, Bill *reported*, without Amendment; and to be read 3ª *To-morrow* 1355

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 16.

REIGATE ELECTION—

House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Granville William Gresham Leveson Gower, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Reigate. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 1356

CAMBRIDGE BOROUGH ELECTION—

House informed, that the Committee had determined, That William Forsyth, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Cambridge. That the last Election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of the said William Forsyth, esquire, is a void Election. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House 1357

RE-DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS—Question, Mr. Marsh; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1357

THE MALT DUTY—Question, The Chancellor of the Exchequer; Answer, Sir FitzRoy Kelly 1358

FACTORY ACTS—Question, Lord John Manners; Answer, Sir George Grey .. 1359

THE CATTLE PLAGUE—Observations, Sir George Grey 1359

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—

SECOND READING—DEBATE RESUMED—[THIRD NIGHT] 1361

After long debate, Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday*.

MR. SPEAKER having retired, Mr. DODSON, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker for the remainder of the night.

Convicts' Property Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Attorney General, Sir George Grey*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 105] 1491

Bankruptcy Law Amendment, &c., Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Solicitor General, Sir George Grey*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 106] .. 1491

Local Government Supplemental Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir George Grey*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 107] 1491

LORDS, TUESDAY, APRIL 17.

Electoral Returns—Moved,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to examine the Electoral Returns laid upon the Table with a view to the Changes they suggest as desirable or necessary in the Rights of Voting; and to inquire into the Conditions upon which the Occupation Franchise may be lowered with Advantage in Counties or in Boroughs of England and Wales.—(*The Lord Campbell*) 1492

On Question, *Resolved* in the *Negative*.

Employment of Children—Question, The Earl of Shaftesbury; Answer, Earl Russell 1503

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 17.

The Factory Acts—Question, Mr. Fawcett; Answer, Sir George Grey .. 1505

Court of Probate—District Registries—Question, Mr. Monck; Answer, Mr. Childers 1505

The Royal Academy—Question, Mr. Gregory; Answer, Mr. Cowper .. 1506

Prussia and Italy—Question, Mr. W. B. Beaumont; Answer, Mr. Layard 1506

Queen's University (Ireland)—Question, Mr. Aytoun; Answer, Sir George Grey 1506

The Cattle Plague—Question, Mr. Leslie; Answer, The Lord Advocate .. 1507

New Courts of Justice—Question, Mr. Horsfall; Answer, The Attorney General 1507

India—Claims on Oude—Question, Colonel French; Answer, Mr. Stansfeld 1507

Navy—Dockyard Voters—Question, Mr. Otway; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1508

Execution of Mary Ashford—Question, Mr. Kekewich; Answer, Mr. W. Ewart 1508

Army—Regiments in India—Question, Mr. O'Reilly; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1509

Malt Duty—Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That upon any future remission of indirect taxation, this House will take into consideration the Duty upon Malt, with a view to its immediate reduction and ultimate repeal,"—(*Sir FitzRoy Kelly*) 1509

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the present state of the taxation and resources of the Country, it is the duty of Parliament to make provision for the systematic reduction of the National Debt, and not to sanction any proposal for any repeal or change of taxes which is likely to be attended with a diminution of the Revenue,"—(*Mr. Neate*,)—instead thereof:—Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

After long debate, Amendment *withdrawn*:—Main Question put:—The House *divided*; Ayes 150, Noes 234; Majority 84:—Division List, Ayes and Noes 1574

Mr. Speaker having retired, Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker for the remainder of the night.

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Railway Debentures, &c., Registry Bill—
After debate, Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Scourfield, Mr. Hankey*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 109] 1577

Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland) Bill [Bill 89]—
Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow* 1577

Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) Bill [Bill 88]—
Bill *considered* in Committee :—After short debate, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow* 1577

Tithe Rent Charge (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Esmonde, Mr. Murphy*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 110] 1579

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18.

Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker.

Public Companies Bill [Bill 35]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Darby Griffith*) 1580
After short debate, Motion *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

Hop Trade Bill [Bill 36]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Huddleston*) .. 1584
Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months :"—(*Mr. Beresford Hope* :)—Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question :"—After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn* :—Main Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* next.

Bank Notes (Ireland) Bill [Bill 29]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen*) 1599
After debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn* :—Bill *withdrawn.*

Prosecution Expenses Bill [Bill 28]—
Bill *considered* in Committee 1610
After short time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Friday.*

Thames Navigation Bill [Bill 59]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Milner Gibson*) .. 1611
After short debate, Motion *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee :—And, on May 10, Select Committee *nominated* (*List of Committee*) 1615

Helston Election—
House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Adolphus William Young, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Helston :—That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election; and the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.
House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 1615

LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 19.

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill (No. 54)—
House in Committee 1616
Amendments made :—The Report thereof to be received *To-morrow*, and Bill to be printed, as amended. (No. 76.)

Court of Queen's Bench (Ireland)—Question, The Marquess of Clanricarde; Answer, Lord Dufferin:—Discussion thereon 1628

Breech Loading Small Arms—Question, Viscount Lifford; Answer, Lord Dufferin 1638

Railway Bills affecting the City of London—Petitions—Question, The Earl of Carnarvon; Answer, Lord Redesdale 1640

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 19.

Horsham Election—

House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Robert Henry Hurst, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Horsham. And the said Determination was ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House. House further informed, That they had altered the Poll taken at such Election by striking off the names of Henry Foreman, James Winscom, and Richard Howes, as not having a right to vote at such Election .. ..

Religious Rights in Workhouses—Question, Mr. Thomas Chambers; Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers 1643

Electoral Statistics—Question, Lord Burghley; Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers .. 1644

The Cholera—Question, Sir Jervoise Jervoise; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce .. 1644

Treaty of Vienna—Question, Sir Harry Verney; Answer, Mr. Layard .. 1645

Army—Civil Officers of Royal Engineers—Question, Mr. Maguire; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1645

Metropolitan District Railway—Question, Mr. Crawford; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson 1646

Navy—Widows of Naval Engineers—Question, Mr. Ferrand; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget 1646

Commercial Treaty with France—Question, Mr. Cowen; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson 1647

Irish and Scotch Reform Bills—Question, Major Stuart Knox; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1647

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—

Second Reading—Debate Resumed—[Fourth Night] 1648

After long debate, Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Mr. Speaker having retired, Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker for the remainder of the night.

Petition from Harden—Motion,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the circumstances connected with the preparation of the Petition from Harden [presented upon Thursday last], and into the genuineness of the signatures thereto,"—(*Mr. Ferrand*) 1750

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) [Advances] Bill—Resolution in Committee 1750

Naval Savings Banks Bill—*Ordered* (*Lord Clarence Paget, Mr. Childers*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 114] 1750

Glebe Lands (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir James Fergusson, Major Walker, Mr. M'Lagan*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 115] 1750

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 20.

Court of Queen's Bench (Ireland)—Lord Chief Justice Lefroy—Personal Explanation, The Marquess of Clanricarde 1751

East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer Bill (No. 75)—

After short debate, Bill *considered* in Committee; an Amendment made: The Report thereof to be received on *Monday* next 1752

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SEA FISHERIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM—REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS—Observations—Question, The Marquess of Clanricarde; Answer, Lord Stanley of Alderley 1753

THE POOR LAW—STRAND UNION WORKHOUSE — Question, The Marquess Townshend; Answer, Earl Granville 1758

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill (No. 76)—
Amendments *reported ;* and, after short debate, *agreed to* 1759

DISEASED CATTLE—THE CATTLE DISEASES ACT—Questions, The Duke of Buckingham; Answer, Earl Granville 1760

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 20.

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS—Mr. SPEAKER being unable to attend with the House in the House of Peers to hear a Commission, Mr. DODSON, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker, and attended the House in the House of Peers; and being returned, *reported* to the House the *Royal Assent* to several Acts; and Mr. SPEAKER thereon resumed the Chair.

MEMBERS' APPROPRIATION OF SEATS IN THE HOUSE—Question, Major Stuart Knox; Answer, Mr. Speaker:—Short discussion thereon .. 1764

NOTTINGHAN TOWN ELECTION—
House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Sir Robert Juckes Clifton, baronet, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Nottingham. That Samuel Morley, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Nottingham. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.
House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 1766

CHAPLAINS IN THE ARMY—Question, General Dunne; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 1768

EXHAUSTION OF THE COAL FIELDS—Question, Mr. Liddell; Answer, Sir George Grey 1768

INDIA—DELHI PRIZE MONEY—Question, General Dunne; Answer, Mr. Monsell 1769

THE GERMAN EMIGRANT SHIP "HERTHA"—Question, Lord Burghley; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce 1769

METROPOLIS—FINSBURY PARK—Question, Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens; Answer, Mr. Tite 1771

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS—Question, Lord Robert Montagu; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce 1771

THE DANUBIAN PRINCIPALITIES—Question, Mr. Sandford; Answer, Mr. Layard 1772

THE SMOKE NUISANCE—Question, Sir Robert Peel; Answer, Sir George Grey 1772

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

IRISH RECORDS—Question, General Dunne; Answer, Mr. Childers .. 1773

AFFAIRS OF ROUMANIA—Question, Mr. Darby Griffith; Answer, Mr. Layard 1774

ELECTORAL RETURNS—Question, Mr. Hunt; Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers:—Short debate thereon 1775

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn* :—Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—
SECOND READING—DEBATE RESUMED—[FIFTH NIGHT] 1778
After long debate, Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MR. SPEAKER having retired, Mr. DODSON, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker for the remainder of the night.

Exchequer and Audit Departments (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 79]—
Bill *considered* in Committee 1862
After short time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

Forsyth's Indemnity Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Lowe, Mr. Scourfield*); *presented*, and read the first and second time; *committed; considered* in Committee, and *reported*, without Amendment; read the third time, and *passed* 1864

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 23.

THE CATTLE DISEASES ACT AND ORDER IN COUNCIL OF MARCH 24—Observations, The Earl of Derby; Reply, Earl Granville 1865

ABYSSINIA — RELEASE OF BRITISH SUBJECTS IN ABYSSINIA — TELEGRAM FROM COLONEL MEREWETHER — Observations, The Earl of Clarendon; Reply, The Earl of Derby 1867

PRIVATE BILLS — On the Motion of The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES, it was *Ordered*—
"That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a Second Time after *Friday the 29th day of June* next;" and other Orders 1868

THE POOR LAW — STRAND UNION WORKHOUSE — Observations, The Earl of Carnarvon; Reply, Earl Granville 1868

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 23.

MAIDSTONE ELECTION—
House informed, that the Committee had determined, That William Lee, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone. That James Whatman, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.
House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 1870

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS—MR. SPEAKER being unable to attend with the House in the House of Peers to hear a Commission, Mr. DODSON, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker, and attended the House in the House of Peers; and being returned, *reported* to the House the *Royal Assent* to several Acts; and MR. SPEAKER thereon resumed the Chair.

LANCASTER BOROUGH ELECTION—
House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Edward Matthew Fenwick, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Lancaster. That Henry William Schneider, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Lancaster. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.
House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 1871

CONVENTION OF PARIS (1815-18)—Question, Sir George Bowyer; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1872

SCOTLAND—POOR LAW BOARD, EDINBURGH—Question, Mr. H. Baillie; Answer, The Lord Advocate 1872

DURATION OF THE COAL FIELDS—Question, Mr. Liddell; Answer, Sir G. Grey 1873

FIRE INSURANCE DUTY—Question, Mr. Locke; Answer, Mr. H. B. Sheridan .. 1873

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—
SECOND READING—DEBATE RESUMED—[SIXTH NIGHT] 1874
After long debate, Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday*.

EAST INDIA COMMUNICATIONS—SELECT COMMITTEE—
After short debate, *Instruction* to the Select Committee on East India Communications, that they be empowered to extend their inquiry to China and Japan and Australia and the Mauritius:—(*Mr. Crawford:*)—Mr. Marsh and Mr. Brooks added to the Committee 1974

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LORDS, TUESDAY, APRIL 24.

Navy—Her Majesty's Ship "Octavia"—Question, The Earl of Ellenborough; Answer, The Duke of Somerset 1975

West Middlesex Water Bill—

Moved, That the House do resolve itself into a Committee on the said Bill.—(*The Chairman of Committees*) 1976

After debate, Motion *agreed to*:—House in Committee accordingly; Bill *reported,* without Amendment.

Qualification for Offices Abolition Bill (No. 41)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Houghton*) .. 1980

After debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday* next.

Ireland—Daunt's Rock—Cork Harbour—Question, The Earl of Bandon; Answer, The Duke of Somerset 1986

Conferences—Resolution—On the Motion of The Chairman of Committees, it was

Resolved, That the Lords are willing to receive from the Commons, by Message, without a Conference, any Communication desiring the Concurrence of this House to any Address to Her Majesty, under the Provisions of the Act Fifteenth and Sixteenth Victoria, Chapter Fifty-seven, to which the Commons may have agreed, unless at any Time the Commons should desire to communicate the same at a Conference: And a Message sent to the Commons, to acquaint them therewith.—(*The Chairman of Committees.*)

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 24.

Rye Election—

House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Lauchlan Bellingham Mackinnon, esquire, is duly elected a Baron to serve in this present Parliament for the Town and Port of Rye. And the said Determination was ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 1987

New Zealand—Bishopric of Nelson—Question, Mr. Selwyn; Answer, Mr. Cardwell 1988

Coolies—Emigration to the French Colonies—Question, Mr. B. Cochrane; Answer, Mr. Layard 1989

Division of New Zealand—Question, Mr. Adderley; Answer, Mr. Cardwell.. 1989

The Fenians and the British American Colonies—Question, Lord Dunkellin; Answer, Mr. Cardwell 1990

Rates on Government Property—Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, Her Majesty's Government should consider the expediency of recommending to Parliament that all lands and buildings used and occupied for public purposes ought to be liable to local rates in the same manner as other property, and pay rates accordingly."—(*Mr. Alderman Salomons*) 1990

After debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Poor Law Expenditure—Resolution—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that all items of Poor Law expenditure throughout the United Kingdom, not being in-maintenance or out-relief, or otherwise under the immediate control and direction of Boards of Guardians or Parish Officers, should become a National charge."—(*Mr. Knight*) 2002

After debate, Question put, and *negatived.*

Fire Insurance—Observations, Mr. Hodgkinson; Reply, Mr. Sheridan .. 2007

Transubstantiation, &c., Declaration Abolition Bill [Bill 82]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen*) 2007

After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*:—Second Reading *deferred* till *Tuesday* 8th May.

Superannuations (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards) Bill [Bill 118]—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 2009

Exchequer and Audit Departments (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 79]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 2009

And after some time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* next, and to be *printed.* [Bill 120.]

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL (HARDEN PETITION)—

Select Committee *appointed,* " to inquire whether the signatures to the Petition presented to this House upon the 12th day of April 1866, professing to be a Petition of Inhabitants of Harden, near Bingley, in the County of York, in favour of the Representation of the People Bill, are the genuine signatures of the persons whose signatures they profess to be; and, under what circumstances such signatures were annexed."—(*Mr. Ferrand.*)

Contagious Diseases [Expenses] Bill—Resolution in Committee 2011

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25.

MR. DODSON, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, sat as Deputy Speaker.

INCLOSURE OF HAINAULT FOREST — Question, Mr. J. Stuart Mill; Answer, Sir George Grey 2012

Fellows of Colleges Declaration Bill [Bill 26]—

Moved, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair," — (*Mr. E. P. Bouverie*) 2013

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day six months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Walpole,*)—instead thereof:—Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

After long debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 208, Noes 186; Majority 22:—Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill *considered* in Committee:—Bill *reported,* without Amendment; to be read the third time upon *Wednesday,* 6th June.

Division List, Ayes and Noes, *Appendix,* p. 2181.

Turnpike Roads Bill [Bill 39]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Whalley*) .. 2061

After debate (it being Six of the clock), Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

BRIDGWATER ELECTION—

House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Henry Westropp, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Bridgwater. That Alexander William Kinglake, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Horsham. That the last Election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of Henry Westropp, esquire, is a void Election. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 2066

Veterinary Surgeons Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Holland, Mr. Newdegate*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 121] 2066

Execution of Deeds Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Goldney, Mr. Powell*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 122] 2066

LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 26.

Sale of Land by Auction Bill (No. 93)—

House in Committee (*on re-commitment*) 2067

Amendments made:—The Report thereof to be received on *Monday* next; and Bill to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 89.)

Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) Bill (No. 77)—

Bill read 2ª after short debate, and *committed* to a Committee of the whole House on *Monday* next 2069

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COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 26.

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New Windsor Election—

House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of New Windsor. That Henry Labouchere, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of New Windsor. That the last election for the said Borough is a void Election. And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee 2070

Daunt's Rock, Ireland—Question, Mr. Maguire; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson 2071

Church Rates—Question, Lord John Manners; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 2072

St. Pancras Churchyard—Question, Mr. MacEvoy; Answer, Sir George Grey 2073

Army—Quartermasters of Militia—Question, Sir James Fergusson; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 2073

The Dockyard Electors—Question, Mr. Ferrand; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 2074

Army—Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteers—Question, Mr. Yorke; Answer, The Marquess of Hartington 2074

Oyster Fisheries—Question, Mr. Stephen Cave; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson 2075

Landed Estates Court (Ireland) — Question, Mr. Whiteside; Answer, Mr. Chichester Fortescue 2075

Raid on the Austrian Territory—Question, Mr. Henry Seymour; Answer, Mr. Layard 2076

The General Post Office—Question, Mr. Crawford; Answer, Mr. Childers 2076

The Financial Statement—Observations, Mr. MacEvoy; Reply, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 2076

Representation of the People Bill [Bill 68]—

Second Reading—Debate Resumed—[Seventh Night] 2077

After long debate, Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill [Bill 119]—

After short debate, Lords' Amendments *agreed to* 2176

Contagious Diseases (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 116]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 2176

And after some time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

Conferences—Lords Message [24th April] *considered.*

Resolved, That the Commons are willing to send to The Lords by Message, without a Conference, any Communication desiring the concurrence of The Lords to any Address to Her Majesty, under the provisions of the Act fifteenth and sixteenth Victoria, chapter fifty-seven, to which the Commons may have agreed, unless at any time the Lords should desire to receive the same at a Conference. A Message to be sent to The Lords accordingly.

Hop Trade Bill [Bill 36]—

[House counted out.]

LORDS.

SAT FIRST.

Thursday, March 15.

The Earl Beauchamp, after the Death of his Father.

Thursday, April 19.

The Earl of Jersey, after the Death of his Grandfather.

COMMONS.

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

Tuesday, March 13.

For *Louth*, *v.* Right Hon. Chichester Samuel Fortescue, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

For *Tewkesbury*, *v.* William Edward Dowdeswell, Esq., Chiltern Hundreds.

Wednesday, March 14.

For *Worcester County* (Western Division), *v.* Hon. F. Lygon, now Earl of Beauchamp.

Tuesday, March 20.

For *Wigan*, *v.* Major General the Hon. James Lindsay, Manor of Northstead.

Wednesday, March 21.

For *Boston*, *v.* Thomas Parry, Esq., not duly elected.

Thursday, March 22.

For *Bridgnorth*, *v.* Sir John Emerick Dalberg Acton, not duly elected.

Friday, March 23.

For *Ripon*, *v.* Lord John Hay, Commissioner of the Admiralty.

For *Honiton*, *v.* Frederic David Goldsmid, Esq., deceased.

Monday, April 16.

For *Cambridge Borough*, *v.* William Forsyth, Esq., void Election.

Monday, April 23.

For *Helston*, *v.* Adolphus William Young, Esq., void Election.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7.

Richmond—Marmaduke Wyvill, Esq.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21.

Boston—Meaburn Staniland, Esq.

THURSDAY, MARCH 22.

Bridgnorth—Henry Whitmore, Esq.

FRIDAY, MARCH 23.

Tewkesbury—Sir Edmund Anthony Harley Lechmere, Baronet.

MONDAY, APRIL 9.

Kerry—Henry Arthur Herbert, Esq.

TUESDAY, APRIL 10.

Louth—The Right Hon. Chichester Samuel Fortescue.

Wigan—Nathaniel Eckersley, Esq.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11.

Worcester County (Western Division)—William Edward Dowdeswell, Esq.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12.

Ripon—Lord John Hay.

MONDAY, APRIL 16.

Honiton—Julian Goldsmid, Esq.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25.

Cambridge Borough—John Eldon Gorst, Esq.

TUESDAY, MARCH 13.

For *Dumbartonshire*—Double Return, Patrick Boyle Smollett, Esq., James Stirling, Esq.—Indenture by which James Stirling, Esq., was returned for the Shire of Dumbarton taken off the file.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

FIRST SESSION OF THE *NINETEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND* APPOINTED TO MEET 1 FEBRUARY, 1866, IN THE TWENTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SECOND VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 12, 1866.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Marine Mutiny * ; Pensions * (47).

Second Reading—Salmon Fisheries (Scotland)* [H.L.] (42).

Referred to Select Committee—Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) * [H.L.] (42).

Committee — Princess Helena's Annuity * (39); Prince Alfred's Annuity * (40); Sale of Land by Auction * [H.L.] (48).

Report—Princess Helena's Annuity* (39); Prince Alfred's Annuity * (40).

Third Reading—Consolidated Fund (£1,137,772).*

NAVY—TURRET SHIPS—CAPTAIN COWPER COLES.

QUESTION. MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD DUNSANY, in rising to put the Question of which he had given Notice to the First Lord of the Admiralty, respecting the Cupola principle of Captain Cowper Coles, for the Reports of the Committee of Naval Officers appointed to inquire into the subject, said, he need not recall to their Lordships' attention the difference between cupola and turret-ships, both of which would effect a total change in naval warfare, and would involve the re-construction of the navy, but rather on the side of economy than increased cost. Whether we adopted them or not we must be prepared to meet with them in all parts of the world. He wished to say a few words with regard to the merits of the invention, and also of some of the hardships of which Captain Coles complained; but before doing so he begged it to be observed that he had no personal acquaintance with that gallant officer, and offered no personal opinion upon the subject, because he was met by conflicting considerations. First—there was no more honourable and, in naval matters, no more capable man than Admiral Robinson, the Controller of the Navy. Secondly—the Admiralty as a Department, wholly irrespective of persons, was one of the worst institutions of the State. What he was about to state would be based mainly upon the published letters of Captain Cowper Coles, respecting whom the general impression was that in some respects he had met with rather hard treatment. The press had pretty unanimously expressed such an opinion. The essence of the turret system was the abandonment of broadside armour and the substitution of circular revolving turrets on the upper deck mounting the heaviest ordnance used in naval warfare. It was admitted that turret-ships would carry the heaviest guns likely to be used, and it was not certain that such guns could be carried as broadside armament. If we imagined the 600-pounder to be the gun of the future, the turret-ship must be the ship of the future. Hitherto our artillerists had not succeeded in producing a satisfactory 600-pounder ; but recent experiments at Shoeburyness had produced remarkable results, and it was, at all events, possible that before long we might see a 600-pounder gun used. In the meantime 300-pounders were being used, and turret-ships were being built for other nations if not for ourselves. Already one was crossing the Atlantic for the Peruvian navy, and we might soon hear of her encountering a Spanish iron-clad. Of Captain Coles he had no personal knowledge, but it was well known that he was a man of great genius, resource, and perseverance. At a lecture at the United Service Club he explained clearly and forcibly his position, stating that the Admiralty had adopted a design by Mr. Reed for a cupola ship named the *Favourite*, in allusion to which Captain Coles named his model the *Naughty Child.* Captain Coles evidently thought that favour had been shown to Mr. Reed, and that the cold shoulder had been given to himself. When the English and French fleets were at Spithead great interest was excited by the *Royal Sovereign*, which was a two-decker, and, from a variety of circumstances, was never intended to be a sea-going ship. The turrets of Captain Coles were adapted on the *Royal Sovereign*, and the success of the turrets, as turrets, was, on unquestionable authority, most complete. In a report upon the *Royal Sovereign* Captain Sherard Osborn said that the ship on all occasions behaved remarkably well, that she was more buoyant and rolled less than might have been anticipated, that her turret-guns worked admirably, and that she was the most formidable vessel of war he had been on board, and would easily destroy, if her guns were rifled, any of our present men-of-war. Captain Osborn added that vessels like the *Royal Sovereign* were well calculated to defend the coast, and that if we had a sufficient number of them our ordinary fleet might be sent abroad, and we should still be secure at home. Taking the least favourable view of the case, turret-ships for harbours would release sea-going ships, and the gain to the navy would be great. Previous to the success of the *Royal Sovereign*, the Admiralty had desired Captain Coles to send in a drawing of a sea-going turret-ship ; and, with the assistance of an Admiralty draughtsman, he did so. Very naturally, the Admiralty submitted the design to a committee of distinguished officers, who reported against the particular model, but in favour of the system. After that Captain Coles seemed to expect that the Admiralty would avail themselves of his services to construct a sea-going turrret-ship. It did not appear, however, that any communications passed between him and the Admiralty till the 9th of September, 1865, when Captain Coles wrote to inquire whether it was intended to take any steps in the matter. On the 14th the Admiralty sent a reply to the effect that it appeared likely a ship with two turrets would be designed, in which case the Admiralty would avail themselves of Captain Coles' assistance. After that a long interval occurred before Captain Coles heard anything more on the subject. At last, however, on the 10th of January, 1866, he wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty asking when he might expect the drawings. On the same day Captain Coles wrote a letter upon his supposed hardships to *The Standard* newspaper. Now he (Lord Dunsany) thought that the letter was an objectionable letter, and there could be no doubt that it was an objectionable practice for persons employed under Government to write to newspapers respecting what had taken place in their particular Department. There was, however, a very curious circumstance connected with this letter. An agreement had been entered into between the Admiralty and Captain Coles, which contained a proviso that Captain Coles should be at liberty, by means of lectures, models, or otherwise, to diffuse the knowledge and show the advantages of his inventions, so that if, on the one hand, it might seem that Captain Coles had been wrong in writing to the papers in a tone condemnatory of the Government, on the other hand it appeared probable that under this contract he had a right to do so. Such being the case it might, perhaps, have since appeared to the Admiralty that it was right that an officer who was so distinguished and whose inventions had been, or might be, of great value to the country should be leniently judged and restored to the advantages which he formerly possessed. He would, therefore, ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is the intention of the Admiralty to adopt the Cupola or Turret Principle invented by Captain Cowper Coles, R.N.; and, if so, whether it is true that the Assistance of the Inventor (although offered) has been refused, and his extra pay and Allowances stopped? He also moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty requesting that the Report of the Committee of Naval Officers appointed to examine the Design of a Turret Ship designed by Captain Cowper Coles, should be laid before this House."

The Duke of SOMERSET: The Question put to me by the noble Lord (Lord Dunsany) involves, in fact, two or three different subjects, and, in answering it, the most convenient course I can adopt will be to say, in the first place, that I shall have no objection whatever to lay upon the table the Report of the Committee who have examined into the design of Captain Coles' turret-ship, and to give your Lordships all the information in my power in reference to that inquiry. The noble Lord has asked whether it is the intention of the Admiralty to adopt the cupola or turret principle. Now, my Lords, as long ago as the year 1862 the Admiralty actually did adopt that principle; and I may say now, in justice to the Dockyard officers at Woolwich and Portsmouth, that those officers greatly assisted Captain Coles by giving him practical information in order to enable him to carry out his design. I believe, indeed, that Captain Coles would himself admit that whatever merit there may now be in the turret system, Captain Coles is largely indebted to those Dockyard officers. I see it frequently stated that the Admiralty from the first opposed Captain Coles and put obstacles in his way, and I therefore ask your Lordships to let me revert for a few moments to the connection which has subsisted between Captain Coles and the Admiralty. When I came to the Admiralty in 1859, I found that in March that year Captain Coles had already applied to the previous Board, of which Sir John Pakington was at the head, requesting that his plan might be tried. The Board intimated to him that his application had been laid before the then Constructors, that they had disapproved the system, and that consequently the Admiralty declined to adopt it. When we first came to the Admiralty we were very much occupied with the affairs of China; so that until the latter part of the year 1860 I had not time to attend to the turret question. Towards the end of the year, however, being rather in favour of the principle, I again called the attention of the Constructors of the Navy to the merits of Captain Coles' invention. For myself, being rather fond of experiments, I was rather inclined to make a trial of it; but I received a Report from the Department to the effect that it was totally unsuited for sea-going ships, and that it was extremely doubtful whether it was even suited for coasting vessels. That was not encouraging; but I had heard that a small cupola was being constructed by Captain Coles under the direction of the War Office, and I therefore spoke to Mr. Sidney Herbert, who was then Secretary for War, on the subject. He told me that it had been in course of construction at Mr. Scott Russell's yard, but that there had been so many difficulties experienced, and so many disputes had taken place between Captain Coles and the Constructors, that he thought he should never complete the cupola at all, and he added: "If you think the cupola will be of any use to you I shall be very glad to give it to you." I said I would try it, and see what I could do with it. I accordingly took the cupola from Mr. Scott Russell in May, 1861, and put Captain Coles in communication with the Dockyard officers at Woolwich. In about four months' time, after a good deal of trouble, we finished the cupola, and it was placed on board the *Thunderer*. We made an experiment which was, I thought, a very satisfactory one, as it showed the great power of resistance offered by the cupola to the guns of that day. I therefore went so far as to determine to take in the next Navy Estimates money for building a cupola vessel for coast defence. Now, when I am told that we did everything we could to impede and stop the progress of this invention from the very first, I think it is somewhat hard upon me, when the fact is that I went out of my way to bring the principle forward for experiment. I complimented Captain Coles on his success, and in 1862 took money for a cupola vessel for coast defence, and the drawings were prepared. Towards the end of March, 1862, accounts were received of the *Monitor*, and everybody was for building vessels of that class and character. However, we ordered an iron vessel to be built by contract, and also cut down the *Royal Sovereign* in order that we might have a fuller opportunity of trying the cupola system. We also decided that Captain Coles should be appointed to a post under the Admiralty in order that he might superintend the fitting and arrangement of his own vessels. But it is said that the Admiralty adopted a rival plan—that we adopted "the box" principle, which was a new idea of Mr. Reed's, and one opposed to Captain Coles' principle. Now that is entirely incorrect. The box principle was not an idea of Mr. Reed's. It had been adopted in the case of ships provided with armour-plating in the centre, but which had not armour-plating on the ends. It had been adopted in order to lighten the ends of the *Warrior*, in order that she might be able to carry her heavy armour-plates, and it was carried out in the *Defence* and many other vessels, including the French ships the *Magenta* and the *Solferino*. It had been acted upon by Captain Coles himself; the box principle being to have bulkheads in those ships which were protected in the centre by armour-plating, but the ends of which were left uncovered in order that they might be light. The statement that we discouraged Captain Coles' cupola principle is, therefore, not correct; and the statement that we adopted a rival principle is also contrary to the fact. The description of vessels that were to be built afterwards was, of course, a matter of doubt, because Captain Coles from the first was most anxious to build a sea-going cupola-ship. He said his plan never could be properly carried out until he built a ship rigged and armed and fit to go to sea. But a difficulty arose here. It was necessary to decide as to what sized gun we should have on board. If you have the guns placed in ports and you require larger guns, you can increase the size of your ports; but if your ship is to be a cupola or turret-built ship it is necessary you should know the size of the gun that is intended to be put in. We were discussing this question in 1862, and it was thought we should get a 300-pounder gun; but when we came to that size Captain Coles said he must give up the cupola and adopt the turret. The cupola was then given up and the turret substituted. This, of course, caused some delay. We inquired about the guns. We then had a 300-pounder gun, and I went to see it tried at Shoeburyness, but it unfortunately burst; and this gave rise to some doubt about the sized gun we could have. Since then we have got a large gun, not a 300-pounder, but a 250-pounder gun. From that day forward Captain Coles was continually employed by the Admiralty superintending the preparation of those guns. It is quite true that he did express his desire to compete with a vessel called the *Favourite*. That was a wooden ship which we had at Woolwich. We were most anxious to get a small ship armour-plated, and we asked Mr. Reed could he make a design for the plating of the *Favourite*. He said that she would labour under disadvantages; that she would not be so good as a vessel built for the purpose of being plated; but he would undertake what we required. Well, that vessel was plated, and I may say that the experiment was very successful. Captain Coles wished to build a vessel to compete with the *Favourite*, but we thought that would not be quite fair. I objected from the first to competition between Constructors acting under the Admiralty. It appeared to me that such a system would lead to mutual recrimination, and that it would be impossible for me to go on if such an unpleasant state of things arose as this competition was sure to bring about. Captain Coles' wish always was to compete. His first proposal was to compete with the *Warrior*, and build a vessel with eight cupolas. But a vessel of that kind, built on his principle and armed with 68-pounders, would have been a vessel of no value ultimately; and it would have been an injustice to his own system to have applied it to such a ship. It was the same with the *Favourite*. She was not a ship with which it would have been fair to test Captain Coles' principle. Having looked very anxiously at all our ships, we resolved upon having the experiment tried with the *Royal Sovereign*, in preference to any other vessel at Portsmouth. We did not send her to sea till 1864, because she was not ready to go. We put Captain Sherard Osborn on board, because he had an especial predilection for turret ships. I was so anxious to have Captain Coles' principle tested under the most favourable circumstances that I gave the command of the ship to an officer who was a friend of his, and who at the same time was devoted to turret-ships, in order that it might have a fair trial. The noble Lord (Lord Dunsany) only read one report on the performance of the *Royal Sovereign*; but she went to sea and the report made of her when she came back was not very encouraging. It showed that she would do very well for a vessel intended to sail along the coast from one port to another, but it was not very encouraging in respect of a ship intended for sea-going purposes. Indeed, anybody who saw the *Royal Sovereign* when fitted with Captain

Coles' invention would be struck with her appearance as not being that of a sea-going vessel. Again, your Lordships will bear in mind that the Admiralty have not only to make vessels good for fighting, but good for the seamen also. If ships are not comfortable for the seamen there is great trouble as regards discipline. It has been said that vessels which do not rise much above the water are better for fighting; but for the men on board they are very uncomfortable. We have a report from the *Scorpion*, which was one of the unfortunate rams built at Liverpool, and which we purchased there. We received a report from the captain of that vessel in which he complained of the conduct of a portion of the crew, and attributed it to the fact that the lower deck of the *Scorpion* was as uncomfortable as possible. As our ships have to go about the world it does not do to have them as uncomfortable as possible for the crews. It must be remembered that our seamen have to live aboard their ships, and that if we mean to get men to enter the service we must make the ships as comfortable as possible. Well, in 1864 Captain Coles proposed to build another ship—one to compete with the *Pallas*. We were still against encouraging a system of competition, but the following Minute was made by the Board:—

> "My Lords will give him the aid of a competent draughtsman, but they wish him to understand that their object is not to institute a comparison with any other vessel, but to obtain a ship combining an armament of the heaviest guns with high speed and good sea-going qualities."

Captain Coles again took the lines of the *Pallas*, and sent in a proposal for the construction of a vessel on those lines. I appointed a Committee of Officers, presided over by Lord Lauderdale. That Committee sat for six weeks, and took a great deal of evidence on the subject. I was extremely sorry that Captain Coles was not able to attend in consequence of illness; but having fully considered the question the Committee recommended us not to build a ship such as he proposed, and stated their objections to it. They further reported their opinion that it was most desirable we should build a cupola-ship to carry two turrets. Well, my Lords, I was quite satisfied to undertake this, and I called on the Constructors' Department to turn their attention to what they considered would be a good ship, carrying two turrets, and being at the same time a good sea-going ship. The first question necessary to be considered was, what amount of armour she should bear? It is very easy to build a turret-ship so that she may be perfectly able to go round the world, and yet not be fitted to cope with another vessel. If you build a ship fitted to carry the heaviest guns, in my opinion she ought either to be plated with the heaviest armour or else not plated at all; and the Americans are rapidly coming round to that opinion, for they are building vessels of 300 tons intended to carry the heaviest guns, but not plated. In giving directions to the Constructor we accordingly took the best and strongest models. I was anxious that the vessel should resemble the *Hercules* target, and be calculated to resist not only the 300-pounder, but the 20-ton gun. That would have been a most satisfactory vessel; but when the details came to be worked out I was obliged somewhat to reduce the weight. I, however, insisted on having a vessel with 8½ inches of iron, a 7-inch plate outside, and an inner coating, making it up to 8½ inches, with 18 inches or 20 inches of wood. The vessel was moreover to carry four of the largest guns, to be a thoroughly good sea-going vessel, and a comfortable home for seamen. When we came to lay down her lines we found that we should have a vessel up to 330 feet, and that it was necessary her deck should be 14 feet above water. A ship with bulwarks may be somewhat lower, but in a cupola-ship it is necessary that she have no bulwarks, or at least that they should disappear in action. It may be said that we have made this ship unnecessarily heavy. But what is the use of comparing her with vessels like the *Scorpion*, when if you send her to distant parts of the world she may have to meet ships armed like the *Monadnock?* We have the experiments at Shoeburyness to guide us, and we know what other nations are doing. I have seen it stated that slight armour-plating round a vessel is quite sufficient for the purpose, and that she thereby becomes a much better sea-boat. Of course she does; and you would get even a better sea-boat by dispensing with the armament altogether. Therefore, if you weight the vessel at all, you ought to make the armour really defensive. As soon as we had designed the vessel, I was very anxious to obtain suggestions from Captain Coles respecting the turrets. But at this time, unfortunately, Captain Coles had taken to attacking the Constructors' Department, and when these attacks were brought to my notice I sent to the Department to say that whatever attacks might be made upon them, or whatever misstatements might be published, they were not to defend themselves. This I did to put a stop to controversies in the newspapers, which otherwise would have been endless; but in justice to the Department I felt that I could not allow it to be attacked by a salaried officer who since 1862 had been receiving pay every week. I therefore wrote to Captain Coles, saying that he must take his choice whether he would continue to serve the Admiralty, in which case he must desist from his attacks; or else, if he wished to persevere in them, he must resign his office and take up an independent position. He then undertook that while he was employed at the Admiralty he would not continue his newspaper attacks, and I at once said I should be very glad to have the benefit of his experience; because Captain Coles has now had great experience on these subjects, and I do not hesitate to say has learnt a great deal from the Admiralty. Both at Woolwich and at Portsmouth he has been engaged with professional officers of great skill in building turrets; and half, probably, of his experience is consequently due to service with the Admiralty. The vessel of which I have spoken will, I think, be more powerful than any which has yet been built, and for the estimate the Admiralty must take the entire responsibility. I have told Captain Coles, however, that we should give him every opportunity for forming and offering opinions, more particularly as to the turrets, their mode of fitting, &c. With regard to the turret principle and its supposed importance to heavy guns, I have the high authority of Captain Cooper Key for saying that these can be worked equally well along a broadside as in turrets. Captain Cooper Key says—

> "No practical reasons exist why a heavy gun should not be worked on a broadside with the same security as in a turret; and I am satisfied that there is no difference between the two systems in this respect."

And Captain Cooper Key, we must remember, has had great experience in the *Excellent.* Up to 12-ton guns I see no reason why they should not be worked as broadside guns; but when they become larger and go up to 18 or 20 tons, my own opinion is that we shall require the central principle of working. At the present moment we have only one 20-ton gun, and that is not satisfactory in its performance; it does not consume properly the powder suitable for so large a weapon, and its discharge has not the weight and force which it ought to have. But I believe we shall soon have a more powerful weapon. I asked Mr. Whitworth if he could make a gun that would pierce the *Hercules* target, and he said, "Yes; but I cannot do it under 24 tons." We have not yet got to that; but my belief is that we shall very soon get to an 18 or 20-ton gun, and shall then be obliged to carry a centre battery. It only remains for me to add that although these designs have been prepared by the Department, there has been no opposition to Captain Coles, but, on the contrary, an earnest desire to co-operate with him in producing the best ship that we possibly can. I believe I have now answered all the Questions of the noble Lord. I have not felt it necessary to touch upon one part of his Question, because to do so would be to revive questions now happily at an end, and I hope for the future that all will work together for the public service. There is no objection to give the Reports that the noble Lord asks for.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE said, he had not the advantage of being in the House when the Question was put by the noble Lord (Lord Dunsany), but he had listened with great attention to what had fallen from the noble Duke in reply. The noble Duke had entered not merely into the merits of the cupola and turret-ships, but into their strength and dimensions, the power of the cannon, thickness of the armour-plating, and the various points connected with the experiments—subjects of the very highest importance, and such as were not usually debated in that House. Taken as a whole, it seemed that the opinion of the noble Duke was directed rather against the progress of what was known as the cupola-ship. The question of training guns on a turntable was one to be determined by common sense. Every one had seen the enormous weight of a railway engine and tender turned on a turntable by the power of one man. The invention, as it was called, of Captain Coles, consisted in placing a heavy gun on a turntable, and in protecting it with an iron turret. Nothing could be more simple than the adoption of such a principle, by which the heaviest guns could be trained in the most exact manner. A somewhat similar principle was adopted in the olden time on board what were called "Long Tom schooners," which were small vessels carrying one heavy gun amidships; and in the present day either the size of the ships must be greatly increased, or else the enormous artillery must be carried amidships. That was the whole mystery of the case; and by adopting the principle of Captain Coles, or of anybody else, we should avail ourselves of the system of a turntable carried amidships. The complaint was that Captain Coles had not had a fair chance hitherto of proving the merit of his invention, and he (the Earl of Hardwicke) must say that the impression left upon his mind by the speech of the noble Duke was that he was not very favourable to Captain Coles. It also appeared that Captain Coles had not had a very good ship placed at his disposal for the purpose of carrying out his invention, and what he now asked for was to have a good ship placed at his disposal. He was glad to hear from the noble Duke that at length an admirable vessel was about to be placed at Captain Coles' disposal, so that he would have an opportunity of testing his invention. He (the Earl of Hardwicke) did not at that time intend to go into the question of guns and of armour-plating, and he would merely say that the desire of the country was that experiments should be undertaken once for all to determine the best calibre of guns, the dimensions of ships, and the thickness of armour-plating, so that at last we might obtain a good ship properly armed. In one instance, where large broadside guns were being worked, it required thirteen minutes to shift the gun, which might have the effect of losing an action.

THE DUKE OF SOMERSET: The noble Earl appears to think that the *Royal Sovereign* is the only ship ever intended for Captain Coles, whereas, in fact, the *Prince Alfred*, a remarkably fine vessel, was expressly designed for the trial of his invention, although that vessel was not completed until a year after the time allowed for its building.

LORD DUNSANY said, the noble Duke appeared to think that unless armour-plating was invulnerable, it was utterly worthless; whereas it would be a great thing to keep out shells. It was of the utmost importance that we should secure large guns, because without them, although we might succeed in making holes in the vessels of the enemy, we could not possibly expect to be able to detach their plates. Then, again, it must be remembered that there was this difference between a turret and a broadside ship, that the plates in the latter were much more liable to injury, because a shot entering through the port-hole would take the armour of the opposite side of the ship in what was termed "reverse," and under those circumstances would cause more disaster than would be the case if the vessel were struck in the ordinary way.

THE EARL OF ELLENBOROUGH said, he had paid great attention to this matter throughout the debate, and it appeared to him that it was not only necessary to use a very large gun amidships, but that to do so the turret system must be employed. It required, however, an engineer to construct a proper turntable, and a shipbuilder to build a suitable vessel. He understood the noble Duke to argue that Captain Coles was no shipbuilder, and he (the Earl of Ellenborough) felt perfectly certain that he was no engineer. Instead, therefore, of being entitled to build this ship, Captain Coles was exactly the last person who should have been selected for that purpose.

Motion *agreed to.*

House adjourned at a quarter before
Seven o'clock, till to-morrow,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 12, 1866.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee —Resolutions* [March 9] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Motion for leave*—Representation of the People.*

Ordered—Land Tax Commissioners' Names*; Trusts (Scotland)*; Summary Procedure (Scotland)*; Poor Relief (Scotland)*; Writs Registration (Scotland).*

First Reading—Writs Registration (Scotland)* [63]; Summary Procedure (Scotland)* [64]; Trusts (Scotland)* [65]; Poor Relief (Scotland)* [66].

Second Reading—Labouring Classes' Dwellings [9]; County Courts* [47]; Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings* [27].

Referred to Select Committee — Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings* [27].

Report—Public Offices (Site)* [10].

Third Reading—Mutiny* and *passed.*

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, and read the following Letter, which he had this day received:—

Speaker's House, March 12, 1866.

Sir,—I regret that it is not in my power to resume my duties to-day. My medical adviser, *Sir William Fergusson, prescribes absolute rest for some further time.—I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servant,*

J. Evelyn Denison, *Speaker.*

To Sir Denis Le Marchant, Bt.

Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

CATTLE STATISTICS.—QUESTION.

Admiral DUNCOMBE said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, If he is aware that the Schedules prepared by the Board of Trade, calling upon the owners of live stock to make a return thereof on the 5th day of March, have never been issued in many townships; and how he purposes to insure an accurate return of Cattle throughout the country on a given day?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON said, in reply, that in consequence of the notice he had received of the Question of the hon. and gallant Admiral he had made inquiries of those charged with the duty of issuing the schedules, and there was every reason to believe that the officers charged with the duty of issuing schedules for the return of live stock had complied with their instructions, and had sent schedules to all occupiers of land whose names appeared on the Land Assessment Returns. The only persons to whom they had not been sent were some small occupiers, being sub-tenants or persons described as occupiers of houses and gardens. In those cases steps had been taken to ascertain the number of their live stock.

Admiral DUNCOMBE said, that there were to his knowledge many townships in which the occupiers had not had the returns sent to them.

RINDERPEST AMONG SHEEP.
QUESTION.

Sir ANDREW AGNEW said, he wished to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Privy Council on Education, If he can give any information as to whether the disease said to have broken out among sheep in some parts in Scotland had in any instance been reported by competent authority to be identical with Rinderpest?

Mr. H. A. BRUCE said, in reply, that no official information had been received as to the existence of rinderpest among sheep in Scotland; but he was sorry to say that other information had reached the Government which left little doubt of the existence of the disease in Forfarshire and the county of Fife. As to England, he regretted to say there could be no doubt. An inspection of sheep said to have died by rinderpest had been made by Professors Simonds and Brown on behalf of the Veterinary Department. The result was to establish in their minds beyond all doubt that the rinderpest had existed in ten different cases among sheep in England, and that it was accompanied with serious loss. He was informed by Professor Simonds that in every case where he had traced the loss of sheep to its source the animals had been in contact with cattle suffering from the disease.

ARMY—BARRACKS AT NOTTINGHAM.
QUESTION.

Sir ROBERT CLIFTON said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, The date of the purchase of land at Nottingham for site of Barracks, from whom it was purchased, the extent of land, and price paid?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The land was purchased in 1860 from the Duke of Newcastle. The extent was twenty-one acres, and the price £5,200.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—RIFLED ORDNANCE.—QUESTION.

Mr. H. BAILLIE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether any of the 12-ton guns rifled upon the Woolwich pattern, and now being served out to Her Majesty's Ships, have been submitted to the test of continuous firing, such as would occur during a bombardment; whether the range and accuracy of such guns have been fully ascertained by either separate or competitive proof; and whether it has been represented to the War Office that the steel tubes rifled on the Woolwich system of those guns will not be able to stand, without injury or destruction, such a test?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON replied, that the 12-ton rifle guns were fired 135 rounds before they were proved, and as continuously as the state of the tide at Shoeburyness would admit. The same gun was afterwards fired 315 rounds, and the accuracy of the guns had been fully maintained. A Select Committee had reported that, looking to the practice of the gun as a whole, it was the best ever made by a rifle gun. He was not able to give a definite answer to the third question.

NEW COURTS OF JUSTICE AND NATIONAL GALLERY.—QUESTION.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK said, he rose to ask the First Commissioner of Works, What course Her Majesty's Government intend to pursue with reference to the new building for the National Gallery; whether a competition of architects has been invited, and who has been selected to compete; whether any definite period has been fixed for the exhibition of the competing designs, and who is to make the final award; whether any of the architects designated to compete for the new Courts of Justice have declined the proposed competition; by whom the Instructions in the form of a Blue Book, furnished to the competing architects, have been prepared; and, what date has been fixed for sending in the plans?

Mr. COWPER said, in reply, that two of the architects invited to send in designs for the new Courts of Justice—namely, Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Hardwicke—had declined to do so, and two others had the invitation still under consideration. The specifications, which contained elaborate details, had been prepared by the architectural clerk of the Board of Works. The time fixed for sending in the designs was the end of October. With regard to the National Gallery, it was intended to receive designs from a limited number of architects, suggesting the best way in which the ground in the rear of the National Gallery might be disposed of, and also a plan showing how, if it were determined to demolish altogether the building in Trafalgar Square, another building might be erected more convenient for the purposes of a National Gallery, and more ornamental. There was no intention to abandon the designs of the late Captain Fowke for the new buildings at Kensington. Mr. Waterhouse had been engaged to act in Captain Fowke's behalf, and to superintend the erection of the building. With regard to the Law Courts, the arrangements were not yet in such a state as to give any information, but plenty of time would be given for consideration before any step was taken by the Government.

ELECTORAL STATISTICS (SCOTLAND).

QUESTION.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Electoral Statistics, similar to those laid on the table on Saturday for England, are in course of preparation for the rest of the United Kingdom; and, if so, when they will be ready?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, in reply, that directions had been given for the preparation of similar Electoral Returns for Scotland as had been furnished for England. He could not name the precise day when they would be ready, but ample time would be given for their consideration.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE ORDERS OF THE DAY.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER moved that the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion with respect to Paragraphs in the Queen's Speech.

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the Orders of the Day be postponed till after the Notice of Motion with respect to Paragraphs in the Queen's Speech.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM—REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING. FIRST NIGHT.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I have now, Sir, to ask that those paragraphs of The Queen's Speech that relate to the electoral franchise may be read at the table.

Paragraphs in Queen's Speech at the opening of the Session read, as follows:—

"*I have directed that information should be procured in reference to the Rights of Voting in the Election of Members to serve in Parliament for Counties, Cities, and Boroughs.*

"*When that information is complete, the attention of Parliament will be called to the result thus obtained, with a view to such* *improvements in the Laws which regulate the Rights of Voting in the Election of Members of the House of Commons as may tend to strengthen our Free Institutions and conduce to the Public Welfare."*

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER again rose and said—Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if in order to estimate justly the difficulties of the question which I have now to bring before you it be right, as I suppose, to take into view not only its own extent and complexity, and not only the strange fluctuation of circumstances which has attended and marked its history, but also the weakness of the hands into which the treatment of it has fallen, then, perhaps, I may well say that few Ministers have risen in recent years to address this House under greater difficulties than those which at this moment attend my own position and my present task. Sir, those difficulties are difficulties which I am conscious affect in the first instance Her Majesty's Government; and they are perfectly sensible of the weight of responsibility which attaches to them. But although they be concentrated in their greatest weight upon us, yet they are not ours alone. The interest in the successful solution of this question is an interest common to the whole House of Commons, and to every party, and every section of a party that sits within these walls. For, Sir, let me remind you that those paragraphs which we have just heard read are not the only paragraphs in which, under the most solemn form known to the Constitution, the subject of the representation of the people has been brought under the notice of Parliament. By no less than five Administrations, and in no less than five Queen's Speeches before that of the present year, the House of Commons has been acquainted by the Sovereign, under the advice of her constitutionally appointed Ministers, that the time, in their judgment, had arrived when the representation of the people ought to undergo revision. It is needless to refer to the terms of those Speeches severally; but it will at once be recollected that they have not been delivered exclusively at periods when Ministers taken from one side of the House were in power. In 1859, and in 1860, by both parties each in its turn, those solemn pledges were given in the face of the country. And, Sir, having much, I fear, to state to the House, I shall not, under the circumstances I have stated, unnecessarily occupy its time on this occasion by discussing the general ground of the question whether there ought to be a revision of our electoral system, and whether the franchises of the people ought to be extended. With such an accumulation of authority, and of authority proceeding from every quarter, in my favour, I hold it to be superfluous for the moment to debate that general question. I shall assume that by these declarations, so repeatedly and so earnestly made, the general ground and justification have been sufficiently, nay, amply laid down on which Her Majesty's present Government are warranted in placing before you a proposal relating to this important subject. And I venture, Sir, to request from the House not only for myself that kind patience and indulgence which I have, times innumerable, received at its hands, but likewise, for the question which I have to introduce, that grave and earnest attention which belongs to a matter undoubtedly of a serious order.

Sir, it may be with great truth said, with respect to the origin of this question, that it is emphatically the work of the House of Commons itself. Let me remind the House, as the period has now long gone by, and as many of the Gentlemen whom I address have now taken their seats on these Benches for the first time—let me remind the House of what happened in the beginning of the year 1851. And I must say that the event which then occurred was of a nature to saddle the responsibility connected with the introduction of this question, in a high and peculiar sense, not merely on one or on another Minister or Government, but upon the whole body of the House of Commons. It was an independent Member—my hon. Friend the Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King)—who, on the 20th February, 1851, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to grant a £10 occupation franchise in counties. In the debate which followed, the sole opponent of that Motion was my noble Friend now at the head of the Government. Every other authority in the House either approved or was silent on the occasion. Although, in resisting the Motion, the noble Earl, then first Minister, promised that the Government would itself take the question into its consideration, and would in the following Session make a proposal for amending the representation of the people, yet this did not at the time satisfy the House, and the Government were beaten by a majority of forty-eight. The minority consisted of fifty-two Members, and among those fifty-two there were not, I think, more than twelve or fifteen who sat on the Benches of the party opposite. So that it cannot, I think, be denied that the first initiation of this subject in the form in which it now comes before us—having begun as a question of the county franchise only, but it being perfectly well known that a change in that portion of our system must draw a change in the borough franchise along with it—the initiation of this subject, I say, was in a peculiar sense the work of the House of Commons. And, therefore, in inviting you to co-operate with us, the advisers of the Crown, in endeavouring to bring it to a solution, we are inviting you not only to relieve us of difficulties, but to effect a work in which Parliament itself has had from the first a common interest with ourselves. Sir, the election of a new Parliament naturally made the Government feel that the time had arrived when it was right that the sense of the representatives of the people should again be taken in regard to the laws which regulate our electoral system. The duty of the Government in this respect was a very plain one. No doubt, they had before them the discouraging record of former failures. No doubt, they had to deal, as it was obvious, with a state of the public mind that was not clear, definite, and resolute, but rather bewildered or, at the least, indecisive. Their duty, however, was, as I have said, plain. It was at once to examine the whole materials within their reach which could throw real light upon the case, to cast aside every consideration narrower than those which belonged to a great public and national interest; not to inquire for one moment what might be for the benefit or for the convenience of this party or of that; to be more studious of the substance than of the shadow or the name of their own consistency; to apply their minds and the best powers they possessed to the framing of a prudent, but an effectual measure; and then to await the issue at the hands of Parliament; but, as far as depended upon them, having framed their measure, to sustain and support it with all the energy and decision they could command.

And, Sir, the first question which we had to consider was a most important one. It was whether we were to attempt legislation in the present Session, or whether we were to be content for the time with inquiry. It was beyond all dispute that the careful examination of the facts of the case lay at the very threshold of the subject. It was want of information, or the want of definite and authentic information, which formed the greatest matter of contention during the debates of the year 1860. It was scarcely possible in that year to get at the point really in issue. Such were the doubts, such were the misgivings, such was the scepticism in regard to the figures on the one side and on the other, that we felt that if we were really to come to issue on the merits of the case, we must endeavour to make ourselves, and to make Parliament as well as ourselves, masters of the material facts appertaining to it. Well, Sir, with no delay—I believe in the first Cabinet after the funeral of our lamented head, but certainly before approaching any other domestic question of a public character—we applied ourselves to consider and frame the heads under which that information was to be obtained. As soon as those heads could be framed, the necessary measures were taken for procuring it; and I am bound to say that the assistance we have received from the Poor Law Department, and in particular the labours of Mr. Lambert, who has been the person principally concerned, were, in point of ability and of assiduity, everything that we could desire. Indeed, I am persuaded that if Members, whether they sit on this side or on that, have been able, since Saturday morning last, to institute any examination of the volume which has been laid on the table, they will admit that in the preparation of that volume the time has not been mis-spent; and they will likewise admit that they have now the advantage of approaching the consideration of this important question with such a knowledge and such a mass of authentic and weighty facts as have never been collected before.

We, therefore, Sir, can truly say that no time has been wasted. Had we found that it was not feasible by the means at the command of the executive Government to obtain information which should be full in its scope and range, and authentic and trustworthy in its character, we should have had no hesitation in at once seeking the aid of Parliament, and postponing legislation until such information had been obtained. But when we saw what could be done, and when, as the materials began to flow in upon our hands during the winter months, we perceived what had been done, we had no doubt whatever as to the practicability of satisfying both the branches of the Legislature with regard to the sufficiency of their knowledge; and, therefore, we had not the least hesitation in at once pledging ourselves, as early as the commencement of the Session, to the introduction of a measure on this subject. And here, Sir, I am anxious to make an explanation in reference to the preparation of the electoral statistics now in the hands of the Members of this House. There have been here and there not unnatural indications of a disposition to murmur at the supposed delay in the production of these papers, and to ascribe it to hesitation and vacillation of purpose on the part of the Government. Undoubtedly that has not been the case. So anxious have we been to give promptly to the House of Commons, as far as we could, the same means of judging with ourselves, that I can truly state that on Friday evening I could not obtain for my own use a completely finished copy of those papers, except the copy that was laid by me on the table of the House of Commons, and that, consequently, when so laid, passed out of my hands. But the question of time has an importance very different from that which it derives from its connection with vague rumours or vague insinuations. It has this importance—it is now the 12th of March when I make to you the first proposal for the introduction of a Bill; and, taking into consideration the approach of the Easter recess, it will not be possible for us to ask you to read the Bill a second time till the second week in April. As prudent and practical men, therefore, we have had to measure what our powers might be with regard to legislation in the present Session. Then, of course, arose the question for consideration—Are we to have what is termed a complete measure, or are we to have one that is incomplete? Now, I would ask Members of the House to consider what is meant by a complete revision of our representative system. I must omit from a complete definition or explanation of it some branches of legislation which are or have been favourites with a portion of the Members of the House, and which we, as a Government, do not admit to be necessary or desirable to take into consideration. I do not, therefore, refer to such questions as the question of secret voting, or the question of shortening Parliaments, which we cannot undertake to view with favour either now or at a future time; but to what would generally be admitted to belong to a complete revision of your representative system; because we—like every one else—are sensible of the immense advantage which would attend an operation whereby you would be able to deal with the whole range of the question at once. In the first place, there must be a consideration of the franchise in England and Wales, and a like consideration in Scotland, where it is, perhaps, even more obviously, I might say urgently, required. The subject of the Irish franchise, too, must be considered, although that is in a simpler state, because the electoral arrangements in that island have been more recently adjusted by Parliament, and the machinery necessary for such purposes is much more perfect than in this country. Then comes the whole group of questions that are included in the common phrase "re-distribution of seats"—questions between the three kingdoms—questions between town and country—questions between total extinction, or capital punishment, such as is inflicted in Schedule A, and the milder method of amputation, such as is administered in Schedule B, or that yet milder method of grouping boroughs together adopted in principle by my noble Friend now at the head of Her Majesty's Government in his Bill of 1852, but susceptible of being applied in many and very different forms. All these are matters that must undergo careful consideration by Parliament, and must, of necessity, entail protracted discussion. Then comes another question which, in reviewing your electoral system, can never be avoided—namely, whether the present boundaries of boroughs are such as the circumstances of those boroughs naturally demand. To meddle with the boundaries of boroughs for the sake of affecting questions of town and country representation, and the balance of interests, would, in my opinion, be a gross abuse. But, on the other hand, to inquire what are called the natural boundaries of each borough, as determined by public convenience, from time to time, is not only a natural and useful, but it is an essential part of any complete review of our electoral system. I am sorry to say that there is another matter belonging to that review which I do not believe to be less urgent at the present time than at any other, and that is the consideration of the state of the law with respect to corrupt practices at elections. I cannot hazard prophecies on that subject, which is as difficult as it is important. But I am afraid the urgency of it is in no degree diminished; and, undoubtedly, it could not be passed over by any Government in taking a complete review of the electoral system. Lastly comes a question of great practical importance, though no doubt of a less arduous character, concerning the administrative machinery for registration and for the holding of elections. These subjects are complex in themselves; but they have been further complicated by the speculations of many men of great ability and great authority, who have thought that, taking into account on the one side the demand for the extension of the franchise, and, on the other side, the difficulties we have to encounter with respect to the due or undue distribution of power among the different classes of the community, the time was come for introducing in one form or another propositions to which they attach great importance. One or other of them, or several of them, may be supported by arguments the most ingenious and by authorities the most weighty, but yet they are propositions of almost all of which it may be emphatically said that they are in the old English sense innovations, and which, as being innovations, never could come under the criticism of this House without a careful, a searching, and a jealous examination. Now, was it possible for us to suppose that as we now stand we could expect that it would be in the power of Parliament to accomplish the complete review that I have described during the present Session? It is all very good, very conformable to the habits of this country, and a very constitutional practice to entertain the idea of what we call the omnipotence of Parliament. But time and space are not yet annihilated, either for the purpose of making lovers happy or for any other purpose. I, therefore, want to know what is the time at our command in the position in which we stand, and what is the time requisite to enable Parliament to deal deliberately and effectually with this group of subjects? Neither of these questions is very difficult to answer. As regards the time at our command, as far as I can at present judge, if we obtain leave from the House for the introduction of this Bill, we shall propose that the second reading take place on the 12th of April. Suppose, then, I measure the time between the 12th of April and the middle of July, which I think will be the latest period at which such a Bill can be sent to the House of Lords, I find that the evenings certainly at the disposal of the Government would amount to about twenty-four. One-half of these might, as we must calculate, probably be occupied by the financial arrangements of the Session, and by the business of Supply. Beyond a period, then, which might not much exceed twelve evenings, we shall have nothing whatever to depend upon but the charity of private Members and the crumbs that may fall from their table. What have we found on similar occasions in former years? In 1860 we spent about ten nights, in trying, I may say, to do nothing. The great example of the Reform Act may give us some idea of the time occupied by complete reviews of our electoral system. A single one of the three Bills, out of which the Reform Act finally grew, occupied fifty nights of the House of Commons. But I feel that I should understate the case if I were to say that 100 nights, at least, were required for the complete review of the electoral system which was achieved in the year 1831-2. It may be said, and said very truly, that at that time there was a political heat and excitement, and a degree of apprehension which do not now exist; and I do not suppose that any such review as I have indicated would at the present day require so great a time. But, then, let me point out that the time occupied in passing that Act and the subsequent Acts was not less than six or eight times in extent that which is now, even at a sanguine estimate, at our command. On the occasion to which I have referred, you did indeed achieve a complete review of your electoral system; but, in order to do so, you turned day into night, summer into winter. You called upon every man of every class to sacrifice all his domestic engagements, you made the seasons of the year give way to your resistless and determined will, and you justly sacrificed—you were compelled to sacrifice all other legislation, I may say, of a nature to require serious discussion for two years. These are not the circumstances in which we now stand. We may reckon, I have no doubt, upon very fair and reasonable treatment with respect to the progress of a measure of this kind. Do not let it be supposed that I am apprehensive of what is called obstruction. We may gather, I think, what we may anticipate from a few words in a speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli) in 1860. He said—

> "He and his friends desired, in short, not delay, but that deep and deliberate investigation of a great subject which was in accordance with the freedom of discussion by which the Parliament of England was characterized."

The right hon. Gentleman was justified in calling for such an investigation, and for us to attempt now to overlook or pass by such a call would be a breach of duty on our part. We have determined, therefore, that it was quite impossible for us to do more than in approaching this question to look first at what we might think came first in the natural order of importance, and I do not doubt for one moment that the branch of the question which stands first is in its own importance and in the public estimation that which relates to the enfranchisement of large numbers of our fellow-countrymen now excluded from the electoral suffrage, but qualified, as we believe, to use it.

This, we think, to be the first and most urgent claim upon us, and this, therefore, unable as we are to deal in Parliament with the whole matter, we propose for immediate legislation. We might, it is true, have adopted a different mode of action, we might have framed a complete measure or a complete set of measures, and might have thrown them on the table of this House, claiming credit for the comprehensiveness of our views, and availing ourselves of every formula of objection to legislating piecemeal. But we should have done this knowing perfectly well that such measures could not in the time at our command be duly considered; that the effect of the proposal would simply be to prevent all possibility of real progress during the year; and that to all the unhappy miscarriages which have occurred in former years with relation to this subject, we were adding the certainty of another failure the most disastrous, and by far the most discreditable of them all. We have therefore determined to confine the Bill which we are about to ask for leave to introduce to the consideration of the electoral franchise, and we have founded this determination on a review of the time and circumstances in which we stand, and on the amount of opportunity at our command.

Perhaps, however, it may be asked—and the demand is, I think, a fair one—what view we take of the Scotch electoral franchise. A question which has been put to me this day by an hon. Baronet opposite has, indeed, given me an intimation that we must not expect to stir this question in England without being prepared to deal with it in Scotland also. What we ourselves think is, that a fair review of our representative system must include, if not all, yet unquestionably most of the important subjects I have named. We freely admit that the present plan is incomplete. But it will be asked, "Do you intend to complete it?" Now, I have ever been averse—and I think that aversion is justified by general observation and experience—to dealing in pledges, which in a case like this must, in part at least, embrace a future Session. Such are the number and variety of the circumstances which must affect the position and duties of the Government of an Empire like ours, that we must, in my opinion, look to the future itself to determine the proper opportunities for dealing with the portions not at present touched of this important question. This, however, I am free to say, that while I am convinced the group of questions bound up with the complex subject of Parliamentary Reform are beyond handling in one Session, and especially in what remains to us of the present Session, yet I cannot have the slightest doubt that if the Government find it to be their duty to take up those other questions by way of direct sequel to the proposition which they now make, the present Parliament will be perfectly competent to discuss and decide whatever measures we may bring forward.

Having arrived, Sir, as we at once arrived, at the conclusion that we ought to deal with the question of Parliamentary representation and to approach it first in that branch which concerns the franchise, it was equally obvious to us that if we did not revive the Bill for which we were responsible as a Government, in great part composed of the same individuals, in 1860, that Bill, at least, formed for us the natural starting-point of our inquiry. I will first take the question of the county representation. This is not a question beset with intrinsic difficulties; and I do not believe that it is regarded with anything like the jealousies with which the question of the borough representation is surrounded. In the year 1860 a proposal was adopted by the Government which had been contained in the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for East Surrey, to reduce the occupation franchise in counties from £50 to £10. That proposal was not attended, I believe, by any other proposal touching the county representation. What we now propose is a modification of this plan. We propose to reduce the occupation franchise —my statement is not precisely accurate when I say to reduce the occupation franchise, but it is accurate enough, and is, perhaps, that which will generally be best understood—from £50 to £14. That reduction of the franchise from £50 downwards will not precisely correspond with the £50 franchise as it now exists. We propose to leave that £50 franchise precisely as it stands. The occupation franchise which we propose between £50 value and £14 value will be an occupation franchise, not, however, of land alone, but of a house, or of a house with land. That is the nature of the franchise which we propose, and there is no great difficulty in estimating from the papers which have been laid on the table the amount of enfranchisement which this change will produce. It would correspond as nearly as possible with the effect of a £12 rating franchise. If hon. Members will look to the figures furnished by the volume of statistics which has been laid on the table with respect to a £12 rating franchise, they will find, I think, that its effect, after making proper deductions for those who do not claim to vote, and for those who have not been in occupation a sufficient length of time to come upon the register, will be to add to the present number of county voters 172,000 persons. I may be asked why it is that we do not go down to the limit of £10. I do not know, and I certainly cannot say, that there would be any danger, so far as I am able to discern, in going downwards to that limit, but what we think on the whole is this, that by the change which the Bill recommends we shall obtain not only a very large, but a very independent addition to the county constituencies. At least we are of opinion that by going from £14 to £10 we should probably obtain not a more but a less independent re-inforcement of the county voters. We have, I may add, no apprehension whatever with regard to the considerable enfranchisement which we propose; and we hope no such apprehension will prevail in any other quarter. It will, I think, be admitted on all hands, and I, for one, very strongly entertain the opinion, that this must be viewed as a middle-class enfranchisement. The county constituency, when thus enlarged, will be a middle-class constituency in the same sense —nay, rather more strictly than under the present system. The number of persons properly belonging to the working-classes and having a £14 rental franchise will be so very small in number as not to be worth taking into calculation. Or at the least, I may say, that such portion of the newly enfranchised body as may belong to the labouring class, will be tenants of small holdings of land in immediate connection with the landed class.

We have looked, however, further into the matter to see whether there were any cases in which, under the present law, there were interests of a more strictly proprietary character, interests connected with tenure, the most properly of all belonging to the county franchise, not provided for by the present law; and we found the following state of the law to prevail with regard to county franchises derived from property within the limits of cities and boroughs. We found that a man possessing a 40*s*. freehold within a borough might draw from it a county vote, but that if he had a copyhold, which is a rare case, or a leasehold, which is much more common, and which is just as truly a proprietary interest as a 40*s*. freehold, and may in many cases be fifty times the amount, he is not entitled to vote for it in the county within which it lies. We propose, therefore, by a clause in the Bill to give the possessor of copyhold and leasehold property within the limits of boroughs the right of voting beyond those limits, as if they were freeholders within the limits of boroughs, and to enable them, under the same conditions of relative amount which are fixed by the present law for freeholds and leaseholds respectively, to come upon the county register.

I am not able to estimate what the numerical effect of this proposal will be. It would not be possible, I think, to obtain any adequate materials for the purpose. The change cannot be numerically very large; but it must, I think, be good so far as it goes, because it will give a kind of constituency thoroughly germane to the nature and purposes of a county representation.

I come now to another topic affecting counties, and it is the only remaining one I need mention. I introduce it at this point because it is in connection with counties, in my opinion, that it will have its principal operation. I must, Sir, briefly allude to the subject of those franchises, new to the Constitution, and distinct from the franchise of tenure and occupation, which have sometimes been endowed with scoffing or irreverent names, but which may be properly called, I think, special or bye-franchises. A number of those franchises were proposed by the Ministry of Lord Aberdeen in the Bill of 1854, and again in the Bill of 1859, by the Ministry of Lord Derby. So far as the Bill of 1854 is concerned, I may say that many of us who form the present Government were responsible for it. But we have considered further and very carefully the nature of those franchises, and the numerous considerations that bear on the policy of their introduction. And first of all I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, that they are not suitable or adequate as a general basis for extending the franchise. They do not in general admit any large number of such persons as you cannot get by the old customary constitutional means of occupation and tenure. They have, however, a great tendency to complicate the electoral system by introducing a multitude of titles and a diversity of investigation, thereby multiplying and increasing the expense, already very heavy, which is connected with our system of registration. And therefore, speaking generally, the effect of our review, I do not hesitate to say, has been unfavourable to the general introduction of those bye-franchises and special franchises; but there is one among them with respect to which, although not attaching to it any exceeding importance, yet, notwithstanding, we think there are sufficient grounds for recommending it to the favourable notice of Parliament—I mean that which is called the savings banks franchise. The savings banks franchise has these advantages:—first of all, as far as it goes it meets a feeling prevalent in the country, and a feeling to which we are disposed to give effect as far as we can without the sacrifice of more important ends and aims—a feeling that it is desirable to include within the constituent body, by the method of what I may call spontaneous selection, some who could not be included by any method of franchise you could adopt founded upon the old principles of occupation or tenure. Now certainly it is true—it must be true—it is beyond all reasonable doubt or question, although the nature of savings banks does not allow us to offer you any demonstration of it—it is true without any doubt that provident habits enable many persons in early youth, many in very humble circumstances, many not having any independent holding, to amass their little stores by the time they come to legal age, and thereby, as, we think, to qualify themselves, and justly qualify themselves, for taking part in the choice of those who are to govern the country. And, above all, the savings banks franchise has this notable advantage, that it is attended with no complication of title whatever. Every savings bank depositor possesses—it is necessary for him as a depositor to possess—a book, in which is inserted every payment in he has made—every payment out he has received, with the date of each and all of these payments; so that an inspection which could hardly require a minute of time would tell you when you had fixed your standard whether a man is qualified to be put upon the register as a savings bank depositor or not. We therefore propose that all adult male depositors of £50 and upwards, who have been possessed of that deposit for two years in a savings bank, or in a Post Office savings bank, shall be entitled to be registered for the place in which they reside. The place wherein they reside will, I think, commonly be outside the limits of a town. Of course, I do not mean because there will be no such savings banks depositors in a town, but because in the towns the nature of the franchise may probably be such as to include the great bulk of them. But a large proportion, I think, of savings banks depositors will be found to be below the limits of the £14 holding which is proposed for counties; and it is on that account that I mention the savings banks in connection with this department of the electoral system.

With respect to the term I have mentioned—namely, two years for the duration of the deposit, we do not follow precisely the arrangements proposed in some former Bills, but it is obviously proper to propose a certain period of time as an essential part of the qualification in order to prevent this franchise from being used as a means of corruption.

And now, Sir, as to the probable or possible numbers of depositors in savings banks who may be enfranchised. If we look to the Returns regarding the savings banks, printed within a few days, we find that out of the imposing totals of the depositors of all classes no less a number of male adults in England and Wales than 94,000 are depositors to the amount of £50, and of those the depositors for two years amount to 87,000. But when we come to consider the probable operation of two most powerful causes, we shall find that we must not reckon upon large enfranchisements from this source. It would be a mere delusion in my opinion to look upon it as a means of a large enfranchisement. The first of these causes is that so large a proportion of these persons will be enfranchised by other titles and claims; and the second is the immense deduction that ought to be made from the apparent effect of every provision for the extension of the franchise when that franchise is accompanied, as it is of necessity in this case, with the condition that the possession of the franchise must be attended with the trouble of an annual claim. Now the trouble of an annual claim in this case is inevitable. The money might be withdrawn, the qualification might be lost; and to prevent gross abuse it is absolutely necessary that the claim should be made. We cannot in a case like this relieve the depositor from his trouble by means of a public officer. The claim must, therefore, be made, and must be renewed from year to year; and, therefore, although we think this a good franchise, we offer it simply as a collateral and subsidiary franchise. If it adds 10,000 or 15,000 to the electoral body, I believe that is the outside of what it will do. It is right, however, to observe that any estimate of numbers under this head must necessarily be matter of conjecture. But, at any rate, it is a very good franchise as far as it goes, and moreover we hope that under the operation of the Post Office savings banks it will be a franchise having a tendency to gradually extend itself. These remarks, I think, complete what I have to say upon the subject of the county franchise. The enfranchisement in counties will, according to the plan of the Government, as far as we can see, be a middle-class enfranchisement. The effect of it will be not to increase the relative share of the working classes in the representation, but, on the contrary, to diminish that share proportionately, because the influence of the working classes, represented by the very small freeholders, will form hereafter a diminished percentage of the entire county constituency, as compared with that which exists at the present moment.

MR. BRIGHT: What will be the proportion—how much for the house, and how much for the land?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: There must be a house; and if the house is inhabited by the man there is no stipulation as to its value; while if it is not inhabited by the man, it must be worth £6 at least, or one-half of the county qualification. And I will now pass to the question of the franchise in boroughs.

I think it will contribute to clearness, which, above all things, I am desirous to study, if I first call the attention of the House to the fact that the inhabitants of towns for the purpose of enfranchisement may be dealt with in four distinct classes. One class, and this is the principal class, inhabit separate houses, or at the least a separately rated building, and likewise pay their own rates. These are the proper objects of the Reform Act of 1832 with respect to the franchise, and these I shall call ratepaying householders. The next class consists of persons who inhabit their own houses, and whose houses are separately rated, but who do not pay their own rates, these being paid either under Mr. Sturgess Bourne's Act, or, and more commonly, under the Small Tenements Rating Act, or under particular local acts in certain towns. In all these cases the rates are paid by the landlord. I shall designate these persons by a phrase by which they are best known, though I am not sure that it is one of exact legal precision; I shall term them compound householders. The third class of persons with respect to whom it appears that they have now in law a claim to enfranchisement like the two former classes, but whose claim is, as far as we can obtain information, practically null and valueless, is formed of those who not only do not pay their own rates, but whose holdings are not separately rated. That is to say, they are inhabitants of a separate portion of a house, but this separate portion not separately rated, and these persons pay their rents without any reference to rates whatever. The first two classes we think to be properly householders. There has been some tendency, I believe, in legal decisions to favour enfranchisement, and, accordingly, either to introduce the third class under the title of householders, or if not yet to give them the effect of that title—that is to say, to consider these men as qualified for the franchise, though not householders. But I much doubt whether, except in a few instances, such as the case of Victoria Street, where the houses are partitioned into separate holdings of a very superior class, so that there can be no question of their sufficiency of value, this class is now to be found in practice on the list or register of voters at all. As regards them, inasmuch as they are not separately rated, we hold it better, I might almost say we find it indispensable, to deal with them as lodgers. The only mode under the present law by which they could obtain the franchise would be by getting their holdings separately rated. The enormous majority of them are, I believe, to be found in London, and, as nothing could be more inconvenient than to have an electoral law requiring parishes to adopt rating arrangements, not for rating purposes, but only arbitrarily imposed upon them for the purpose of the franchise, we think it better to let things take their natural course. Substantially, these persons are found standing in the category of lodgers; and as lodgers we deal with them, although generally speaking there is an open door, a common staircase, and an access to the abode independently of the landlord or his representative. The fourth class are lodgers properly so called, being persons who inhabit their own rooms, but as inmates in the houses, indeed, in the domestic establishments, of others. And let us now approach the question on which, it is idle to disguise, so much indecision, so much jealousy, and so much apprehension exist —namely, the question of the town franchise; and we wish, as far as depends on us, to remove all that indecision, to allay that jealousy, and to abate that apprehension. We think this can best be done by a full exposition of the facts of the case. What is the present state of the town constituencies, and what progress has been made by them, as compared with the population in the represented towns, since 1832? In 1832 the town constituencies numbered 282,000 voters. Of these, 63,000 and odd were freemen, 44,000 and odd were voters under scot and lot, and other old rights of a popular character, and 174,000 were £10 householders. Between 1832 and 1865 the ten-pounders rose to 463,000. The gross total of the constituency—we have no net total for the year 1832, and therefore I can only compare the gross numbers—the gross total of the constituency was 514,000 in 1865. That shows since 1832 an increase of 82 per cent. Within the same period the population of towns has increased as follows:—In 1831 the population of the towns was 5,207,000; in 1865 it is believed to have been £9,326,000. The increase has been 4,119,000, or 79 per cent. So that the growth of the constituency—and I wish to call the attention of the House to this fact—the growth of the constituency in towns, notwithstanding the vast augmentation of the wealth of the country, has practically but just exceeded the bare growth of the population. That is, I apprehend, an important fact for the House to bear in mind. In the counties it is otherwise; there the growth of the constituency has been as great, but the growth of the population has been much less; the growth of the constituency has been considerably beyond the increase of the population.

I now come to a point of very great interest and also of importance, and I think the House will be of opinion that if three or four months had been spent in the collection of these Returns, they would not have been ill-spent, presuming that they had led to no other result than the particulars contained in the blue book of Friday last, with respect to the representation of the working classes in the present constituency. The figures as they stand come to the following result. I mentioned, I think, that the town constituency was 514,000. Great pains have been taken in every case to strike off double entries, and I have no doubt that has been done with considerable precision. The net amount of the constituency, as far as we can ascertain, is now 489,000. All through my statement, for the convenience of the House, I confine myself to thousands. The £10 voters of the working classes are returned as 108,000, and the freemen and old-right voters of the working classes as 20,000, making a total of 128,000, and showing an apparent percentage of 26 per cent of the present constituencies as belonging to the working classes. Well, now, Sir, there will be, I have no doubt, some dispute as to the soundness of our definition of the working man; and I am bound to say that our definition is a large definition. [Mr. WHITE: Hear, hear!] I believe, however, that though imperfect and disputable, yet it is the best definition that can be found. [Mr. WHITE: Hear, hear!] Let my hon. Friend try his hand at framing a better; he will find it no easy matter. I do not believe this admits of accurate definition; but we found the only definition we could take is undoubtedly a liberal definition, and you might say that 10 or that 20 per cent of those included in the working class under our definition are so considerably interested in shopkeeping, or are otherwise in circumstances such that they ought not to be found among the working class. There is undoubtedly a certain amount of debateable ground. I think it right to notice this in order that there may be a clear understanding of the case as it stands. But suppose we deduct 20 per cent from the amount, the result of these remarkable figures will still be that not less than 21 per cent of the constituency may be considered as belonging to the working class. And I freely own it is a larger percentage than I had expected to find. I am very glad that this is so; and if the percentage were still higher I should like it all the better. But I must observe upon this infusion of the working class in the present constituency that, in the first place, it is exceedingly unequal. I have gone roughly over the 200 boroughs, and I think I gathered together about sixty boroughs in which the proportion the working class possessed of the franchise was not less than one-third. I gathered thirty other boroughs, commonly boroughs of greater importance, and in these I found the proportion of the working class was not more than one-tenth; and this distribution of the working class is not only unequal but I must say, being myself a northerner, it is least where it ought to be largest, I mean in the towns of the north. As an illustration of this I will mention the names of six towns—in Oldham, with a constituency of 2,285, the working class represent 315, or one in 8 of the population; in Halifax, with a constituency of 1,771, the working class stands at 171, or one in 10; in Stockport, with a constituency of 1,348, the working class is 124, or one in 11; in Bradford, with a constituency of 5,189, the working class is 438, or one in 12; in Leeds, with a constituency of 7,217, the working class stands at 523, or one in 14; and last of all, there is a town which deserves special mention, not only on account of the distinguished man by whom it was but twelve months ago represented, but for other reasons—I mean the town of Rochdale, which has probably done more than any other town in making good to practical minds a case for some enfranchisement of the working classes; because it is the town where that remarkable system, and at first sight I do not hesitate to say that most critical and even perilous system, obtained, under which the working class ousted the retail dealer from his accustomed province, and took into its own hands the business of supply; and where, through the extraordinary intelligence and self-governing power of these men, that system has been brought to a successful issue, and has become a source of the greatest comfort and profit to themselves. What is the case in Rochdale? With a constituency of 1,358, the enfranchised working class stands at only 68, or one in 20. I say, then, that if the percentage of the working class on the whole constituency be more satisfactory than I, in common with others, was led to expect, the manner of its distribution is even less satisfactory. The case of Rochdale is peculiar. It so happens that a district which naturally would belong to it is not included in it; and that illustrates the necessity of including some consideration of the present state of boundaries in any complete revision of the representative system. Well, Sir, we are very much pleased and in good humour with ourselves because we find that 26, or more probably that 21 per cent of the working classes are included in the borough constituencies. Let me now approach another point. How was it in 1832? I have endeavoured to make the best estimate in my power, because this is a very interesting and important question. I apprehend there cannot be the smallest doubt of these propositions—first of all that the enfranchisement of the working class as it stood in 1832 was not an excessive enfranchisement at that time. Secondly, that the advance of the working class since 1832 in everything that can entitle men to some share in the Government of their country has been a great and an undeniable advance. It is not denied on any hand—whether we take education in schools; whether we take social conduct; whether we take obedience to the law; whether we take self-command and power of endurance, shown under difficulty and privation; whether we take avidity for knowledge and self-improvement—if we apply any one of these tests, or any other test that can be named, there can be no doubt at all that if the working man in some degree was fit to share in political privileges in 1832 he has, at any rate, attained some considerable degree of additional fitness now. How, then, I ask, stands the case now as compared with

1832? In 1832 there were 63,000 freemen; I take the proportion of working men at that date to have been the same as by our Returns we find it to be now, that is to say, to have been 54 per cent of that number; consequently, there were 34,000 freemen belonging to the working class. The scot and lot and potwallopers were 45,000, and I assume that 60 per cent of these voters belonged to the working class. In my opinion that is a very moderate estimate; an estimate below the truth. The £10 occupiers in 1832 were 174,000. I assume, for the purpose of comparison, that in 1832 the working class represented only 15 per cent of the £10 occupiers of that day. The result of this computation is that of the total constituency of 282,000 in 1832, the proportion belonging to the working class was 87,000, or 31 per cent. They are now at the very outside not more than 26 per cent. It is not satisfactory, in all points of view, to deal with this question as a matter of pure statistics; but then I must say, if these statistics prove anything, the figures I have quoted prove that the working class, which ought to have borne an increasing and growing proportion, has borne a dwindling and diminishing proportion to the whole number of the town constituency, and consequently that the time has arrived when something ought to be done to increase their share in the elective franchise.

And now, Sir, if I may take so great a liberty, I wish to address one word to Gentlemen opposite. No wile, no stratagem can lie in what I am about to say; it is the simplest thing in the world. Let them take the distribution of the working class voters in different parts of the constituency; I would promise them that they may, if they will, derive immense consolation from it; let them observe the effect of this working class element upon the relative strength of political parties—because it is not to be denied that there is, and I admit not unnaturally, a considerable apprehension of the effect of a large enfranchisement or of any enfranchisement of the working class with regard to a diminution of that particular Parliamentary influence which most naturally and justifiably these Gentlemen regard as the influence most essential to the well-being of the State. I will, for the purpose of illustration, take a case which we may call celebrated on the one side, and notorious on the other. How stands the population of the working classes in the metropolitan boroughs as compared with the rest of the country? England, without the metropolitan boroughs, has, in her town constituency, 27 per cent of the working classes; England, in the metropolitan boroughs, has only 23 per cent of the working classes; and yet I apprehend that it is an undoubted fact that if there be one section of Members who steadily, perseveringly, and uniformly represent Liberalism in this House—a somewhat advanced Liberalism, indeed, but also, I am glad to think, sometimes a philosophic Liberalism, too, it is the section of those Members who have been sent up to this House by the metropolitan boroughs. Thus, from constituencies having the smallest proportion of the working classes have been sent up Members the least "Conservative," in the party sense of that term. That is my small modicum of consolation, humbly, but sincerely, offered to Gentlemen opposite.

I have stated, Sir, that the Government, in approaching the consideration of this question, naturally took the Bill of 1860 as their starting point. I may be asked whether we adopt the Bill of 1860 *simpliciter*. Let me now call the attention of the House to what took place in 1860. And though we then spent ten nights apparently in doing next to nothing, and although a good deal that was irrelevant was said in comparing our own institutions with those of other countries, it is my duty to admit that in the course of the discussion of that year some important facts were elicited. I do not think that, if we had been permitted to have gone into Committee on the Bill of 1860, we could have held to it exactly as it stood. Not because in our view of the Bill it would have admitted too many persons to the franchise. What was the view we then took of it? My noble Friend now at the head of the Government, in introducing the Bill on the 1st of March, pointed out that the effect of it would be, as he judged, to enfranchise 194,000 persons in the boroughs; but that was, in our belief, an outside estimate; and during the time the Bill was before the House we saw reason rather to contract it than otherwise. Sir George Lewis—than whom no man certainly could be a more acute and impartial judge—estimated the number from later information at 160,000. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham had taken it at about the same amount, from 160,000 to 170,000. I do not think anyone who is of opinion that our borough representation should be remodelled would say that was an unreasonable or an unduly large enfranchisement, but it was, as we found, an enfranchisement badly distributed and imperfectly adjusted. We must bear in mind that the metropolis, as measured by population, has within it one-third part of the population of the whole of the towns in the country; and undoubtedly, I think it could be shown that the operation of that Bill would have been highly unequal as between the metropolis and the provincial towns. Very large numbers would have been enfranchised in very many considerable towns, but it was shown to us that in London under the present law numbers of persons are excluded from the franchise as it now exists, although they come within it according to the spirit of the law. I refer to those compound householders who cannot number less than 40,000 in London alone. This large body of persons, though standing on a footing of equality with many of the present voters, the Bill of 1860 virtually passed by. The Bill of 1860 was, it might almost be said, of no use at all to London. Such was the scale of rents in the metropolis, that a descent from £10 to £6 was of no importance whatever. It is quite true that this Bill for establishing a £6 occupation franchise did, according to our estimates, purport to enfranchise a number somewhere between 160,000 and 200,000 men; and that other estimates were placed in competition with ours, which placed the numbers higher. The then Member for Marylebone (Mr. Edwin James) made a most effective speech in relation to some points connected with the London constituency: and the number of persons likely to be admitted in the various London boroughs under the £6 franchise he estimated, I think extravagantly, at about 400,000. But a Committee of the House of Lords, which considered this question, by a large majority adopted a statement that the £6 franchise would have enfranchised a number I think approaching or even exceeding 300,000. Now we could not admit these computations; we held to our own belief, and still placed the number of the working classes that would be admitted to the franchise at from 160,000 to 180,000 or thereabouts. While we contended that this was a proper number to admit, we also contended that the franchise should be placed at £6. Now I am bound to admit that if the Bill had proceeded into Committee the two propositions could not have stood together. Either the one basis or the other must have been given up. No one would have proposed to bring down the franchise to £6, and yet to leave £10 householders unenfranchised. We must have given them the advantage of a real admission. Not wishing to change the relations of class to class, if we had gone into Committee we should probably have had to make a change as regarded the £6 rental. The most authoritative statement on the subject was that made by Lord Russell himself towards the close of the discussion, after the debates in the House of Commons had shown the imperfection of the proposed arrangement. On June 4, 1860, my noble Friend said—

> "And this I will say, that, if you will propose any of the measures that have been mentioned this evening, either for raising the franchise by making it a rating instead of a rental franchise, or by increasing the amount of the rental, or, in another way that has been pointed out, by admitting a great number of voters who are distinguished by property, or by a high degree of knowledge from those belonging to the working classes, any proposition of the kind shall be fairly considered by us in Committee. We certainly shall not declare ourselves so completely wedded to the franchise which we have put forward that we will not submit to treat on the subject. If in Committee such a proposal as I have alluded to be made, and if the House should prefer it to that which we have originated, it will be our duty to see whether the Bill with such an alteration would be a valuable measure, whether it would extend the franchise in a manner that would strengthen the institutions of the country; and, in that case, though we might not think it a change for the better, we should be ready to adopt that alteration."
> —[3 *Hansard*, clviii. 1992.]

Sir, it was in our view essential, as was declared by a Motion carried in this House in 1859, that any fresh enfranchisement in the towns must be an enfranchisement downwards. But now that the facts have been brought before us, we find they prove that through some defective operation of the present law large numbers of persons, being householders, who pay a rent, which the law allows to be a sufficient presumptive qualification, are not in possession of the franchise, and we find it impossible to overlook their claims. We find it our first duty to inquire who there are that, being above the line of £10, and being at present within the spirit of the law, should be enfranchised; and then to devise some plan whereby they may be enfranchised. The first question, then, for us to ask is, What are the defects in the law which bring about the result complained of? They are two; one of them I have already glanced at; and I will now mention the other. By the present law a man fulfilling the various conditions with respect to the time and value of occupation, and being rated, cannot be brought upon the register unless he has paid the Queen's taxes and local rates made since a certain date. This is usually called the ratepaying clause. Men do not call it the taxpaying clause, and certainly, as far as the Queen's taxes are concerned, if I may venture to form a judgment upon the investigations we have made, I think the local authorities have been exceedingly considerate, and have not given much trouble to the voters. But so far as the ratepaying clauses have been considered there has been a great obstacle; some trouble has been occasioned and many have lost the benefit of their vote. It has been supposed sometimes that the local authorities, for particular purposes, did not apply for the payment of the rates until the time had elapsed when the vote could be secured; while in other cases, do not let us conceal from ourselves the fact that voters belonging to the two parties, at any rate a portion of them, have had their taxes paid by the political agents in the interest of the respective candidates. In one instance, the local gentleman who most candidly sent up the information, wished it to be understood that this communication was to be considered confidential. Again, there are certain boroughs where the law is systematically, and by a joint understanding, overlooked on both sides. All this is bad, and bad in various ways. The operation of the law has been unjust and unequal; and this is a clause which we propose to do away with altogether. In Liverpool, I do not overstate the case when I say that there are not less than 6,000 or 7,000 persons, and probably more, whose rates are regularly collected from the landlords by arrangement with the parish officers, and therefore those persons are disfranchised. They are not compound householders, but ratepaying householders, and they lose the franchise contrary to the intention of the Reform Act, and without any fault of their own. We propose, therefore, to abolish this clause; and we expect, as the victims of this clause are almost all of the class that come within the general designation of working men, we shall by this means admit not less than 25,000 persons to the constituency of those I call above the line.

Then we come to the question of the compound householders; and what we think just and right is that the compound householders should be treated exactly like the ratepaying householders. If the rent of their houses is on such a scale that, in the judgment of the Legislature, they are suitable persons to be enfranchised, it is perfectly certain, as an economical truth, that the rates upon the house, though paid in the first instance by the landlords, are ultimately and truly paid by the tenants; and it cannot make any difference to us, it does not justify drawing any line of distinction, that instead of being paid directly by the householder, they are paid by the landlord and charged by him in the rental. At present the law is defective in this respect, that the name of the compound householder does not commonly appear upon the rate book. Now, for the purposes of rating it ought so to appear; and in an Amendment that we shall have to propose in the law of rating we shall provide that the name of the holder of a house, as well as of any rated holding that is not a house, shall appear upon the rate book, from whence, just like the name of a ratepaying householder, it will pass to the list of voters, without imposing trouble or burden of any kind upon the householder himself. Being, too, on the list of voters, it will be subject to the scrutiny of the revising barrister, just like the name of a ratepaying householder, and, unless proper ground of objection shall be preferred, it will take its place upon the register. An effective enfranchisement, therefore, will be given to the compound householders, whereas up to the present time their enfranchisement has been almost purely speculative. There are, indeed, some instances to the contrary. I rather think the great town of Birmingham is one such instance; but the metropolis affords by far the most important illustration of the present operation of the law; and in the metropolis you may say, without any fear of contradiction, not only that the compound householders are not on the register in one case in fifty, but likewise when they are on the register it is because, for some particular purpose, an election agent has thought it worth his while to find out the names, prefer the claims, and get them put on the register. Now, that is not the way in which we want a constituency to be fashioned, and if our proposition be adopted, the name of the compound householder will be put upon the rate book and the register without the trouble and difficulty of a claim, and by the very same spontaneous process as that by which the name of the man who pays the rates himself comes upon them.

Then comes the other class to which I have already alluded—a class of persons also very numerous in the metropolis; I mean those who inhabit flats and portions of houses, which flats or portions of houses, though having a separate access, are not made the subject of separate rating. Now, with regard to this class we can, I believe, do nothing, at least as to their theoretic title, but we must in that respect leave them just as they are. At present, if they can show that the value of the apartments which they occupy of what the law calls the clear annual value of £10, and if they can get to be rated—which I believe they are entitled to ask, though a test of that kind must in practice generally form an insuperable obstacle—they may by a circuitous process cause themselves to be registered on the list of voters. Now, under our Bill there will be no necessity that the apartments should be rated, and that difficulty, consequently, will be obviated. Thus we propose to confer on them a great advantage by the removal of an obstacle: but we can do no more. A public officer cannot know the rent that these people pay. He knows the value of the holding of the compound householder, because for rating purposes it is necessary that he should know the value of the house; but he does not know, and cannot know, the rent that is paid by a man who inhabits only part of a house. That class, therefore, we must leave as they are now, subject to the burden of claiming. If such a person can show that his rooms are of a clear annual value of £10, the benefit he will derive from the Bill will be that he will be released from all necessity of being rated, and he may then come upon the register; but he will come upon it with the necessity of renewing his claim from year to year.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON: What is the estimated number that will be added by these provisions?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: We believe there will be an addition of probably 35,000 persons to the constituency in consequence of the provisions, we propose to make respecting compound householders above the line of £10, nearly the whole of that addition being in the metropolis. The estimate, I think, is sufficiently near to accuracy, because we have ascertained the number of houses in the different parishes which are compounded for, or where the rates are paid by the landlord.

Thus far, Sir, I have given the House an anticipation of what I may call enfranchisement above the line. The number we think amounts to 60,000 persons—namely, 25,000 by the abolition of the ratepaying clauses, and 35,000 by the new provisions of the law with regard to compound householders.

I now come to a question of considerable interest, the question which is commonly called that of the "lodger franchise." Now, we propose to place lodgers, properly so called, that is—persons who hold rooms as inmates of another man's house or household—exactly upon the same footing as those who hold tenements or apartments, that is to say, rooms or parts only of a house having no separate rating, although with a separate access. Those two classes we shall treat together, just as we treated together ratepaying and compound householders, and in fact, every person who, because separately rated, will, according to the provisions of our Bill, come upon the list of voters at once by the action of the proper public authority. We also take together those men who dwell in tenements and apartments (so to call them) and those who dwell in lodgings. And the provision we make is this—that if they can show that the rooms they inhabit are of the clear annual value of £10, of course without including either rates, taxes, or cost of furniture, they will be entitled, upon claiming year by year, to be placed upon the list of voters. The conditions of time are, I need hardly say, the same in all these cases. But I must now refer to the proposal as to the lodger franchise contained in the Bill of 1859. It was proposed by the Ministry then in power that any person paying £20 by the year, or 8*s*. by the week, for any rooms, whether furnished or unfurnished, should be entitled, upon making his claim, and subject to certain conditions, to be placed upon the register. Now, there are, we think, insuperable difficulties in the way of any attempt to deal with any franchise resting upon the rent paid for furnished apartments. In the first place, bear in mind that the clear annual value of rooms is a thing which is continually estimated from day to day in every town in the country, and which is capable, therefore, of being brought to some definite standard. On the other hand, if we endeavoured to deal with furniture and the portion of rent paid for it—for the use, that is, of movable commodities—it would be a very fluctuating and inconvenient basis for the franchise. If, however, the case is unsatisfactory when you view it with regard to furniture alone, much more defective is the basis proposed when we come to consider that £20 a year, or 8*s*. a week, or any sum paid for furnished lodgings, not only includes furniture with the rooms, but it includes almost always more or less of personal service. It includes sometimes firing, sometimes cooking, very commonly the use of the kitchen fire. In point of fact, it gives a basis of so uncertain and slippery a character that it would be quite impossible to employ it with advantage for the purposes of enfranchisement. I hope the right hon. Gentleman opposite will not think I am criticizing his Bill in a censorious spirit, because I have done so no more freely than I have performed the same operation on our own Bill of 1860, with respect to its inequality as between the metropolis and the country. I wish the House, therefore, to understand—for I know that great and very natural interest has been excited on the question of the lodger franchise—that we propose to deal with it in a manner which we think will include every case, and more than every *bonâ fide* case, that could have been included by the provisions of the Bill of 1859; because if a man pays £20 a year for furnished lodgings, those lodgings ought to be, and as a rule, unless many other things besides the use of furniture were included, would be, worth more than £10 of clear annual value as defined by the law. Supposing, then, the rooms which a lodger occupies are of £10 annual value, he would be entitled, subject to the usual conditions as to time of occupation, to claim, and to come upon the list of voters.

Now, I can give no information, and I believe the right hon. Gentleman was unable to give any in 1859, as to the number of persons who would, perhaps, be enfranchised under the title of lodgers; but this I may say, that, in the first place, my firm belief is that it will be a small one; and, in the second place, my firm belief likewise is this, what I now speak of is a middle-class rather than a lower-class enfranchisement. The operation of claiming, and of claiming, too, year by year, is one that must be very burdensome to working men; whereas young men, such as clerks and men of business, familiar with the use of pen and ink, if educated and intelligent persons, and desirous of obtaining the franchise, will estimate the trouble far more lightly. We calculate, therefore, on a certain amount of middle-class enfranchisement by the provision I have described; but I should be misleading the House were I to pretend to entertain the opinion that any large number of the working class, or any very large number even of the middle-class will come upon the register by virtue of that which we term a lodger franchise. A great number of persons now inhabit tenements, being almost all of them working men, and all of them theoretically entitled, out of whom scarcely any find their way to the register; and this is, in my opinion, a demonstration that no very large or considerable additions to the constituency are to be expected from this source. Consequently, I do not venture to add any figures under this head, but I take the 60,000 persons whom I have already named as the amount of additional enfranchisement granted by provisions of the Bill, which I have the honour of asking leave to introduce.

I next come to the question of that description of enfranchisement which I venture to call enfranchisement below the line—that is to say, enfranchisement as related to any portions of the community above the limit of £10 downwards—from £10 which is not only a necessary, but is in our view the most important part of any measure relating to this subject.

My noble Friend Lord Russell, in a speech delivered in 1860, adverted to the possibility of changing the proposal for a £6 rental franchise into one for a rating franchise of the same amount. The question of a rating franchise has always been one of the greatest interest to those who have been engaged in the preparation of our numerous, I will add, our too numerous Reform Bills. The advantage of having an external standard to determine the claim for registration, not based simply upon a process which, as often as the question is raised, each man must conduct anew for himself, but dependent on the evidence of a public authority, though guarded by an appeal, it being the business of that public authority to fix the value of a holding for certain parochial purposes, which are not political—the value of a franchise of that kind, considered narrowly and closely from such a point of view, is obvious. There was another reason also, which, but for objections which I shall presently mention, would have led us to the adoption of a rating franchise—to the adoption probably of that franchise indicated in the passage of the speech of my noble Friend to which I have referred. The Small Tenements Act provides that in all the boroughs where it is adopted—and it is adopted in, I think, a considerable majority of the boroughs in the country—for every tenement up to and including those of £6 the rates shall be paid not by the occupier, but paid by the landlord. Now there would have been a great advantage in saying, "We will adopt the precise limit which Parliament has indicated, as expressing its view of the capacity to pay direct local taxes. Where that capacity begins the franchise shall begin; where that capacity ends, the franchise shall end also." But when we came to look at the operation of the Small Tenements Act, which includes all houses of a value of £6, as well as those under that value, we found that the enfranchisement would not have exceeded 80,000 persons, and we did not think that this was such a number as, upon one of these rarely recurring occasions of the re-adjustment of the franchise, we could propose to Parliament, or hold out to the country as anything like a settlement of the question. But then we were met by another question—and this is the last of the drier subjects which I shall have to submit to your consideration. It is nevertheless, I think, one of some importance, and in respect to which I beg to invite your attention during a few minutes. We were called upon to consider the great change —I will go further and say, the great Reform which has been effected by my right hon. Friend the President of the Poor Law Board, through the medium of the Union Assessment Act. In former times it was said, "Why not have a rated franchise—a franchise taken from the rate book?" But the inequality of that rating was so gross and so anomalous in the various parts of the country that, though we did admit it into the Bill of 1854, we, nevertheless, subsequently considered that it could not prove a satisfactory basis for the franchise. The rating, however, is now immensely improved. It is, of course, our duty to take the best and simplest basis for the franchise that we can find. The simple question, therefore, is whether there is not another basis more nearly coinciding with the present basis, although differing from it in legal expression, which is better than the basis of rating. That basis is the clear annual value; but it is the clear annual value as determined by the column in the rate book, called the gross estimated rental. Now, rating is good if we consider it as the adoption of a public independent standard—a standard supposed to be impartially chosen for local taxation. But in everything in which the rating is good, the gross estimated rental is good also, whereas it escapes many sources of error and of inequality which are inherent in rating. For the rateable value after all is estimated by certain deductions made from the gross estimated value. The rateable value contains no new and independent element of estimation which we do not get from the gross estimated value. The rateable value is not then, *per se*, the proper test to adopt as the basis of the franchise. It is not the test of what a man actually pays for his tenement, but it is only the test of the net value of the tenement to the person beneficially interested, which is no doubt important to the parish officers, as it determines relative capacity to pay; but with which we have really nothing to do. You may, for example, have two houses, paying £20 a year each. One of those may belong to a solid and substantial class of houses, and may only require a deduction of £6 or £8 per cent for repairs; but the other may have been built of slight materials, and therefore requiring much more money from year to year—perhaps £15 to £20 per cent—to keep it in repair, and in a condition equally good with the other house. But the same rent is paid for them both, and the same franchise, according to the view of Parliament under the circumstances I have referred to, might fairly be demanded; but if we adopt the standard of rating as the basis of the franchise one would be enfranchised whilst the other would be excluded. Again, there will also remain an element of inequality in reference to insurance as well as repairs. The duty on insurance has of itself undergone a material change within the last few years. My hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Hubbard) pointed out that the fire insurance duty amounted to 4 or 5 per cent on the net income from the house, when it stood at 3*s.* per cent. But it is now reduced to half that amount. We connect this proposition with the present legal rule, by saying that the column of the gross estimated rental shall be *primâ facie* evidence, until contested, of the clear annual value. Thus, we shall secure the double object of adhering to the present definition, and of avoiding all the inequalities inherent in rating, while, at the same time, we shall in this manner attain that simplicity, certainty, and facility, which is obtained by the use of the rate book, as a public and impartial document in each parish.

Now, Sir, the gross estimated rental is, as we find, in exact correspondence with the rack rent. There will, of course, be an appeal to the revising barrister. But in all the boroughs except thirty, the gross estimated rental appears to be under the operation of the Act introduced by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers), as nearly as possible equal to the rack rent. In these thirty boroughs one-half exhibit a considerable inequality; but it is only because the operations under the Act of my right hon. Friend are not quite completed. Certainly, before any practical steps can be taken under this Bill those operations will be completed. There are a few other cases of local acts, and certain cases in the metropolis, where in point of fact the column of gross estimated rental is not at present in accordance with the true principles of the Union Assessment Act. That is to say, it represents a mere conventional sum. With a view to correct this inequality, we propose to provide by enactments on the subject, and then we can with confidence recommend the gross estimated rental as the proper basis of the franchise. But then, even while these inequalities exist in a few particular cases, we have a means of applying a test with sufficient accuracy to the gross estimated rental as a whole. We have called for the Income Tax Returns. We know that these represent a sum considerably above the rack rent; for in every case where the landlord pays the rates he includes them in his returns, and consequently the income tax assessment is, in very many cases, much in advance of the rack rent. The gross annual Income Tax Returns, allowing for all excesses, give a total valuation of £39,238,000; and the gross estimated rental, though still defective in some places, amounts to £37,375,000. The difference at this moment therefore is only £1,863,000, or 5 per cent. We have therefore no hesitation whatever in what we propose, feeling that we can now found ourselves upon a secure basis of operation which will be the means of introducing a great practical improvement in the administration of the law.

It appears, Sir, that the present town constituency consists of 488,000 persons. Dividing those as above the line of the working classes from those below it, I find that in the former category there are 126,000, according to a large and liberal estimate, who belong to the working classes, while I take 362,000 as the number of voters in the towns who do not belong to them. We propose, as I have said, to add 60,000 to the present number of £10 voters. All these I take as belonging to the working classes. I do not now refer to the lodger, or to the depositor in savings banks; both of these would probably be of small numbers; the lodgers at any rate of mixed and balanced condition. Up to this point, then, I may roughly reckon that we have 186,000 persons, more or less, on the future register, who belong to the working class. If a £6 rental were added, I find that this would be the result. A £6 rental, calculated upon the most careful investigation, and after making every allowance and deduction that ought to be made, would give 242,000 new voters, whom I should take as all belonging to the working class. I should thus arrive at a gross total of 428,000 persons, which would, in fact, probably place the working classes in a clear majority upon the constituency. Well, that has never been the intention of any Bill proposed in this House. I do not think it is a proposal that Parliament would ever adopt. I cannot say I think it would be attended with great danger, but I am sure it is not according to the present view or expectation of Parliament. And although for my own part I do not think that much apprehension need be entertained with respect to the working classes, even if admitted in larger numbers than we propose, yet this I fully admit, that upon general ground of political prudence, it is not well to make sudden and extensive changes in the depositories of political power. I do not think that we are called upon by any overruling or sufficient consideration, under the circumstances, to give over the majority of town constituencies into the hands of the working class. We propose, therefore, to take the figure next above that which I have named—namely, a clear annual value of £7. I will give the House the exact numerical result, so far as we can distinctly make it out, of the proposal to fix the borough franchise at a clear annual value of £7. The figure of £7 is not very far from that apparently fixed by the Small Tenements Rating Act, but the result as to admission will be considerably larger. If Gentlemen will take the pains to add together from page 54 of the statistical volumes the gross total of the male occupiers at £7, and under £10, and will then make a Rule of Three sum, having for its first two terms the gross number of occupiers above £10, and the present number of the £10 constituency, and for its third term the gross number of occupiers between £7 and £10, the fourth term will give the probable constituency upon reducing the franchise to £7. [*Laughter from the Opposition Members.*] I am very glad that these studies in arithmetic prove so amusing, as they are generally thought to be among the drier class of subjects. But the result is that the figure is 156,000 persons. [An hon. MEMBER: The gross number?] No, the net number. The gross number will be between 207,000 and 208,000; and from the net number a deduction must be made of a certain number of freemen who have already the franchise. I take off from the 156,000 one-third of the total number of freemen now enjoying the franchise, and that leaves 144,000 who would be enfranchised by the reduction to a clear annual rental of £7. But it is right I should point out the causes by which, in the view of some persons, this calculation may be modified. There are some persons living in houses between £7 to £10 who do not belong to the working classes. The number of these, so far as our inquiries extend, is probably small. I believe that 5 per cent would be an over-statement of the amount, and it is needless to take into view the reduction by this number which may be balanced from other sources. Then, again, there must be a deduction, some would say a considerable deduction, made on account of the more frequent removals which take place among the holders of small houses. But, on the other hand, an increase will have to be made in allowance for the effect likely to be produced by the abolition of the ratepaying clauses on that class of persons. The Rule of Three sum is affected by all the causes I have named, including the abolition of the ratepaying clauses and the operation of the new provisions we propose to make for compound householders: also there would be some small addition to be made for the savings bank franchise. I do not myself attach any very great consequence to the general upshot of these various modifying circumstances. They may, I think, be taken, on the whole, as balancing one another, and, desiring to avoid all minor points of controversy, I should say that the addition to the working class voters by the reduction to £7 would be about 144,000.

And, Sir, I wish to point out to those who may still think that this addition to the constituency ought not to take place, that all are disposed to admit that the franchise ought to be at the least attainable by the working man. I think that the most extreme speeches heard in this House in opposition to change are of this character. They all state that it is desirable that the working man should be able to reach the franchise. That, of course, means that he should be able to reach it by means of such efforts as it is really within his power to make. Let us consider his position with regard to the £10 franchise. £10 clear annual value, when you make the proper addition for rates and furniture, must imply that the man is at a charge for his residence of not less than £16. I am safe, I may even claim that I speak with moderation, when I say that the working man does not spend more than one-sixth of his income on his house. Therefore, in order that he may have a £10 house, his income must be £96, or, in other words, without making any allowance whatever for sickness and casual interruption of work, he must receive, at least, £1 17*s*. per week, or, if we allow for necessary breaks, about £2 per week. Now, Sir, it is plain that only a very small portion of the working classes can hope to receive £2 per week as the wages of their labour: many an able, industrious, and skilful workman, using his best exertions all his lifetime, would and must fail to attain to such an income. Accordingly, I do not think that a £10 franchise can be said to be liberally and fairly within the reach of the working man. A £7 franchise would work in a different manner. Adding 60 per cent, as in the other case, for rates and furniture, to the sum of £7, it would come in the gross to £11 4*s*., which would represent an income of £67 4*s*., or instead of 37*s*. per week a little under 26*s*. a week. Now, 26*s*. a week is an income which is undoubtedly unattainable by the peasantry or mere hand labourer, except under very favourable circumstances, but it is also an income very generally attainable by the artizans and skilled labourers of our towns, though perhaps not so easily in the country.

I will now, Sir, endeavour to give a general view of the figures in this case, in order that they may be placed clearly as a whole before the House. In the counties, as I have said, if our Bill shall become law, the working classes will be a much smaller proportion of the whole constituency than they now are, as the 40*s*. freeholders, among whom they are to be found, will form a smaller proportion of the aggregate number, and I can hardly reckon the agricultural servant at £14 rent as belonging to the class of working men. In the towns the voters of the classes, other than the working classes, amount to 362,000. The working class, as it appears, has now 126,000 persons, and there will be new electors of the working class for houses above the line of £10 amounting to 60,000, and for those below the line of £10, so far as we can calculate, 144,000, making the entire number of the working classes in the constituency 330,000 or a total addition of 204,000 to the 126,000 now included in the constituency. The total enfranchisement contemplated in counties is, by the £14 occupation, 172,000, to which, however, is to be added whatever may be thought fit for copyholders and leaseholders having their qualifications within represented towns, and for the savings bank franchise. As in towns there will be an addition of 204,000 persons, we are likely to have a total addition of 376,000, so far as we may venture to offer definite figures on this subject. With respect to the lodger franchise, to the copyhold and leasehold franchise for counties, and to the savings bank franchise, we may be at least safe in throwing in the 24,000 which are necessary to make up round numbers, and in stating that the total enfranchisement will probably embrace 400,000 persons, of whom, speaking roughly, one-half will belong to the working class and the other half to the middle class, including among the latter, in the counties, many persons of education, although, perhaps, not many of great means or station.

And now as to the proportion which the new constituency will bear to the total number of our householders. There appears to be in our towns a population of 9,326,000. Of these the adult males may be taken at 2,331,000, and the adult male occupiers are 1,347,000. Of occupiers, occupying houses at and over £7, there are 847,000. The actual constituency of 488,000 represents 36 per cent of the male occupiers. The proposed constituency of 692,000 would represent 51 per cent of those male occupiers, and of the working classes there would be in the towns, according to these figures, 330,000 enfranchised against 588,000 unenfranchised, being less than two in five, but more than one in three of the working classes. Again, Sir, the gross constituency of the whole country will stand thus. There are already, taking the gross numbers, 550,000 voters in the counties of England and Wales. There will be 488,000 in towns, making a total of 1,038,000. But in order to know the actual number of persons a very large deduction must be made for those who possess a plurality of votes. I cannot think that even upon the most liberal estimate the present constituency consists of more than 900,000 electors. In addition to those we propose to bring in 400,000, making for England and Wales a total constituency of 1,300,000. The total number of adult males is 5,300,000; so that the whole number enfranchised in town and country would be one in four, as nearly as possible. So much for the figures. I do not know whether the House would like me to recapitulate very shortly the legislative proposals which form the basis of them.

The first is to create an occupation franchise in counties, for houses alone or houses with land, beginning at £14 rental, and reaching up to the present occupation franchise of £50. The second is to introduce into counties the provision that copyholders and leaseholders within Parliamentary boroughs shall be put upon the same footing as freeholders in Parliamentary boroughs now stand for the purpose of county voting without any alteration in the relative amounts of qualification for household and copyhold as compared with freehold. The third is a savings bank franchise, which will operate in both counties and towns, but which will, we think, have a more important operation in the counties. In towns, we propose to place compound householders on the same footing as ratepaying householders. We propose to abolish tax and ratepaying clauses, we propose to reduce £10 clear annual value to a £7 clear annual value, and to bring in the gross estimated rental taken from the rate book as the measure of the value, thus, *pro tanto*, making the rate book the register. We propose also to introduce a franchise on behalf of lodgers, which will comprehend both those persons holding part of a house with separate and independent access, and those who hold part of a house as inmates of the family of another person. The qualification for which will be the £10 clear annual value of apartments, without reference to furniture. We propose to abolish the necessity, in the case of registered voters, for residence at the time of voting. And, lastly—I say lastly because though there are some other minor provisions, I do not think it needful to trouble the House with them at the present time—we propose to follow the example set us by the right hon. Gentleman opposite and the Government of Lord Derby in 1859, and, sustained and supported I must say by many great authorities, to introduce a clause disabling from voting persons who are employed in the Government yards, while they continue to be so employed.

Sir, I have detained the House very long in this explanation, and I have now briefly to consider what is the true representation to be made of such a plan as that which we now submit. It certainly makes a large addition to the constituency. The number of persons who will be enfranchised by this Bill, not upon an estimate wholly vague, but taken on the basis, as far as may be, of the positive and absolute figures which we have been enabled to present, will, I think, certainly be greater than the number of those who were enfranchised by the Reform Act; for no estimate of the enfranchisement effected by the Reform Act would carry it very greatly beyond 300,000 persons. As respects the county vote, we do not apprehend that it will raise here any question of principle. As regards the borough vote, we hope that our plan is a liberal, as we believe and are sure that it is a moderate and a safe plan. It alters greatly in towns the balance as between the working classes, defined in the liberal manner which I have stated, and the classes above them ; and yet it does not give the absolute majority in the town constituencies to the working classes. It is probable that, according to the various tempers of men's minds, we shall be told that we have done too little, or that we have done too much. Our answer is, that we have done our best. We have endeavoured to take account of the state and condition of the country, as well as of the qualifications which the people possess for the exercise of the political franchise. We are mindful that unhappily the limbo of abortive creations is peopled with the skeletons of Reform Bills. We do not wish to add to the number of these unfortunate miscarriages. We may have erred, but we have endeavoured to see how much good, by the measure which we propose, we have a prospect of effecting for the country. As to the completeness of the measure, I have given to the House what I think are the clear and distinct objects which any Government attempting to deal with the question of the representation of the people must have in view, but honesty of purpose equally compels us upon careful examination of the facts not to attempt, by any measure that we could lay on the table of the House at this given moment, that which we know to be impracticable, and in which, therefore, we must fail. If we are told that, with respect to the franchise itself, we ought to have done more, our answer is that it was our duty to take into view the public sentiment of the country, disposed to moderate change, but sensible of the value of what it possesses, sensitive with regard to bringing what it possesses into hazard. And, whatever may be the opinion entertained of the growing capacity and intelligence of the working classes, and of their admirable performance at least of their duties towards their superiors—for it has ever appeared to me that though they have sins, in common with us all, yet their sins are chiefly, and in a peculiar sense, sins against themselves—yet it is true of the working classes, as it is true of any class, that it is a dangerous temptation to human nature to be suddenly invested with preponderating power. That is the reason why I think we have not done too little in the way of enfranchisement. We may be told, on the other hand, that we have done too much. I will hope that will not be urged. We do not entirely abandon the expectation that even those who have protested almost in principle against the extension of the franchise downwards will be disposed to accept a measure which they do not wholly approve if they think it offers the promise of the settlement for a considerable period of a grave, important, complex, and difficult subject. I would beg them to consider what an immense value there is in the extension of the franchise for its own sake. Liberty is a thing which is good not merely in its fruits, but in itself. This is what we constantly say in regard to English legislation, when we are told that affairs are managed more economically, more cleverly, more effectually in foreign countries. "Yes," we answer, "but here they are managed freely; and in freedom, in the free discharge of political duties, there is an immense power both of discipline and of education for the people." If issue is taken adversely upon this Bill, I hope it will be above all a plain and direct issue. I trust it will be taken upon the question whether there is or is not to be an enfranchisement downwards, if it is to be taken at all. We have felt that to carry enfranchisement above the present line was essential; essential to character, essential to credit, essential to usefulness; essential to the character and credit not merely of the Government, not merely of the political party by which it has the honour to be represented, but of this House, and of the successive Parliaments and Governments, who all stand pledged with respect to this question of the representation. We cannot consent to look upon this large addition, considerable although it may be, to the political power of the working classes of this country as if it were an addition fraught with mischief and with danger. We cannot look, and we hope no man will look, upon it as upon some Trojan horse approaching the walls of the sacred city, and filled with armed men, bent upon ruin, plunder, and conflagration. We cannot join in comparing it with that *monstrum infelix*—we cannot say—

"——Scandit fatalis machina muros,
Fœta armis: mediæque minans illabitur urbi."

I believe that those persons whom we ask you to enfranchise ought rather to be welcomed as you would welcome recruits to your army or children to your family. We ask you to give within what you consider to be the just limits of prudence and circumspection; but, having once determined those limits, to give with an ungrudging hand. Consider what you can safely and justly afford to do in admitting new subjects and citizens within the pale of the Parliamentary Constitution; and, having so considered it, do not, I beseech you, perform the act as if you were compounding with danger and misfortune. Do it as if you were conferring a boon that will be felt and reciprocated in grateful attachment. Give to these persons new interests in the Constitution—new interests which, by the beneficent processes of the law of nature and of Providence, shall beget in them new attachment; for the attachment of the people to the Throne, the institutions, and the laws under which they live is, after all, more than gold and silver, or more than fleets and armies, at once the strength, the glory, and the safety of the land.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend the Right of Voting at Elections of Members of Parliament in England and Wales."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. MARSH said, he looked upon the measure which had just been so eloquently described to them as the beginning of the end. There had been no petitions presented in favour of a £7 franchise, and very few in favour of a £6 franchise. The tendency of the proposed Bill was towards universal suffrage; and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) himself whether it did not tend to that result? It was said that that measure would settle this question; but he (Mr. Marsh) maintained that, on the contrary, it was just such a measure as would keep it unsettled. The right hon. Gentleman himself had expressed the opinion that a £6 franchise would swamp the existing constituencies; and yet the £7 proposal was not very different from it. He thought the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) would hail the proposal as a step towards universal suffrage. The right hon. Gentleman said that the class of voters who came in under the lower franchises frequently voted for Conservative candidates. That might possibly happen in quiet times; but suppose there came a great political fight, instead of being on the Conservative side they would be on the other side, and the greater need there was for Conservatism the less Conservative would they be. Look at what had happened in Australia, where a popular House of Assembly, overriding everything, raised money without the consent of the other branch of the Legislature. He believed the fact to be that a very small number of the Members of that House really desired Reform; while those who did really desire Reform were those who wished to bring the country to the lowest level of democracy. And why did they wish for democracy? They wished for it simply because they had some particular hobbies to ride. At one time that hobby was for financial economy, at another peace throughout the world; but he denied that democracy had been favourable to human freedom or progress. If they looked at its operation on commercial progress, civil progress, or religious freedom, they would find that it had been the opponent, and not the friend of, measures for the advancement of freedom under those heads. In very early times the export of wool was prohibited not for the sake of the landlords but of the hand-loom weaver and cotton spinners. Protection was indeed the child of democracy; the navigation laws were not introduced under the reign of the Stuarts, but by the Commonwealth; and in modern times it required all the energies of the great ruler of France to induce his people to accept free trade, and if they looked to America, they found high protective tariffs in connection with democracy. It was the same in our colonies, where there had been a large extension of the suffrage, combined with local self-government. As to social and civil freedom, it was only necessary to refer to what had been done at the time of the French Revolution, and to the state of things in France under universal suffrage at the present moment, to see how far democracy promoted civil freedom. The press was completely gagged, and this year there had been twenty-one warnings, six condemnations, four suppressions, and two interdictions. Under the democratic institutions of America they had such legislation as the Maine Liquor Law; and in this country, where the trades unions legislated for their fellow-workmen, the result was that the houses and workshops of those who did not assent to the legislation of those unions were blown up with gunpowder. In Australia the influence of trades unions was more extensive than here; there they operated on Parliament with a view to give their measures the force of law, and a deputation from trades unions had urged on the Government there the propriety of introducing an eight hours labour Bill. There had been religious democracies in Spain, Naples, and France, but they had not promoted religious freedom. No one could say that hitherto the interests of the working classes had been neglected in this country. Many Acts had been passed for the special benefit of these classes which were in direct contravention of the laws of political economy. Railway companies were compelled to carry them at a certain rate, the truck system had been made illegal, the health of towns had been promoted, Post Office savings banks had been established, Government annuities had been introduced, Factory Acts had been passed, a Bill relating to the dwellings of the poor was now before Parliament, taxes had been reduced which pressed upon the labouring classes, whilst the income tax had been imposed on the upper and middle classes. It was said that there had been great improvement since 1832, and that the working classes had risen intellectually. On the other hand the advance of civilization and the introduction of machinery necessarily led to the elevation above their class of those who displayed superior intelligence, and only those remained down whose abilities and energies did not lift them higher than the average level. All the arguments founded on the intelligence of the working classes as qualifying them for the exercise of the franchise applied equally to their fitness to serve as jurors; yet nobody contended that the qualification of jurors should be lowered. Wherever there were freemen in boroughs numerous petitions were presented to the House against bribery; yet the people to be admitted to the franchise by this Bill were of about the same class as the freemen who were bribed. Much had been said about "bricks and mortar" as an electoral qualification. He agreed with the late Lord Macaulay, that where we saw the best houses we saw the most intelligent people; but the principle of this Bill was to give the franchise to the occupants of the worst houses; so that "bricks and mortar" was, in his opinion, a very good qualification after all. Wherever a nation started with a high franchise, she entered, it seemed to him, on her political career with a greater chance of success than by adopting the contrary course. Belgium started with such a franchise, while in Italy the franchise was nearly the same as our own £10 qualification, and it had, he maintained, succeeded so far as she had gone. Looking, on the other hand, to Australia, where he had many very dear friends, with a beautiful country and an unrivalled climate, what did he find to be the case? Corruption of the grossest kind prevailed in the political system. At one time certain persons in the colony wished to carry a particular point; they accordingly raised a large sum and went round to those members of the Assembly who they heard were determined to vote against the project, and to some of them they gave £10, while the greatest patriot of all found his patriotism oozing out of his fingers' ends on being offered a sum of £750. Again, a scene in the House was thus described—

> "While all Melbourne was absorbed in a cricket match a furious debate was taking place in the House, on the Motion of Mr. Barton, that a sum of money should be placed on the Estimates for the payment of Members."

The narrative went on to state—

> "All disguise as to the motives of the Mover and his friends was cast off. It was explicitly declared that the popular Members could not live without appropriating the public money."

A scene in the Assembly was thus described—

> "One hon. Gentleman was charged by another with uttering words 'grossly untrue.' The Speaker having called him to order, he substituted the words 'utterly false,' which was also objected to. He then tries 'untrue,' with no better success, and ultimately is allowed to characterize the statement as not in accordance with fact."

The question was, how were we to prevent democracy from gaining ground? He replied that it could only be done by the inherent excellence of our mixed Constitution. In early times it had survived the proud Cortes of Spain and the gallant States General of France, and when the French Revolution broke out this country was saved by the inherent excellence of the Constitution. We ought to show that the House of Commons was now, as it had always been, in advance of public opinion. He felt this question most strongly — more strongly, perhaps, than any other hon. Gentleman present. Others might have heard and read of democracy, but he had seen it and felt it in its deepest reality. He hoped the House would pause before it did anything which would cause us to drift into democracy, or which would do away with that Imperial Parliament by which the country had been governed so long and so well.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he wished to offer a few remarks, although he was conscious that, as this was a question of first-rate importance, the House was naturally looking to those who had had greater experience for an expression of opinion in regard to it. The interest manifested by the vast assemblage which thronged within those walls two hours previously, and the tones of just solemnity in which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the measure proved the magnitude of the question and the large share of attention which it merited. Indeed, the discussion of a measure affecting our representative system must always be regarded as one of first-rate importance, for it was impossible to take such a measure into consideration without at the same time touching upon questions which lay at the very root of the Constitution, and on the safe solution of which must depend the future prosperity of the country. One point which had presented itself to his mind with a somewhat grave aspect was the prospect that had been opened to them of discussions on the great subject before them at the present time, but also of future discussions on those portions of it which had been postponed. For the first time, certainly, since the great measure of 1832, they had been called upon to consider a Bill, presented on the authority of Her Majesty's Government, and relating to the representative system, but which at the same time dealt only with one portion of the many branches into which that question divided itself. In the various measures which between 1851 and the present time had been introduced on the responsibility of the Ministers of the Crown there had always been an attempt to deal with this important subject in a comprehensive manner, and to include all the points necessary for the settlement of the question for a series of years at all events. Indeed, when private Members had on their own responsibility introduced measures dealing with only one portion of the question, the Ministers of the day had always replied that if the question was to be touched it must be settled once for all, and that it would never do to be taking it up anew year after year, because to do so would be perpetually imperilling the Constitution, or at all events keeping the public mind in an unsettled state. He invited the House to consider what was the prospect which the discussion of the franchise in counties and boroughs in England alone would open to the House? He confessed that the answer he had received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer at an earlier period of the evening with regard to the electoral statistics of another portion of the kingdom was entirely unsatisfactory. The right hon. Gentleman said that inquiries had been set on foot as to the electoral statistics of Scotland, but that he could give no undertaking as to when the Returns might be expected. As to Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman had said nothing; but taking into consideration its present exceptional condition, perhaps no very inviting prospect could be held out of legislating on the representative system of that portion of the kingdom. But what was the prospect even with regard to England? The discussion of this question, he presumed, would occupy a considerable portion of the present Session, and unless, by some method or other, the days at the disposal of the Government were considerably multiplied he did not see how between the present time and the middle of July the question could be fully debated and decided. Though simplicity was, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the characteristics of the Bill, to his mind the measure was so complex, that in one point, at all events, he was unable to realize its scope and object. Then, the right hon. Gentleman had submitted, on the responsibility of Government, proposals respecting several of those franchises upon which Her Majesty's Ministers had cast so much ridicule when they were proposed by the Government of Lord Derby. Now, this branch of the subject would lead to much discussion; and certainly when exceptional franchises were proposed by the Government, it was not to be expected that no others would be proposed by hon. Gentlemen in that House. He presumed, also, that it was intended to consider the representative system of Scotland next Session; and he believed that the advances which that country had made since 1832 would prove that its electoral system had become altered in its character, as much, at all events, as had been the case in England. The case of Ireland, would, perhaps, be ready for consideration about the year 1868. It was possible, however, that though in 1866 the Government weapon had one barrel only, it might, in 1867, have two. The system proposed might have its merits in the eyes of a new Parliament by offering a greater chance of a prolonged existence than if the whole subject were introduced and brought to an untimely end in the present Session. But if this question were a great and a difficult one, as he admitted it was, ought we not to follow the precedent of those Ministers who advised the Crown in 1830, and who, recognizing the magnitude of the question, submitted their measure to Parliament before Christmas, and devoted the whole of the following Session to its discussion? They did not delay the introduction of their Bill till the month of March, so that it could only be advanced a single stage before Easter. As the right hon. Gentleman had said, the event proved that the Government had not exaggerated the difficulties they had to contend with when he proposed to devote the whole of the Session to the consideration of this subject. It should not, however, be forgotten that not one of the off-nights could be spared, as the Estimates, the disturbance in Jamaica, and a dozen other important subjects were awaiting discussion. It was somewhat ominous, he thought, that about two months since the hon. Member for Birmingham gave a tolerably accurate description of what might be expected in the Government proposal, the acceptance of which he advocated because it could be employed as a lever for future proceedings. Immediately after this speech the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), who had gained for himself an excellent position in the House, delivered one of a similar character. Now, he (Sir James Fergusson) thought it ominous that the measure introduced by the Government contained the very proposals which had been thus indicated by two Members in their public addresses, and who avowed that they looked upon such steps as a means of leverage. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of the present Parliament as being capable of settling the question of Parliamentary Reform, but that was a matter of uncertainty. Appeals might be made by the Government to the people, new Parliaments returned, and the country for some time filled with great excitement with discussions of various branches of the question. There was a peculiarity as to the manner in which the Bill had been brought forward. The whole measure bore the impress of the utmost haste. The electoral statistics had been furnished, according to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at so late a period that even he, by his own confession, had scarcely had time to consult them. On Saturday they were put into the hands of the Members, and on Monday the Bill, professedly founded on them, was brought in. It was hardly to be supposed, however, that it had been prepared in such hot haste; because, as he had explained, the Bill was, no doubt, sketched out two or three months ago, and several Members of the Government, from time to time, had given indications of its intentions. On the contrary, it would rather seem as if at the last moment the Government had been surprised by the general result of the information they had obtained, and that the statistics were only meant to cover the entrance of the measure into the House. Perhaps no one had shown greater ignorance—if he might say so, with the utmost respect—on this subject than the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. In the Session of Parliament of 1864 he stated that not one-tenth of the working classes were included in the present constituencies. He would, however, refer to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, which contained the following passage:—

> "I will not enter into the question whether the precise form of franchise and the precise figure which my hon. Friend has indicated is that which, upon full deliberation, we ought to choose; but this I say, not to be misunderstood, that I give my cordial concurrence to the proposition that there ought to be, not a wholesale, but a sensible and considerable addition to that portion of the working classes—at present almost infinitesimal—which is in possession of the franchise. What is the present state of the constituency, any departure from which some hon. Gentlemen deprecate as a 'domestic revolution?' At present we have, generally speaking, a constituency of which between one-tenth and one-twentieth—certainly less than one-tenth—consists of working men. And what proportion does that fraction of the working classes who are in possession of the franchise bear to the whole body of the working men? I apprehend that I am correct in saying that they are less than one-fiftieth of the whole working classes. On the other hand, my hon. Friend indicates that kind of extension of the suffrage which would make the working classes a sensible fraction of the borough constituency—an important fraction, but still a small minority."—[*See* 3 *Hansard*, clxxv. 315, 316, 317.]

How did this language of the right hon. Gentleman harmonize with the analysis of the statistics now presented to the House? It showed an astonishing misapprehension of the facts of the case. There was one other point in the right hon. Gentleman's speech which he thought should not be lost sight of. He stated that it was at the Cabinet Council held immediately after the funeral of Lord Palmerston that the present measure was first contemplated. It so happened that one of the last speeches of that noble Lord which it was his fortune to hear was on the Bill of the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King). He thought that the general apprehension expressed at the time of the decease of the noble Lord, that the country would deeply feel his loss, was now to some extent realized by the proceedings of the Government the moment he was removed from it. The noble Lord said—

> "There would be great advantage in making some change, but I cannot vote for the £10 franchise provided by the Bill. The two principal interests are, the manufacturing and commercial on the one hand, and the agricultural on the other; and any alteration of existing arrangements which would tend to introduce too much of the commercial element into agricultural constituencies would, I submit, injure the balance which we ought to be most anxious to preserve. . . . I hardly think it was expedient of my hon. Friend to bring forward his Bill at the present juncture, for it is plain that there does not exist the same anxiety for organic change which was observable some time ago. The fact is, that organic changes were introduced more as a means than as an end, the end being great improvements in the whole of our commercial legislation. . . . There are also other considerations connected with external affairs tending to abate our anxiety for organic changes. The events which are taking place in other countries, and which are in a great measure the result of their constitutional systems, have made the people of this country much less anxious for change. . . . In voting for the second reading I am not prepared to vote for the particular franchise proposed in this Bill."—[*See* 3 *Hansard*, clxxiv. 953.]

But scarcely had the grave closed over their leader than the Government entered upon a course which was utterly different from that advocated by Lord Palmerston, and which had had the sanction of the country for so many years. He utterly disclaimed the imputation of being afraid of the introduction of the working classes to the franchise; for he had found among the artizans intelligence not behind that possessed by large portions of the present constituencies. If, however, the object was to maintain a just balance, and not to throw the whole power of election into the hands of one class, he was exceedingly surprised at the course pursued by the Government. He looked forward with grave apprehensions to long discussions on fragmentary portions of great questions, which must cause much excitement in the country, and the ultimate results of which could not at present be estimated.

Mr. P. WYKEHAM MARTIN (Rochester), expressed his earnest hope that the Government would not detract from the value of their measure by attempting disfranchisement as well as enfranchisement. He now offered a word or two in support of the claims of the *employés* in the Government Dockyards, that there might be ample time for considering the matter before the day stated for the second reading of the Bill. Those voters were perfectly independent, and had supported the return of some of the most consistent and determined opponents of the Government; and during all the years a Liberal Government was in power Sir Frederic Smith maintained his hold upon Chatham.

At the present moment, although there was a Liberal Government in power, Devonport had returned two Opposition Members; and he thought the charge of corruption could not be sustained against the voters of that place. If the object, as had been stated by an hon. Member, was to prevent these people from having their claims brought before the House, the measure did not go far enough; everybody related to these men must be disfranchised. He disclaimed the idea that he was interested in advocating their claims, as very few indeed of his constituents came within this class, and he would be as little affected by the disfranchisement of these men as almost any Member of the House not representing an inland town could be. It so happened, however, that in any appeals he had made to the House in their behalf, he could only recollect two occasions on which an *employé* in the dockyard had spoken to him in reference to the question under consideration. It was rather too bad when venality was not proved against the dockyard *employés*, that they should be deprived (merely because they exercised the English privilege of grumbling) of a right which they esteemed very highly, and which, on the whole, they exercised as fairly as any class of the constituencies of this country. He hardly ever heard of a case in which a voter employed in a dockyard by the Government had condescended to take a bribe. He hoped the long discussions to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had alluded would not result in demolishing the Bill. It would not be to the credit of the House if the same misfortune befel this venture as that which happened to the Bill of 1860. That Bill did not perish from the crafty fence of the right hon. Member for Bucks or the slashing blows of the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin; but it fell, as it had been said to happen to certain generals, because it was shot from the rear by its own allies. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was fond of classical authorities, and as he sat meditating what might be the fate of his measure, ought to remember with dread the prophecy of the old gipsy at the birth of Horace—

> "Hunc neque dira venena, nec hosticus auferet ensis:
> Garrulus hunc quando consumet cumque loquaces,
> Si sapiat, vitet."

At any rate, unless it were upon the question of the dockyard men, he (Mr. P. W. Martin) would not be found among the obstructives.

SIR FRANCIS CROSSLEY said, his conviction was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was perfectly correct last Session when he said that not more than one-tenth of the working classes had the franchise at present, and the statistics now placed before the House were, owing to the nature of the instructions given for their preparation, not such as to controvert that fact. He was sorry that the Government had not gone further in the way of extending the franchise, and proposed a £10 franchise for counties and a £6 franchise for boroughs. At the same time, considering the great fear entertained by hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, and by some on the Ministerial side, he believed that the Ministry had honestly dealt with the subject, and on that account he would support them; and he believed they would also have the support of the great body of Reformers throughout the country. What was wanted in respect to this question was honesty —a proposition not made for mere popularity, but for the purpose of removing evils admitted on all sides. The Bill of 1832 was not fitted for 1866, as great progress in education, in prudential habits, as shown by the Savings Banks Returns, and in various other respects had been made by the working classes. He felt confident that the working men were as well qualified for the franchise now as the £10 householders were in 1832; and he was satisfied that it was not safe to exclude from the franchise large bodies of men as well fitted to exercise it as those who now possessed it. He trusted that the present Parliament, before it came to an end, would deal with the other question of the distribution of seats. At the same time, he conceived that the Government were quite right in dealing with the franchise in one Bill, and leaving the distribution of seats to be comprehended in another measure. He was of opinion that the good sense of the House would acknowledge that the Bill had been prepared with great care, and that it would settle the question for a long time. The hon. Baronet who had just spoken (Sir James Fergusson), spoke of the Bill as only a step—but if in 1832 a step had not been taken we should have had a revolution. This Bill was another step in the same direction, and in like manner he believed it would preserve the peace and prosperity of the country for many years. If they wanted to destroy the evils of democracy they should admit those who were outside within the pale of the Constitution, and thus give them an interest in maintaining its action and existence.

Mr. CRAWFORD said, he wished to call the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—from whose speech he trusted it was only an accidental omission—to a matter of great interest to his constituents and to the electors in all large cities where business was carried on—he referred to the operation of the seven-mile radius, which acted as a virtual disfranchisement to many persons who carried on their business in London, paying rent and rates, but were not privileged to vote because they did not live within the seven-mile radius. In the last Reform Act that distance was adopted as representing the time it would take a voter residing within such a radius to come up to poll, and also it was directed against non-resident freemen. Now, however, merchants who lived thirty miles off could reach the polling place in as little time as it formerly took them by coach with the distance of seven miles. He also wished to know whether it was intended that copyholders and leaseholders in cities and towns should be kept out of the town register and transferred entirely to the county register. The abolition of the rate-paying clause and the lodger franchise would afford great facilities to compound householders in the City of London, and would meet with general approval. In the middle course which the Government had steered he thought that they would obtain a very great amount of support from those who represented the metropolitan constituencies.

Mr. Serjeant GASELEE, though a little satisfied with the Bill, thought it had a decided blot upon it because it proposed to disfranchise dockyard voters. A petition presented against the return of himself and colleague had been withdrawn, and he believed there was not the slightest pretence for any of the numerous charges brought against them in that petition. He protested against disfranchising this class of voters, men respectable and excellent in their way, while those freemen who engaged in every kind of corrupt practice, and were a disgrace to the country, remained on the register. So far from approving this part of the Bill, he thought that employés in the Post Office, Custom House officers, and other persons in the service of the Government at present disqualified, should be enfranchised.

Mr. DUTTON said, that though he must admit that this was hardly the time for discussing the merits of the Bill, he wished at the earliest opportunity to refer to one or two of its provisions. He agreed with the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just spoken (Mr. Serjeant Gaselee) in what he said about the dockyard men. He was not a dockyard representative, but he happened to know a great many of those men, and he was at a loss to understand why by a measure for admitting so many of the working classes to the franchise, a number of the most intelligent of that class should be disfranchised. He knew that in a letter from Devonport the other day it was suggested that the dockyard men there ought to be disfranchised; but, perhaps, it was thought that they ought to lose their votes because they had returned two Conservatives. He concurred with an hon. Member who preceded him, that as the Government had resolved upon descending from £50 to £14 in counties, and from £10 to £7 in boroughs, it was scarcely worth their while stopping short in their concession to those who were demanding a still further reduction of the franchise. He was not afraid of the working man; but as he read the statistics placed before them that night it appeared to him that, throwing in the large boroughs and the small ones of the counties, and taking the average of all, the working men in those boroughs had 26 per cent of the representation in their hands; and that if the large towns—and it was found there the cry for Reform principally came—were taken by themselves, the working men had 40 or 50 per cent of the representation. As to the fancy franchise, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed that there should be qualification arising from the possession of £50 in a savings bank. Now he could not see to what class of men that qualification could be of any use. No working man could afford to keep £50 in a savings bank; and a tradesman in a small business would not keep such a sum in a savings bank, because he could employ it in his trade at a profit of from 12 to 15 per cent. In practice, the use which would be made of that provision in the Bill would be by persons who would keep £50 in a savings bank with a view of obtaining a vote without complying with the conditions that would otherwise be required for securing the franchise. No doubt the Bill would be well ventilated when it came to the second reading; but his present impression was that the Bill would not be found to be a satisfactory measure of Reform.

SIR HENRY HOARE was of opinion that the Bill was excellent as far as it went. There was no danger to be apprehended from the admission to the franchise of the men to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to give votes. But the House were now rather in the position of persons to whom a carriage was presented without horses. He hoped they would have a positive promise of something to draw this Reform carriage, and that what they were hereafter to get in that way would not be an engine which would pull them off the line. Those who appeared to have prompted this Bill would also seem to have copied from the history of England the example of all leaders of the people who had preceded them. All leaders of the people from the time of Jack Cade to the present day had shown distrust of the landed proprietors. That leader made it one of the grievances of the men of Kent that the free expression of the will of the people in the election of the knights of the shire was interfered with by the proprietors of the land. He thought that one of the great blots in our present electoral system was the inadequate representation of that portion of the population who lived in counties. He and many hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House had given pledges which they meant to redeem; but it was painful to be placed on the horns of a dilemma. They must redeem their promises; but in doing so they might be obliged to go further than they thought safe, or originally intended. Unless there was a distinct pledge on the part of the Government that a measure for the redistribution of seats would be introduced, he should feel bound to vote against this Bill at a future stage.

LORD ROBERT MONTAGU said, he had misgivings in respect to the *paulo-post futuro* legislation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Not content with the proposal now before the House, the right hon. Gentleman had given them notice of his intention to bring in another piece of the Reform Bill at a future time. The prospect which the House had now before them was one of Reform Bills or portions of Bills arising Session after Session. Year after year the country was to be kept in agitation; and Members of that House would never know one year what their constituencies were to be the next. In his county there were five large towns, one of which was a borough. By the proposed reduction in the franchise the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be handing the power over entirely from the rich farmers who now had the right of voting to the small shopkeepers in the towns, who would acquire that right under this Bill. But, not content with reducing the franchise to £14 in counties, the right hon. Gentleman would give leaseholders in boroughs the right to vote not only for the boroughs, but for the county also. It would seem as if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had set himself down to contrive a plan for swamping the agricultural constituencies. He, for one, protested against the electoral power in counties being practically taken from the large, influential, and honest class who now possessed it. Did the Chancellor of the Exchequer suppose that, by lowering the franchise, he would increase the check which the House of Commons now exercised on the administration of affairs? On many occasions—such as those of the insurrection in Poland, the dispute about the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and the war between Italy and Austria—the class to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to give political power would have driven this country to war if their demands had been attended to. Did the right hon. Gentleman think that he would check bribery by lowering the franchise in boroughs? They did not know the whole scheme which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was going to propose. They had only a small part of it. If he was going to build a house and went to an architect for a plan, would he think it enough if the architect said to him he could only give him a picture of the belfry? They certainly required to see the whole scheme before they could judge of it. They could not even see the foundations; this only could be said for certain—they would never be free from the masons and bricklayers, and the constant pestering of the architect's little bill. That was one of his objections. Another was the entire swamping of the agricultural class. If the Bill had proposed a re-distribution of seats, that objection might have been partially remedied, because, by uniting certain towns, the Chancellor of the Exchequer might, to some extent, have cured the evil; but at present the towns which had not representatives of their own would swamp the agricultural constituency.

Mr. HANBURY desired to say, as the representative of a large constituency (Middlesex), that he thought the Bill would meet all the requirements of those whom he represented. He was not at all afraid of the working man. He had for the last twenty-five years employed a great number of working men, and he could say from his experience of them that a more respectable or intelligent class did not exist. He did not think their object was to advance the democratic movement or to impair the Constitution, for the advantages which they derived from that Constitution were equal to those derived from it by the middle and upper class. He was rather surprised at the objection which had been stated by some, that the Bill was not a double-barrelled one. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proved beyond a doubt that time would not allow of such a measure being brought forward. If the Bill had been more comprehensive they all knew what the result would have been. Reserving his opinion on the details, he could not help expressing at once his general approval of the Bill.

Mr. LAING said, although the time had not arrived for pronouncing a definite opinion upon the whole important question submitted to them this evening, it might not be useless to express a view upon it so far as it involved a clear definite issue on which, no doubt, all had made up their minds. That issue was, the question of re-opening the great Reform settlement of 1832 by a measure which, on the face of it, was not a complete and final settlement. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made, to his mind, one of the most conclusive speeches he ever heard; but the conclusion was entirely different from that which he meant to convey; for it brought home to his (Mr. Laing's) mind most forcibly the impolicy of the decision to which the Government had come in introducing a measure at that period of the Session, when there was not time to give full and fair consideration to the whole subject. The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that the Returns had been procured so late that they were only in a complete printed form even in his own hands on the Friday evening which preceded the introduction of the Bill. He could easily believe it, for if those Returns had been in the possession of the Government in sufficient time for deliberate examination, he felt confident they would have led them to the very opposite conclusion to that to which they had come. If one thing was shown more than another by these very admirable and interesting Returns, it was that the case was much stronger than had been supposed for a redistribution of seats, and very much weaker for the extension of the franchise downward. He stated that on the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. What did the right hon. Gentleman say in 1860 in defending the Reform Bill then brought forward by the Government of which he was a Member? He said he estimated that, of the 480,000 now constituting the borough constituency, about one-ninth belonged to the labouring class; most of them being freemen or scot and lot voters, and here and there a £10 occupier. Well, then, the conviction in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman in 1860, under which he supported the Bill of that year, and gave those pledges which had been adverted to this evening, was a conviction that the £10 franchise of 1832 admitted the smallest — an infinitesimal —fraction of the working class to the privilege of the representation. Now, what did these remarkable Returns disclose? They showed that in bringing forward the Bill of 1860 the Government based it on a calculation which was erroneous to an extent of very nearly 300 per cent. They based their Bill on the calculation that the total number of the working classes included in the enfranchised class was under 50,000, and that these were almost entirely freemen and old scot and lot voters; but the fact now disclosed was that there were 136,000, of whom no less than 108,000 were £10 householders, of which class the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1860 said only single voters would be found here and there. Was not that a material element in judging of the pledges which public men had given on a question of this sort? Surely, the re-opening of so great a settlement as that of 1832—one of the very gravest questions affecting the interests and future history of the country—ought to be made, to say the least, on something approaching to accurate information. The only valid reason he ever heard for re-opening that settlement was the belief that it was too rigid and exclusive, and did not admit the working classes to anything approaching a fair share in the representation. Now, by these Returns a conclusive answer was given to both these questions. It was shown, on the one hand, that the proportion of the working class, instead of being so insignificant as had been supposed, amounted to 26 per cent of the whole number of the borough electors; and it was shown moreover that, so far from the system being rigid and unelastic, the number was steadily and rapidly on the increase. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that the number of the working class admitted under the £10 franchise in different towns was very unequal. No doubt that was the case; but a careful analysis of the Returns presented would show that it was just in the growing towns, in the great seats of industry, or in the new and rising towns springing into importance, that the increase of the number of working men admitted to the £10 constituency was most marked. Some instances had been quoted where the number of working men in manufacturing constituencies was comparatively small; but if they took a number of the larger cities, the great seats of industry, they would find that in the metropolitan district—Southwark, for instance—the proportion of working men was as high as one-half; in Manchester it was 27 per cent; in Salford, 34 per cent; in Sheffield, 26 per cent; in Wolverhampton, 24 per cent; in Nottingham and Leicester, 40 per cent. They would also find that the proportion in which the working men shared the franchise was peculiarly large in those towns which had made a rapid progress during the last few years, though not seats of manufacturing industry—in Brighton, Cheltenham, and Southampton. In those towns the proportion of working men had now gone up to from 30 to 50 per cent of the entire constituency. That brought him to the great fallacy into which he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer fell in estimating the number of working men who had acquired the franchise under the existing Act. He said that the proportion of the whole was not greater than it was in 1832. But why was that? Because in 1832 they had a large body of freemen, scot and lot and old voters, who by the Bill of that year were placed in a state of suspended animation. They had died out; but their place was more than taken by a new class, who had shown themselves the *élite* of the working class by rising so much above the general level of their class as to occupy comfortable and respectable houses at a rental of £10. That was a growing franchise; and if things remained as they were, seeing the growth of wealth, prosperity, and the advance of wages, there would be a steady increase both in the absolute numbers and proportions of the working men admitted to the franchise. He did say this very materially weakened the force of the argument adduced for re-opening the great settlement of 1832 on the ground that the working men were almost entirely excluded. But, as regards the re-distribution of seats, how did the case stand? Was it possible there could be a stronger case than that disclosed by the Parliamentary Returns? He found a number of boroughs—forty—in which the population was under 7,000; the number of electors averaging 400 in each; those forty boroughs, therefore, with a united population of 200,000, and an aggregate number of voters of 16,000, returned sixty-four Members to that House. Contrast that with the single county of Lanarkshire, with a population of 530,000 by the last Census—more than that of the whole forty boroughs united—and returning only one Member to Parliament. Dundee, with a population of 78,000. [An hon. MEMBER: 91,000.] True, the increase had taken place since the Census Returns. Dundee, the capital of a staple branch of industry, with a population approaching 100,000, had a single Member—exactly 1-64th of the representation enjoyed by the forty small boroughs, whose united population only doubled that of Dundee. Glasgow, again, with a population of about half a million, and more than 20,000 electors, only returned two representatives as against the sixty-four returned by these small boroughs. But the case for re-distribution became even stronger if the table of boroughs was examined with an eye to the increase or diminution which had taken place in the population of the large towns and small boroughs since 1832. In eighteen boroughs, returning 23 Members, the population had actually diminished since that date, whilst in the eleven largest manufacturing towns in the North, the number of £10 householders in the same period had increased by 178 per cent. The contrast was not merely remarkable as regarded the population relatively to the Members; but while, on the one side, they had a set of small boroughs stationary or declining in population, on the other they had a number of large towns rising rapidly into importance, with electors in each of those towns increasing more rapidly than the electors in all the small boroughs put together; and yet they commanded no adequate proportion of the representation. Take a single instance. He selected it not from any invidious motives, but because it was the smallest borough returning two Members. Honiton in 1831 had a population of 3,509; this was now 3,301; a decrease of 208 had taken place in the number of electors, and there were now only 348 on the register. Yet Honiton had as great a voice in the Government of the country as Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Dublin. Anomalies like these could only be defended on one ground—that they formed part of a great settlement which had worked well, and which it was inexpedient to disturb. Re-open that settlement and there was not a vestige of an argument that could be urged for retaining the existing distribution of seats. The principle of such a re-distribution had been recognized in the various Reform Bills from time to time brought forward. It was recognized in the great Reform Bill of 1832; in the Bill of 1854, brought forward by Lord Russell; in the Bill of 1859 and again in 1860 the distribution of seats was recognized as an obvious and necessary part of any settlement of this great question. That it forms an essential part of any settlement must be apparent to every one, because how are we to arrive at the knowledge of whether it is or is not expedient to make a large extension of the borough or county franchise, unless we know the whole conditions of the problem to be put forward? The real practical question in any Reform is not whether men who live in £7 or £8 houses are to return the Members, but how to contrive such a balance of political power as shall fairly represent all the different interests of the country; above all, as shall strike a fair balance between the Progressive and Conservative elements of the country. Previous to 1832 the Conservative element so far preponderated that the country was brought into great danger; it was impossible to effect salutary changes in time, and, consequently, matters were brought to a point where a choice had to be made between the alternative of Reform or revolution. But since the Reform Act of 1832, could any one fairly and justly say that the Conservative element had unduly preponderated in the political representation of this country? Had not abuse after abuse been reformed until at last we had no practical abuses left? ["Oh!"] He repeated that deliberately. Improvement had been carried to such an extent that it was no longer possible for the public opinion of the country to declare, "There is something which ought to be done, and the Parliament of the country will not do it." There were no longer any great questions upon which the opinion of the country was not in entire accordance with the opinions represented in that House. The existing system worked admirably, yet Parliament was asked to re-open most exciting questions. It was all very well for those who belonged to the school of the hon. Member for Birmingham—for those who instead of admiring the harmonious working of our existing system regard it as an oppressive monopoly, injurious to the interests and insulting to the feelings of the great masses of the community—it was very well for them to ask that questions might be re-opened which would excite agitation without settling anything. And if he agreed with them in the end, of course he would agree with them as to the means. But dissenting from them in their ends, he dissented from them entirely as to the means; they stood on opposite sides of the wall, and, as a defender of the fortress, he did not feel in the least degree disposed to assist them in inserting the point of the lever which was intended to topple down the battlements upon his own head. To those who were satisfied with the working of the Reform Bill, and who thought the existing political system admirably adjusted, it was all-important, when a proposition was made to re-open that settlement, that they should see as a whole what was proposed with regard to re-distribution. Who could doubt that if, this year, such an extension of the suffrage as was now demanded were conceded, an application would be made next year for a re-distribution of seats based upon the utter disproportion of the representative power enjoyed by the large cities and the small boroughs which he had already described to the House? The balance between the Conservative and Progressive elements in the country depended very much upon the mode in which the seats taken from the small boroughs were applied. In the three settlements proposed in 1854, 1859, and 1860, it was proposed to give to the counties most of the seats taken from the small boroughs. That in itself, of course, was a Conservative proposal calculated to give the Conservative element a fair counterpoise for what they might lose by the disfranchisement of the small boroughs or the lowering of the suffrage. But if changes were all in one direction to strengthen the Democratic or Progressive element and to weaken the Conservative element, did they not risk the entire disturbance of that balance which had worked so well, and the introduction of further changes such as they might not altogether like to contemplate? Serious questions were involved in a departure from the £10 franchise established by the Reform Bill of 1832. What prospect was there of being able to draw a line anywhere else, or of taking a stand upon any other figure if once they departed from that which gave them a precedent and a principle? It afforded a precedent, because it formed part of a great historical settlement which had worked well and done admirable service for thirty-five years. It constituted a principle, and one recognized throughout the whole of our English Constitution, that the franchise was a trust and not a right. Once admit the franchise to be a right, and limit it as you might, it landed you in universal suffrage, subject only to limitations, such as those of pauperism, crime, and similar distinctions. But hold it to be a trust, and then it followed that it was a trust to be exercised by that portion of the community which had reached a certain standing and acquired a certain stake in the country, and whose ability to act upon solid sense and reflection rather than from inconsiderate impulse might be presumed upon. Now, the £10 franchise drew that line in a general way very clearly and very distinctly. Taking the number of houses inhabited by male occupiers, they would be found to be about 1,300,000 in number. Of these, 639,000 male occupiers lived in houses of the value of £10 and upwards, so that, taken broadly, it might be said that the upper half of the inhabited houses conferred the franchise, and its owners held it as trustees for the remainder. But once descend materially below the £10 level—go down to £7 as proposed by the Government measure—and on what principle could they rely to meet the demand which would at once be raised that they should go down to £6? That demand would be made, and forcibly made, by those who advocated these measures out of doors. No such distinction existed between the £7 and £6 qualifications as between the £10 and those below £10. It could not be said the £6 householder had less real stake in the country than the £7, or if any difference at all existed it was quite evanescent. At any rate the only argument brought against it by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was that he recoiled from the consequences. The figures presented to the House showed that a £6 franchise would give more than one-half the borough representation to the working classes, and the right hon. Gentleman frankly admitted that though he might not personally, yet the majority of the House would recoil from such a measure. But if the working classes at present formed 26 per cent of the voters under an elastic franchise which yet permitted their increase, was the difference between that proportion and one-half so very great that they were to recoil with horror at the one and be in such hot haste with the other that they could not allow themselves time for deliberation? But there was another consideration. The object was to admit the intellect of the working classes, as it was found among the artizans and mechanics in the larger towns. It was proposed to do so by simply lowering the household franchise over the whole area of borough constituencies, with the fact staring them in the face on these Returns that in three out of four boroughs they could not attain their object, but would simply lower and deteriorate the constituency. If they looked through the Returns, they would find that, apart from the large towns in which an intelligent and highly-paid working class had obtained the £10 franchise, the places that were most distinguished for the great proportion of working men were the places which were not favourably distinguished in the annals of elections. Were he in a lecture-room, he would draw a diagram which might be called a chart of corruption. On one side would be the boroughs, instrinsically the most expensive and most productive of petitions to the House. Beside these would be that class in which were most of those freemen and scot and lot voters not coming in the category of artizans of intelligence. He would mention, as types of this latter class, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Canterbury, Lincoln, Maidstone, Gloucester, and Beverley. He could prolong the list, but merely mentioned a few typical instances. They would find that a large extent of working men's franchise and enormous election expenses went together. It must be a matter of notoriety to every Member of that House that if in the ordinary run of small or middle-sized boroughs they were to extend the franchise lower than at present they would increase the expense of the elections. He asked any Gentleman if he were asked to guarantee the expenses of a contested election for one of those boroughs of 20,000 or 30,000 inhabitants, would they not fix a larger amount for the guarantee if the franchise were £6 than if it were £10? Then the moral aspect of the question must be considered. One great object of lowering the franchise was to hold out to the working classes a motive for good conduct and provident habits. The existing franchise did this to a considerable extent. It was evident that the present working class £10 householders were superior men of their class. But if the franchise were indiscriminately lowered, others of not so high a character would be admitted to the privilege—men who had not been so provident and careful to lodge their families in comfortable houses. He thought there was a great advantage in extending the constituencies by admitting what were called the "fancy franchises." Some of the fancy franchises, if made large enough, would admit a number of the working classes, which would be an unmixed good. What could produce a more excellent moral effect than the savings bank franchise, if it were low enough? And why should not the franchise be extended to other classes of property? Why should not the man who possessed £30 or £40 of realized property of any sort in a bank or any other form have a vote? Why should not the man who has bought a house of his own of the value of £6 a year have a vote, while his neighbour who only rented a house at £7 was so privileged? If the moral elevation of the working classes were aimed at, the household franchise should not be lowered indiscriminately; it should be kept at a high standard, and the franchise should be otherwise extended by plans based upon intelligence and providence. He had thought it advisable to express the opinions he had because he believed they were held by many of the moderate Liberal party, and he felt bound to express his deep disappointment that the Government had resolved to deal with the matter piecemeal, and not by one comprehensive measure. He was of opinion that, in bringing forward a measure of such grave importance as the one under consideration, which proposed to disturb a settlement that had lasted so long and worked so well, more deliberation was needed, and more grounds should have been shown than were shown by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in support of it. What, after all, were the grounds upon which the House was asked to support the Bill? Simply pledges, given some years ago. For himself, he had given no pledge on entering Parliament. but a promise generally to support Lord Palmerston's administration. And he did not feel disposed to violate that pledge, either in the letter or the spirit. Would Lord Palmerston have consented, in the face of the Returns recently presented to the House, to introduce a measure proposing to lower the franchise without re-distributing the seats, to re-open an agitation the issue of which none could foresee, to offer them a Reform Bill which was not final and contained no element of security?

Captain GROSVENOR and Mr. BAINES rose to address the House; after considerable confusion and cries of "Order!" Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER called on Mr. BAINES.

MR. BAINES said, he was sorry to interpose between the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Captain Grosvenor) and the House, especially as he was a new Member, but after the intimation he had repeatedly received from the Chair it would not have been proper for him (Mr. Baines) to forego his claim. He had taken a lively interest in the question of Reform, but would detain the House only a few minutes. It appeared to him that the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing) had proved too much. He had undertaken the task of proving that no practical grievance existed in this country such as to call for any amendment of the existing electoral system; yet the latter half of his speech consisted of an exposure of the absurd and glaring anomalies attaching to the present distribution of seats, and for the redress of which he contended. Now, this was surely a practical grievance, and sufficiently refuted the former portion of his speech. It should, however, be remembered that the same thing had been said years ago by a much greater man. In 1830 the Duke of Wellington affirmed that no conceivable form of representation could exceed in excellence and adaptation to its ends the then existing system; while the Reform Act of 1832 was declared by the Conservative party in Parliament to be nothing less than a revolution, and calculated to subject the intelligence and education of the country to the ascendancy of the uneducated classes and the mobocracy of the country. These prognostications had been signally falsified; for the Reform Bill was passed, and the House had just heard from the hon. Member for Wick, as well as on a former occasion from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), that Parliament since 1832 had been a perfect model of a legislative body. Now he freely admitted that many of the practical grievances which existed before that date had been removed; but why had they been removed? Simply in consequence of that very infusion into the House of the popular element which Conservative Members declared at the time to be a revolution. He believed that there were good grounds for expecting a further measure in the same direction to be attended with the like beneficial effects; and it surely was a practical grievance that there should be such anomalies as the hon. Member for Wick had described, and that the proportion of the working classes in the borough constituencies should have sunk from 31 to only 21 per cent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated the proportion, indeed, at first, at 26 per cent, but declared himself willing subsequently to set it down at 21 per cent; and considering the extraordinary material, moral, and intellectual advance which had been achieved in this country during the past thirty years—an advance, perhaps unprecedented in the history of the world—it was surely a grievance that the proportion of the working classes in the borough constituencies should be only two-thirds of what it was in 1832. He did not rise for the purpose of entering into the general argument of the question, but to express his belief that on the side of the House on which he sat there was a considerable measure of satisfaction with the Bill. [*Laughter.*] He was aware that that feeling was not universal among the Gentlemen around him: but as he had had the opportunity of conversing on the subject with hon. Members whose real attachment to Reform he confided in, he could assure hon. Gentlemen opposite of the existence of that considerable measure of satisfaction. For his own part, he did not regard the Bill as a perfect one. It was for the purpose of pointing out the parts of the Bill which were imperfect—although in a sense opposite to that indicated by the hon. Member for Wick—that he had risen. In the first place, he would ask, Were the calculations with which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had favoured them strictly accurate, with regard to the proportion of the working classes that now possessed the franchise compared with the proportion that would possess it in the event of the passing of his Bill? Hon. Members would have an opportunity of testing the accuracy of his figures between the present time and the time when the matter would come on again for discussion after the holydays. The Chancellor of the Exchequer computed that the number of the working classes in boroughs who possessed the franchise at the present time was 126,000; but the accuracy of that computation was to be doubted, on the ground that it comprised under the head of "working classes" several important classes and individuals who, although they might in one sense be working men, should in truth be classed in a higher rank. He was informed that the Poor Law Board in preparing the Returns had expressly directed that small tradesmen should be included under the head of the "working classes," when their shops were managed by their wives. He maintained that these persons, although working men, were something more, inasmuch as they must have some capital with which to stock their shops and carry on business, and must keep books and give credit. Therefore a considerable proportion of the numbers placed under the head of the working classes should be struck off. He might instance in support of his argument that in the borough of Wakefield the working classes only numbered eighty voters; but when the Poor Law Board gave directions that the small tradesmen, or those whose families kept shops, should be included under that head, the numbers were at once raised to 120, or 50 per cent. Again, he had been assured by one of the representatives of the borough of Oldham, that of the 315 voters of that borough returned under the head of the working classes, not more than one-half could strictly be said to belong to that class. Therefore, instead of the Chancellor of the Exchequer taking the number of the working classes to be 126,000, he would have been far beyond the mark in putting it at 100,000; and even that number would include many of the old freemen and scot and lot voters. Then the right hon. Gentleman was also wrong in assigning to the working classes the whole of the 60,000 compound householders; whereas, in point of fact, a large proportion of that number consisted of small tradesmen. The right hon. Gentleman further classed all those whom he intended to enfranchise by going down to £7 among the working classes; but, in reality, a large proportion would consist of clerks, retired tradesmen, &c. His belief was, that instead of the number of the working classes in the future constituencies being 330,000, it would not exceed 250,000. They were told that, in the event of the Bill passing, they would revolutionize the country. But what were the facts? Out of a total adult male population of 5,180,000, 1,300,000, or one in four, would be enfranchised, the great bulk of the unenfranchised remainder consisting of the working classes; and, although the working classes were three times as numerous as the upper classes, they would only have one-fourth of the total elective franchise. Notwithstanding those miscalculations, he admitted that there was much that was excellent in the Bill. As far as the extension of the franchise went he entirely approved of it, though he did not see upon what grounds the Government, on the question of the county franchise, had receded from the position taken up by hon. Gentlemen opposite and by the hon. Member for Surrey with respect to it. Nor did he believe that the £6 borough franchise, which he had himself proposed, would be too great an extension. Of course he approved of the lodger franchise, of the savings bank franchise, and of the abolition of the rate-paying clause; and, although the measure was opposed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, he believed the Bill would prove in its effects a really Conservative measure.

Captain GROSVENOR said, he must express his regret that his first rising to address that House had given rise to a proceeding so much out of order as to call for a remonstrance from the leader of the Opposition, and he begged to apologize both to the hon. Gentleman in the Chair, and to the hon. Member who just sat down for any discourtesy of which he might unwittingly have been guilty. He asked for a large amount of that indulgence usually accorded to hon. Members while they committed that first fault which public school tradition allowed to go unpunished. He felt called upon to make a few observations on the question before them as the representative of one of those great constituencies which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had characterized, in the course of his opening statement, as notorious for their attachment to questions of a liberal tendency. In the course of the month of February he had listened with great interest to the preliminary discussions which this subject underwent, and he then derived an impression which had been rather strengthened than otherwise by what had fallen from various speakers to-night—it struck him that there were many hon. Members in that House who did not correctly appreciate the position which this question occupied before the country, or the difficulties which had encompassed those who had taken upon themselves the arduous duty of attempting to frame a Reform Bill, so that it should raise the people instead of flooring the Ministry, that it should admit a certain proportion of the working classes to the privileges of electoral power, instead of admitting right hon. Gentlemen opposite to official residences in Downing Street and Whitehall. Hon. Gentlemen were aware that this question had been before Parliament in some definite form or other for fourteen years; but they did not seem so universally to appreciate the fact that in the course of that time its position before the country had materially changed. Fourteen, or twelve, or even ten years ago discussions upon it were confined more or less to the statesmen on either side; but in the period which had intervened, and which had been marked by such gigantic strides in moral, material, and educational progress, the semi-aristocratic study of politics had become the study of the nation, and the claims of the unenfranchised had been discussed by the unenfranchised themselves in a moderate and intelligent, but in a firm and determined spirit. It had been a favourite argument with hon. Gentlemen opposite in their efforts to get rid of this vital question—and he was afraid the same argument might at times have been whispered by hon. Members on the Ministerial side—that there was no agitation for it in the country. But that was saying a great deal too much. There was agitation, and the whole strength and colour of the argument was derived from the fact that it was of a peaceful and orderly character. And he might add, that for this the country was as much indebted to the good sense of the people as to the wisdom and statesmanship of their rulers. Would that House like to wait until the character of this agitation changed? While Lord Palmerston was alive, and especially during the years when he presided with such able authority over the last "Long Parliament," there were reasons personal and political why the people should acquiesce in a temporary postponement of their claims. But now that it had pleased Providence to remove that great man, now that no danger from our foreign relations was to be apprehended; above all, now that our Sovereign had called into existence a Government pledged beyond its predecessors to the popular cause, and comprising men upon whom the people reckoned, and reckoned justly, as their staunch allies, it would be highly impolitic, it would be highly dangerous to trifle any longer with those claims. There were two ways in which the Government might have trifled —they might have trifled by attempting to elude the subject altogether, or by bringing in such a measure as could not, under existing circumstances, and in the face of existing combinations, by any possibility become law. No doubt the arguments which he had heard urged in that House against piecemeal legislation, if taken in the abstract, were of some force. No doubt a comprehensive measure, dealing largely and uniformly with this subject, in all its branches, would commend itself to the mind as symmetrical and complete. But would it pass, and if not, what then? Why, it was that very affection for abstract principles, that very hankering after that which was symmetrical and that which was complete, that we owed this long disappointment so deeply unsatisfactory to the people. What the people required from those they trusted was a proof that that trust was mutual. They would recognize no such proof in any artistically designed system for perfect representation which could not possibly become law. They would, he was convinced, recognize such a proof in the measure which had been brought before the House to-day; which, although it might not wholly satisfy their political aspirations—and probably it was not right that it should—at any rate went far to establish the principle that they were not doomed for ever to political exclusion. He was not going to assert—it would argue great presumption and great credulity if he did—that the measure which they had heard propounded to-day was the best measure in its present state which could have been devised even under existing circumstances, but even in its present state it would have his cordial support, because it fairly embraced the chief points of a long promised concession. And he would very respectfully remind the House that whatever differences of opinion might exist among its Members as to the advantages of this or that particular scheme of Reform, there was no public object which it could be called upon to promote more important in its nature, more imperative in its necessity, than the re-establishment of that confidence between the people and their rulers which had of necessity been somewhat impaired by a long course of promises lightly broken, and of pledges wholly unredeemed.

Mr. HORSMAN: Sir, there are two subjects of sincere congratulation which will come home to hon. Members; the first is that we have at last the long expected Government Reform Bill before us, and the next is that it is so extremely satisfactory to the advanced Reformers. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines), as representing those advanced Reformers, is now in a very happy state of mind because the Government has reproduced his single-barrelled Bill, which would not go off last year, respecting the borough franchise, only considerably cut down; and he accepts it, if I understand him rightly, according to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer who proposed it, as a settlement of the question. But I must remind my hon. Friend, in passing, that he very much misunderstood the arguments of the speech of the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing). He did not say in that able and argumentative speech that there were no anomalies in our electoral system; but what he said was this—that there were much greater anomalies in the state of the representation with regard to the boroughs than in the suffrage; that you are beginning at the wrong end, that you are dealing with the smaller anomalies first, and therefore necessitating a new agitation, further demands, and greater changes. But I do not intend to enter into the provisions of the measure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the commencement of his address, reminded us of that paragraph in the Queen's Speech which referred to this subject. He told us that this was no isolated measure, but one of an historical character, associated with the memories and the mishaps, with the obligations and the defalcations of former Cabinets, with Royal Speeches which mocked the nation, and Parliamentary pledges which played with constituents; and he made this reference to the past partly as an apology for the Government again embarking on an enterprize on which so much failure and discredit had been incurred, and partly as a reproach, to induce the House of Commons to redeem public character by the fulfilment of obligations too long evaded, and the discharge of duties too long and too disgracefully delayed. I have no intention of following my right hon. Friend through his statistics, because this question is in reality not a statistical, but a constitutional one. We are not dealing to-day with details, but with principles. You have first of all to discover and establish the principle on which you are to legislate, and the statistics can then be rendered serviceable as auxiliaries to fill up the details—I prefer dealing with that portion of the speech of my right hon. Friend in which he vindicated the policy of the Government in taking up this question at all. My right hon. Friend invited us to survey the situation, and I willingly accept his invitation. For the retrospect is most valuable. It is valuable as enabling us to take a comprehensive view of the origin and character of this measure, and form our judgment upon it—whether it be a wise and well-considered proposal, free from the vices of its abortive predecessors, commending itself to the House and to the country as an honest and intelligible effort to settle a perplexing question, or whether, when divested of the rhetorical embellishment and dazzling ingenuities of my right hon. Friend, and displayed in its own naked and incongruous proportions, it be anything else but another bid for power, another promise made only to be broken—another hope raised only to be dashed, another in the long series of political frauds and Parliamentary juggles so transparent that instead of a crowning honour and success it is the culmination of weakness, incapacity, and failure. My right hon. Friend began by a reference to the past, but of what does that history remind us? Five times have the lips of Royalty been stained by promises which have not been kept—five times has the honour of Ministers been pledged to what they have not performed. That is very true. It is very sad, and it is very discreditable; but to whom? Not to the House of Commons which was never a party to those pledges, and is not bound to whitewash the character of Ministers, whose proceedings when an opportunity offered itself it invariably disapproved. But when my right hon. Friend told us that five Cabinets had been committed to Reform, surely he omitted to explain that four of those five, although nominally different administrations, were identically the same Ministers with a new shuffle of places, and that Lord Russell was a prominent Member of every liberal Cabinet that introduced a Reform Bill—that it was he, and he only, who insisted upon the introduction of those Bills which were notoriously introduced less to meet the exigencies of the nation than to meet the exigencies of a particular Minister, and that every one of those Bills was opposed to the opinion of Parliament and to the sense of the nation. But that makes a very great difference—that is an important fact: because when the authority of history is invoked to influence and to guide us in this matter, there is a vast difference between one individual Minister four times insisting upon the necessity of a change, and four distinct and separate Ministers approaching the question from opposite points of view and concurring in the same necessity. But my right hon. Friend said it was not the Ministers who were responsible, but that the responsibility rested upon Parliament for originating and directing the action of the Government. How did he prove that? He said that in 1851 there was a discussion and a division on the Bill of the hon. Member for Surrey (Mr. Locke King), that in that division Lord Russell was defeated, and that it was in consequence of that defeat that the House of Commons forced upon the Government the necessity of legislating in this direction. My right hon. Friend argued from this that it was the House of Commons and not the Ministry who was responsible for everything which has since occurred. At any rate, I shall not be corrected when I say that my right hon. Friend attributed the origin of all this legislation on the part of the Ministry to the vote on the Motion of the hon. Member for Surrey, in which the Government were defeated, Lord Russell being the only speaker in the debate who opposed the Bill. This, according to my right hon. Friend, was the foundation for all the subsequent proceedings of the Government, and if I can show you that the foundation is rotten, all the superstructure which my right hon. Friend has built upon it comes crumbling to the ground. Let me give my right hon. Friend one piece of advice, and that is, that when he in future takes any statement of facts as the foundation of a speech or line of policy, he should verify these facts for himself, and not accept his information second-hand from any clerk or secretary. That course has to-night led my right hon. Friend into one of the most serious blunders that I have ever seen committed in this House by any prominent man. The original mistake, I am certain, is not his own, and I am equally convinced that he will regret having been led into error by trusting to information supplied to him by another. What are the facts? It was in the debate on the introduction of the Bill by the hon. Member for East Surrey that Lord Russell spoke. But in what sense? So far from allowing the House to originate the policy of the Government, he rose and said that it was twenty years since the Reform Act of 1832 was passed, and he offered to give a pledge, if the hon. Member for East Surrey would withdraw his Motion, that the Government should introduce a Reform Bill in the following year. But the House and the hon. Member for East Surrey were not satisfied with the assurance, and they divided against the Government. The House was a very thin one, consisting of only 156 Members, and on the division being taken the Government was defeated, the "Ayes" numbering 100, and the "Noes" 52. That division took place on the Motion for the introduction of the Bill—a Motion which is usually assented to as a matter of form. But after the hon. Member for East Surrey had defeated the Government, the House of Commons perceived that the question was a serious one; and, consequently, on the second reading, in a larger House, there was another division, when the numbers in favour of the second reading were 83, those by whom it was rejected being 299. [Mr. LOCKE KING interposed a remark, which was not heard.] I beg my hon. Friend's pardon. He is quite mistaken, for I have referred to the debate since the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The promise made by Lord Russell was given on the introduction of the Bill. Lord Russell was defeated in the division in a thin House; and, on the Motion for the second reading, my hon. Friend's Bill was rejected by a majority of more than three to one. This, then, was the event which, according to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, showed that the House of Commons was determined to have a Reform Bill, which compelled the Government to introduce a Reform Bill afterwards, and was the foundation of all subsequent legislation. I was not, I must confess, at all surprised that my right hon. Friend passed over the Bill of 1852 without even a cursory allusion to the Bill which in 1852 was brought in in consequence of Lord Russell's pledge, for he perhaps remembered that by a curious accident we are possessed of the secret history of that measure. The House may recollect that Earl Grey obtained Her Majesty's permission to state what had occurred in the Cabinet with respect to that Bill, and his statement brought to light this interesting fact, that in the reformed Cabinet of 1852 there was only one Reformer. Earl Grey bethinks himself to say in order to be safe that there might possibly have been a second or even a third, but although he was certain that three was the maximum, he adhered to his belief that the reforming element in the Cabinet was represented by an unit. He went on to say that Lord Russell had pledged himself without the slightest consideration for his Colleagues, and without their knowledge or assent. They were very angry, but although they disapproved the pledge, they showed a consideration for Earl Russell which he had not shown for them, and determined to assist him to redeem it. The Bill was accordingly introduced, amid a flourish of Reform trumpets, as a fresh proof of the conscientious liberality of an united Cabinet who thought of nothing but their country. But the curious may ask how was it that a whole Cabinet of dissentients should stoop to accept a Bill which they disapproved and dreaded? On that subject, also, Earl Grey is painfully communicative. As he is only permitted to speak for himself, he leaves us to draw our own inference about his Colleagues, but the reason he gives for himself is this. He says that when the Bill was introduced the Cabinet was doomed, its days were numbered, it was *in extremis* and that therefore the introduction of the Bill could do no harm because it was quite impossible it could pass into law. I wish the House to bear in mind the history of this Bill of 1852 as given by a most unimpeachable authority, because this was the starting-point of the new agitation which Earl Russell has kept alive ever since; it gives the key to that disgraceful and otherwise incredible Reform history of the last fourteen years, and it shows that a series of Bills brought in by a succession of Cabinets were in effect the work of one and the same

Minister, and tending to one and the same end. I need not detain the House by going through the history of the other Bills. No Minister has received permission to give us the secret history of the Bill of 1854; but we know that it also was pressed on a reluctant Cabinet and a reluctant House of Commons, in the teeth of remonstrances and protests on the eve of the Crimean War. But the Parliament would not have it, the country would not have it, and the advanced Reformers unanimously condemned it as being utterly insufficient and worthless. Then came the Queen's Speech of 1857, delivered in the first week of December; but although the Government were not turned out till the end of the following February, Lord Palmerston confessed that the Bill had not even been prepared. Then came the Bill of the Derby Cabinet in 1859, which rather took the Liberal party by surprise, and was nearer legislation than we have been since that time. And, Sir, it is only fair to say that, regarding the Bill itself, it was universally admitted to be a better Bill than any Lord Russell's Cabinet ever produced. But while we are now considering the past as a guide to the future, I feel bound to speak of that Bill with the same freedom that I have spoken of those that have emanated from this side of the House; and the real mistake and blot of that Bill was not merely that the country did not want it, but that it was notoriously against the traditions, and the feelings of the great majority of the party by which it was introduced; and therefore it was that the country looked calmly on while by an abstract Resolution a penalty was inflicted upon it which was prompt, signal, and has been enduring. I do not think that it is for the interest of those who introduced the Bill to recall it too much to the recollection of the House. The opinion of the country upon it may be summed up in a single sentence. The country did feel, whether rightly or wrongly, that the opponents of the Reform Bill on that occasion put Reform up to auction, and that they had no right to complain if it was knocked down to the highest bidder. Then came the Bill of 1860, to which my right hon. Friend referred to-night, and as to which the country, sensibly alarmed, felt that it had no escape; for there was an unexampled conjuncture of political leaders in its favour. Lord Palmerston, Lord Derby, Lord Russell, and the right hon. Member for Bucks were all so deeply committed to the Bill that it passed the second reading almost without debate. Sir, the nation was in despair; but even then its true feeling made itself known throughout the House, and broke out in a manner too strong to be resisted. The House of Commons rebelled against its leaders. Abandoned by the front Benches, the rank and file stood true to their defences, and cheered on, and, supported by the public out of doors, they bombarded the Treasury Bench with such inexhaustible rounds of rhetoric, that they fairly wore out the Government and laughed the Bill out of the House. And so the question remained to the close of the last Session. But the history of these Bills would be incomplete unless we borrowed an illustration which has been very opportunely furnished by the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). We have described the acts of the Ministry, but the hon. Member has given us a portrait of the actors; and in reference to the Bill of 1860, in a letter written in September, in which he declined an invitation to a Reform banquet at Glasgow, after an allusion to Lord Palmerston which I need not read, he gave this opinion of Lord Palmerston's Colleagues, who are now sitting on that Bench. He said—

> "His Colleagues preferred their places to their honour as public men, and they consented to the greatest political fraud of our time rather than leave the Treasury Bench even for a season."

Well, Sir, that is rather strong language, it is a specimen of what is termed the hon. Member for Birmingham's "pure Saxon." But is it true—that is to say, is it true in the sense in which he meant it to be construed as contrasting his conduct with that of the Ministers he denounced? Why, Sir, if I had made a complaint that Ministers had remained in place after they had dropped their Bill, that would have been consistent in me, because I have always expressed my opinion that when they gave up the Bill which brought them into office they ought also to have relinquished office. But that was not the opinion of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and with the circumstances so fresh in my mind I could hardly believe my eyes when I read his letter. For what were the circumstances? On the day when Lord John Russell was about to withdraw his Bill there was an unusual bustle on these Benches; and when I came down, expecting the adjourned debate to go on, I was told that

Lord John Russell had communicated to the hon. Member for Birmingham that it was his intention to withdraw his Bill, and it was even stated that the noble Lord had taken counsel with the hon. Member for Birmingham, and was withdrawing the Bill by his advice. Whether that was true or not, most undoubtedly the noble Lord withdrew it with his knowledge and concurrence, because no sooner had Lord Russell and the right hon. Member for Bucks who followed him resumed their seats, than the hon. Member for Birmingham got up expressly to state his concurrence in the withdrawal of the Bill. He justified that withdrawal, he commended it, and for five years afterwards, while the Government remained in office, he gave them his undiminished support, and on the only opportunity that was offered to him he honoured them with his Vote of Confidence. [Mr. BRIGHT was understood to express dissent.] I can only say that during those five years I knew no steadier supporter than he was, and undoubtedly on the Vote of Confidence—the great trial of strength between parties—he voted with the majority. Then, I ask, if they committed the greatest political fraud known to our times, was he not an accomplice and abettor of that fraud? and if they sacrificed their honour to keep their places, I ask whether he did not, to some extent at least, sacrifice his honour to keep them in their places? I do not ask whether it was just, generous, but was it seemly in him to boast in such opprobious terms the Ministers for whose acts he had made himself responsible, and for the purposes of a new agitation thus coin political capital at their expense. But there was comfort for the Ministry in store. The hon. Member for Birmingham can inflict a wound, but he knows also how to apply the soothing remedy. I have shown you the picture drawn in September; but they gave him another sitting in November, and then we have another sketch slightly varied. Hear what the hon. Gentleman says on the 30th of November. Speaking of the Administration—

> "Some one has said that the Ministry is very much the same as it was — I venture to say it is very different. I think I know almost every Member of the Administration, and many of them with that kind of intimacy which comes from long attendance in the House of Commons, and I should say that it is composed"

Of what? Of pledgebreakers, of dishonourable men who sacrifice their honour to their places? No!

> "It is composed of men more entitled to public confidence probably than any other Ministry of our time."

That is portrait No. 2. But the wind changes again, and it shows how deeply my hon. Friend is in the secrets of the Cabinet, and how he knows the fluctuations of their Councils, because within one short month he again changes his mind, and those dear and intimate friends of whom he spoke so affectingly, the old Whigs, he proposes to inter with all the symbols of national respect in Westminster Abbey. After the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-day, we may possibly have another change. Its complexion is always varying—

> "To-day 'tis black—to-morrow white—next day
> 'Tis neither black, nor white, but dingy grey."

Now the House will observe that from 1852 to 1865 this question of Reform had been agitated under the most favourable circumstances. It had been taken up by every Administration, and supported and recommended by every prominent public man. It has had three-fourths of the press as the partisans of one side or the other writing in its favour. It had public meetings innumerable, and an active agitation founded on the undisputed fact of 5,000,000 of unenfranchised operatives. Yet these Cabinets were all defeated, the Ministers more or less discredited, the Bills all rejected; the agitation a failure: and the more the question was stirred, the more vividly apparent it became that the projected changes were not suited to the wants and temper of the times, and that the country—watching, listening, reading, and judging — was brought slowly, but surely, to the conviction that these changes were not founded in reason, that they were opposed to justice, that they were fatal to the growth of liberty —that they were the creed of a small and noisy section of politicians of extreme opinions, who had gained an accidental and mischievous importance from the fact that the two great political parties in the State were so evenly balanced that rival chiefs vied with one another in bidding for the support of that extreme minority; but that the general thought and education of the country—the morality, the statesmanship, the patriotism of every class, from the highest to the lowest —clung with instinctive fervour to the institutions which they saw approached with an unfriendly hand, and with one will and one voice forbad that that old tree of English liberty which had been the slow growth of ages and the admiration of nations should be transformed into the brazen image of ignorance and intolerance which the worshippers of Trans-Atlantic equality wanted to set up. And that is my answer to one conclusion that might have been drawn from the historical statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that this question has been five times recommended from the Throne. Undoubtedly, he might have added with truth that there is no previous instance, at least in our time, of any great question five times recommended from the Throne not passing into an Act. But what is the reason of it? It is obvious—it is because there is no previous instance of any Minister five times pressing on the Sovereign and the Parliament an important change which was opposed to the well-ascertained feelings and interests of the nation. On former occasions, Sir, great national demands founded on reason and justice have prevailed—as they always ought to prevail—over narrow prejudices and selfish and exclusive interests. But in this case the national demand was to be let alone, and Lord Russell, as a persistent disturber, has been treated with an unexampled patience and forbearance which are happily at last exhausted. Now, Sir, one would suppose that with these facts and this experience before them the Government might have been deterred from hastily committing themselves on this question of Reform. But, nevertheless, Lord Russell, and his Colleagues, who had already broken down four times upon it, determined to come before Parliament with another Reform Bill, without any allegation whatever of new circumstances and new strength, or new views upon it. There was, indeed, one novelty, and only one, connected with this further attempt on their part, and that was their chivalrous determination (as it was called) to stand or fall by their intended measure. I confess, Sir, I was never able to appreciate this "chivalrous determination," on a matter as to which I knew the Government had no choice. Sure I am that the country is determined to have no more trifling with this question of Reform. Sure I am that the country is sick—heartily sick—of the insincerities and hypocrisies which have made the very name of Reform a scandal and reproach to public men. And I very much

mistake the character and temper of this new House of Commons if it would suffer another Ministry to trade on the Reform cry—and introduce and abandon a Bill and yet remain glued to the seats of office. It was, therefore, not only right and proper, but absolutely imperative for the Government to stand or fall by their measure; and it needed no very wise prophet to foretel that whether they were to stand or fall must depend entirely on the character of the Bill they introduced. I think the House will agree with me that there are three great essentials to the success of any Government attempting at this time to deal with the question of Reform. The first is, that the attempt should be made by a strong Government; for Lord Russell himself told the deputations in the autumn that the opposition to his Reform Bill would be very determined and the difficulties very formidable. Therefore, a Bill should only be introduced for the purpose of being carried; it should be an instrument of legislation, not of agitation, and for that purpose the Government should be strong. Then the second essential is, that it should be, for a generation at least, a settlement of the question; and the third is, that a Government bringing in a Bill for the settlement of the question in the face of a formidable opposition should have the power of appealing to the country by a dissolution. I ask the House, then, how many of these essentials are found united on the present Treasury Bench? Suppose we take them one by one. In the first place, have we a strong Government? On this point, of course, I can only apply a very obvious and very easy test, yet one to which it is impossible for any Member of the Government to take the least exception. Let us compare the present Government in point of strength with the last, which attempted and failed to carry a Reform Bill in 1860. Well, in that Government there were no less than ten Members of the Cabinet with seats in the House of Commons. Only six of them remained when they determined to introduce this measure. Four of them were gone; six only remained, and without one single addition to their number for weeks after they announced their determination to bring in a Reform Bill, and even till within a few days of the meeting of Parliament. Six only remain, and who were those that are gone? Were they insignificant men; not missed, easily spared? Why, do not the names of Sidney Herbert, Cornewall Lewis, and Palmerston, remind us that they were the very flower of the Cabinet? With one or two exceptions they were the Cabinet itself. Compare the Cabinet of 1860 with the present Cabinet. Why, it is almost like comparing a living, moving, sentient being with his own skeleton. And when the task in hand was six years ago too mighty for the strength of giants, what miraculous virtue do we expect to find in the notoriously discordant remains? Then, is what you propose a settlement of the question? What does it settle? How does the Bill settle it? And here I must beg to disabuse my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the delusion which he showed he was labouring under, in common probably with the rest of his Colleagues. He said, and he repeated it twice, "We shall have done at least something." Well, but the country does not want you to do "something." What the country wants is that you should settle something; and if you do not settle something you are not doing but undoing and unsettling. You are unsettling everything —unsettling the Act of 1832, unsettling Administration, unsettling legislation, unsettling the thoughts, the occupations, and all the great interests of the country. Now, I hold that there is nothing a Government can do which is so mistaken and so mischievous as to raise great issues which it cannot define, and to let loose a force which it cannot control. But even as to the suffrage what are you settling? Remember, there was by common accord only one problem to be solved—namely, how to admit the masses to a share of political power without giving them a monopoly. Well, does the speech of my right hon. Friend solve that question?—does it even touch it? Why, there is only one mode of satisfactorily settling any great controversy, and that is to found your settlement upon a recognized and intelligible principle. What, then, is the principle of your Bill? Is it the old principle of the representation of property? Is it the principle which was enunciated the other day at Manchester, that representation and taxation should go together? Is it the principle of intelligence advocated by the Member for Hull (Mr. Clay)? Is it that doctrine of abstract right which was so suddenly proclaimed in my right hon. Friend's famous speech on the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines), and which was afterwards so hurriedly withdrawn? Why, it is none of these. There was nothing in my right hon. Friend's speech of to-night that we can dignify with the title of a principle. It was nothing but a reproduction of the old, stale, worn-out and discredited device of the first downward movement in the direction of government by numbers. My right hon. Friend hopes that we shall take the division on this Bill upon that principle. Well, if this is to be the principle of the Bill, I ask again what difficulty do you remove, what agitation do you silence? because even the £6 Franchise Bill of the Member for Leeds of last year was taken to be only an instalment. But there was a portion of my right hon. Friend's speech to which I must say I listened with astonishment and regret. He said, "We don't attempt, we don't profess, to affect a settlement;" and using words which, coming from him, surprised me more than if they had come from any other Member of this House, or from any other public man; he said—and I took the words down—

> "We are unwilling to look to the future. The circumstances are so varied that we must look to that future itself for proper opportunities of dealing with these important questions."

I am sorry that my right hon. Friend gave expression to these opinions, because emanating from him they derive great weight and go forth with great authority. Dealing, Sir, only with the circumstances of this Session or of this Parliament, and looking to the future to take care of itself, may be a very good commercial principle —it may be a very good rule on which to carry on the business of a large establishment at Manchester. But I beg to say it is not statesmanship; and I am quite sure that my right hon. Friend on mature reflection will feel that he has committed himself to a dogma which is not only unsound and untenable, but which, coming from the Ministerial Bench, is as startling as it is paradoxical. Why, there is no doubt that we can only deal with the circumstances of our own Session, or of our own Parliament, or our own generation; but if we deal with them on false principles which become precedents for the next generation, we are not leaving them as free as we are to take care of themselves. No doubt circumstances are shifting and variable; but principles are enduring and eternal; and as we are the slaves of precedent, one false step on a mistaken false principle is in fact kindling a conflagration for our successors to extinguish? Carried out to the full extent, the argument of my right hon. Friend means this:—A Government, especially if it finds itself weak, is only to have a hand-to-mouth policy —is to keep things square exactly for its own time, and to take care of itself, if need be, even at the expense of its successors. That is the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer carried to its logical result; and if that is to bè our rule of conduct, I would suggest to my right hon. Friend, who is a great economiser of the public money, that he should advertize for tenders, and I venture to promise that within a given time he will have offers from more than one joint-stock company to carry on the business of this country on the hand-to-mouth principle quite as well and much more cheaply than it is being done in our day. Well, Sir, it is quite evident hon. Gentlemen feel that my right hon. Friend went rather further than he intended in enunciating that doctrine; because I am sure that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been asked in a more impartial moment to describe the functions and the character of an English statesman, he would have said that he was the man above all others whose special duty it was to look not only to the present, but to the future—the man who above all others was supposed to have stored his mind with all the riches of historical truth and political science, and constitutional lore, in order that he might see farther and soar higher than other men—that he might bring in a knowledge of principles, of precedents, of maxims, of legislative science, in order to foresee, to provide, to avert — and so far as the limitation of poor human faculties will allow it—to foretel and command the future. My right hon. Friend is the very last man from whom I should have expected such a justification of routine and mediocrity; for although we know that under some foreign Governments the Minister of State is only separated from the herd of politicians by the fussy consequence of office and the gratifying arrival of quarter day, we know, and no one better than the right hon. Gentleman, that that is not a measure of an English statesman directing the destinies of his age. We place him on a loftier pedestal, we try him by a more exalted standard; we gift him with a clearer vision and a nobler inspiration; and, while in his own time we honour him as a guide and an example, it is for after generations to pay the real tribute to his worth and bless him as a benefactor. I wish the House to observe the wonderful inconsistency of my right hon. Friend. See how differently he deals with a question which he really understands and really loves—see how differently he deals with finance. Why is he torturing his brain and straining his faculties to reduce the National Debt? Not merely to meet the requirements of a particular Session of Parliament, or a particular generation. We know very well that the requirements of our own time would rather lead us to keep the money in our pockets and pass on to another generation the debt which we inherited. But, in finance, my right hon. Friend does look forward—-finance has been his study, it is his pride, it is his ambition, on finance he intends to found a reputation, and therefore on finance he is careful, conscientious, logical, and far-seeing. But as to Reform, that for a mind like his is merely a platform recreation. We know that he only began to think of it seriously two years ago; and then it was a sudden freak, almost like that visit of the casual to the workhouse. He saw a dark muddy pool before him, he plunged headlong in, and he has been soiled and shivering in questionable company ever since. Well, then, I think it is admitted this Government is not strong; it is admitted also that there is no attempt at a settlement of this question. And now in a few words I will deal with the question of dissolution. Nothing can justify a dissolution of Parliament on any particular question, except the necessity of ascertaining the opinion of the country upon it, coupled with some hope that the response of the country will be favourable to the Government dissolving. But the national opinion on Reform has been already ascertained unequivocally on the two most recent occasions. The dissolution of 1859 took place expressly on Reform, and the new Parliament refused to legislate. Again, at the close of last Session, the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) by his £6 Franchise Bill on the eve of a dissolution, applied a very severe screw to Liberal Members; but they, even with visions of the hustings before their eyes, laughed at his screw and demolished his Bill. And of all the Liberal Members who assisted in that praiseworthy work of demolition I cannot put my finger on one who lost his seat by that vote; but the disasters that befell those enlightened and independent Liberals who voted for the Bill may be told by scores, and they fell most grievously on the Bench behind me, among what might be termed the body guard of the Member for Birmingham. His favourite aide-de-camps were swept away; and if it had not been that the Member for Rochdale providentially emerged alive out of the fray the great republican chief would have lost even his trumpeter. Well, then, I ask, what more can we want with dissolutions? They have already shown that the further a man goes in Reform the more precarious is his seat; and a dissolution, under such circumstances, would be not only unconstitutional, but let me tell my right hon. Friend he knows it would be suicidal. And although it is barely possible that some old and desperate politicians might be prepared to play the game of pirates and to set fire to the ship before they left it, I am quite sure that no Minister with a future before him would dare to offer such an affront to the country, for it would most certainly place such a mark as one decade of years would not be sufficient to efface. One would suppose that the lack of these three essentials—strength of the Government, settlement of the question, and legitimate power of dissolution might have prevented the Government from unnecessarily impaling themselves on the question of Reform. But there is a fourth essential which, according to Lord Russell and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Members for Birmingham and Leeds, and all who have hitherto attempted to legislate or agitate on this question is more vital than all the others combined. One and all have said that, without a strong public opinion out of doors, without the certainty of an irresistible popular support, any Ministry attempting to deal with the Reform question would be highly censurable, and would be so helpless that—in the phrase used by my right hon. Friend tonight—they would only make themselves ridiculous. Lord Russell expressed the desire for that agitation in very remarkable words when he said—

> "The next Ministry attempting to deal with the Reform Question must be supported by a popular breeze not only to carry a measure through the House of Commons, but strong enough to carry it over the Bar of the House of Lords."

But when Lord Russell and the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid their heads together last autumn there was no popular breeze, and no indication of it. Lord Palmerston had left the country in a profound calm; it was contented and prosperous at home, and it was at peace abroad. Lord Palmerston was a statesman who had deeply studied the English character and English institutions. He knew that the first law of political life in England was that we should rule by the voice of the educated majority. His keen sagacity had told him that the educated majority in England was in favour of tranquillity, and not of agitation. He had bequeathed to his successors the example of his wisdom, and its fruit in a recently obtained Parliamentary majority so considerable that, wisely employed, it would have secured to his successors a strong and enduring power. Under these circumstances, one would have thought that the path was so plain before them that no amount of folly or of perverseness could have led them to mistake it. But in an evil hour they summoned the hon. Member for Birmingham to their councils, and if he gave them the advice which he afterwards repeated on the platform, and circulated over the country by his organs, he would appear to have guaranteed the breeze that was to carry a Reform Bill over the Bar of the House of Lords. He must have told them that the calm which Lord Palmerston bequeathed was artificial and deceptive—that it was only the precursor of the storm, that Reform was not dead but dormant, that it pervaded the whole nation, that its feelings were dangerously pent up, and only pent up because it was awaiting the speedy return to power of the great Minister reverentially termed the "Father of Reform," who had already been the benefactor and was again to be the saviour of a nation, that was on the brink of revolution, and could only be saved by a single-barrelled Reform Bill. Now if any man had gone to Lord Palmerston and talked such nonsense to him, as that the country was bursting for Reform, he would have been laughed out of the room. We remember what Lord Palmerston said on the hustings to his friend Mr. Rowcliff, who asked him why the Government had not introduced another Reform Bill. "Why," said he, "because we were not geese." That reply of Lord Palmerston his Colleagues received both as a compliment and a witticism. It went straight to the understanding of Englishmen; it told them more than volumes of writing and hours of speaking could have done. That reply of Lord Palmerston's was strikingly characteristic; it showed his strong, masculine, English common sense, which we all know is of more value, for the guidance of men and the management of parties, than all the other gifts and qualties a Minister can possess. Lord Palmerston would never have been weak enough to be persuaded that England would be governed from Lancashire, or the Liberal party domineered over by the Member for Birmingham. But the man who had been a pigmy in the hands of Lord Palmerston was a giant in the hands of his successor; so Lord Russell at once fell into his toils, and was easily persuaded that as he was the idol of an adoring nation, he had a Heaven-directed mission to fulfil, and like a devout and dauntless patriot, he girded himself for its fulfilment. And so the die was cast. Reform, a comprehensive Reform, was to be the cry, agitation was to be the means; the wise and tranquil policy of Lord Palmerston was to be reversed, the days of truce and compromise were over—and so was the reign of the majority of moderate Liberalism behind the Treasury Benches. The real Liberal party was no longer in that quarter of the House, where formerly it was associated with names of historic renown in great party conflicts, and Liberal triumphs. No; the true and trusted Liberals now were only to be found below the gangway — in the minute section below the gangway which acknowledge the leadership of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and only his nominees were to be preferred as the heirs and occupants of the Treasury Bench and the future governors of England. To them the word was given to "agitate! agitate! agitate!" proclaimed trumpet-tongued through all their organs—at simultaneous meetings in every district—monster gatherings in every town, petitions, addresses, deputations, leagues, placards, and all the machinery of uproar. The hon. Member for Birmingham was himself to rush through the provinces, to ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm. And when the giant spirit of the nation was fairly roused, then the great ruling Council were to consider how it would please them to carry out that redistribution of electoral power which we are to-night assembled to discuss. We know how this plan of campaign was prosecuted —we know how, during those two months of democratic delirium, until the bubble of their popularity burst the instruments of the Government wrote and spoke, and how they bullied, blustered, exulted, and crowed, and threatened; how we were told how the Benches on the Opposition side of the House were to be cleared, and how those on this side were to be purified. Democracy was upon us. For two months we had a foretaste of its sweets, and little was left for us to imagine of the sort of liberty which we should enjoy in this House when these new patrons of liberty were enthroned as power. I observe that there was one topic, usually urged on these occasions, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer carefully avoided. We are often asked to bear in mind the advantages of legislating in a calm, and I am surprised the right hon. Gentleman did not invite our attention to that. Could it be that some of his own Colleagues have not been alive to the advantage of legislating in a calm? There were some of them, who during this agitation, by the countenance and favour shown to the hon. Member behind me, did their best to assist him to let loose the furies of agitation and the demons of disturbance. It was on their mission, in their name, as their auxiliary and ally, that the Member for Birmingham went down as a plenipotentiary to the provinces to lash the people into fury with the recital of imaginary wrongs and fabricated grievances. And if, as was threatened in more than one Ministerial organ, we have not had the scenes of 1831 revived —if we have not had the excitement at Birmingham, and burning of Nottingham, and riots at Bristol—and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer, under a pressure which he could not resist, has not submitted to our notice to-day a very different Bill in a very different tone—that of a master who had a power at his command we should do well not to brave; and if the Member for Birmingham himself, who would then have towered as a dictator over the Government, has not been enabled, like a second Cromwell, to stamp his foot and cry out to refractory Members, "Get you gone; you are no longer a Parliament. Lord Russell has no more need of you." If, I say, all this has not occurred, it is not to the Colleagues of my right hon. Friend that we are indebted for our escape, but to the good sense and loyalty of those who are wiser in head and sounder in heart than some incendiary politicians in high places who have done their utmost to excite them. But the agitation has failed — failed ridiculously, failed ignominiously; and as the unwelcome truth flashed on those popular leaders of the platform that they were, without exception, the most unpopular section in the political community; that they were discredited, distrusted, and shunned; why then their demand for a liberal and comprehensive Reform dwindled down, becoming "small by degrees and beautifully less," until the climax of their discomfiture being reached, by the paragraph in the Queen's Speech, they were ready, like the Member for Leeds, to express their unbounded satisfaction for anything however unpalatable in quality or infinitesimal in quantity, which the ingenuity of the Government might devise to break their fall by enabling them to boast that in the consolatory words of their never-failing Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer they had at least "done something." I have treated this Bill as a Government measure; but we all know that it is entitled to be so called only by courtesy, and that however short it may fall of the original conception and design, that conception and design had its birth not in Downing Street, but in Birmingham. There is not a man in this House who does not know it is the Bill of the hon. Gentleman behind me, who by the spell which he has thrown over Lord Russell has been the ruling spirit of this movement. It is, in short, the old battle revived—the Member for Birmingham and Lord Russell against the majority of the Cabinet and the country. Everybody is aware of the ascendancy of the hon. Gentleman. Of late it had been an ascendancy so ostentatiously and so alarmingly displayed that it has created a profound sensation throughout the country and in the Liberal ranks in this House both above and below the gangway. The question has been asked during the last three weeks by Liberal Members of one another, What are the real principles, what are the aims, what are the claims to our confidence and support on the part of this new ruler whom Lord Russell seems determined to set over us? Do we adopt his principles? do we endorse his ends? Is he the right and proper person to reform our institutions? Can we with safety accept his guidance? Upon this point, however unpalatable it may be to some Gentlemen on this side of the House, I should like to say a few words. I am speaking in the presence of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and I am speaking with the full knowledge that he will follow me in this discussion. [Mr. BRIGHT: No, no!] I think I am going to give the hon. Gentleman something he will reply to. [Mr. BRIGHT: No!] I am told that we are not to have any declaration of his opinion from the hon. Member for Birmingham; but if the House will give me its attention for a few minutes, and if he will give me his attention, I will venture to say that I will place something before the House which he will reply to. What I am going to say is this —and I shall say it very briefly—that while I do not deny that the hon. Gentleman is sincere in seeking to bring about the changes which he advocates, I maintain that he does not desire them in the sense in which we do—namely, with a view to reforming, and strengthening, and perpetuating what we admire and value. We in England understand the word "Reformer" only in one sense—that of a man who is a sincere adherent and friend, and upholder of the form of Government, to render which reform is intended more perfect and durable. But if the professed Reformer be a passionate admirer of Republican institutions; if he openly avows that our English institutions are faulty in those respects in which they differ from Republican institutions, and that the reforms to be made ought to be after the mode and in the direction which would gradually but inevitably assimilate them to republicanism; if he publicly deprecates and decries, not the defects of our English form of Government, but that form of Government itself, and in those very speeches in which he unfolds the changes and Reforms which he advocates, then I say—and I do not believe any man in this House will contradict the assertion—such a Reformer is not a sympathizer in our view—he cannot be a sincere and honest co-operator in our objects; he approaches the work not in the spirit of Reform, but of revolution, and he is not a friend but a enemy of the institutions which he sets himself to change. Upon that point I will enable the House in a very few moments to judge, so far as the hon. Member for Birmingham is concerned. Out of his own mouth. I will ask you to say whether he does not fall under the disqualification which I have just given. It happened at the time when Lord Derby's Government was in office that the advanced Reformers determined to have a Reform Bill of their own, at which, I believe, the Member for Hull (Mr. Clay) was in the chair, and at which it was moved by the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) that the hon. Member for Birmingham should prepare and take charge of a Reform Bill. He accepted that mission. He prepared his Bill. He explained its provisions at public meetings in several of the most important towns in the North of England, stating at the same time what were the views and principles of Reform which he himself entertained. He complained that his Bill was very much attacked and misrepresented in the newspapers. It was said, he observed, that he meant to assail the monarchy and the House of Lords, and he set about vindicating himself from those charges. At the meeting to which I allude he made a speech, from which I will read a short extract. This speech was delivered in his official character as a representative of those who called him to prepare the Bill. It was with the others which he delivered at that period revised by himself and published, and must therefore be regarded as containing the most solemn declaration of political faith which any Englishman could make in the face of the country. In the extract to which I refer, the hon. Gentleman said—

> "I shall take the course of addressing myself to this question according to the light I have with regard to it from great study, from much consultation with others, and from an honest wish that I have that the question of Reform should be rightly viewed by every intelligent man among my countrymen. Now, we will mention two or three things that we do not want. We do not propose in the smallest degree to call in question or to limit the prerogatives of the Crown. I believe we are prepared to say that if the Throne of England be filled with so much dignity and so much purity as we have known it in our time, and as we know it now to be, we hope that the venerable monarchy may be perpetual."

But that hope of perpetuity is coupled with an "if," and that "if" is unknown to the British Constitution. The British Constitution does not allow any man to set up his own standard of individual excellence in the Sovereign, and make his allegiance personal and conditional. But the language of the Member for Birmingham tolerates the monarchy so long as the monarchy comes up to an almost ideal standard of personal excellence—and I call it an ideal standard, because if we look through the long lines of Sovereigns of this or any other country, I know not where during so protracted a reign you can find such another realization of so high a standard. Well, the Gentlemen behind me think that those opinions about monarchy are quite orthodox. And now we come to the next highest branch of the Constitution—the House of Lords. Let us see what the hon. Member's opinions are in regard to the House of Lords—

> "We do not propose even to discuss, much less to limit the legal and constitutional privileges or prerogatives of the House of Peers. We know, everybody knows, nobody knows it better than the Peers, that a House of hereditary legislation cannot be a permanent institution in a free country."

I am waiting for the cheers from the Members behind me. Now, I deny that the Peers know any such thing—I deny that this House knows any such thing, and I deny that the country knows any such thing, and the Constitution flatly contradicts the Member for Birmingham. The Constitution says that an hereditary Peerage is a permanent institution in a free country, and because it is compatible with freedom. I believe, Sir— however much it may shock the Gentlemen below the gangway—that there is an irreconcilable enmity between democracy and freedom, but I know of no irreconcilable enmity between freedom and an hereditary House of Lords. On the contrary, I believe that it is its hereditary character that secures to the House of Lords an independence that renders it a stronger bulwark of freedom than an elective chamber can possibly be. But when the hon. Gentleman says that an hereditary Peerage is incompatible with freedom, what is that but saying that it ought to be abolished, or, in other words, that the Constitution ought to be so far abolished? And though the abolition may not be proposed in his Reform Bill, still it becomes a question of levers and instalments. Well, then, we come to the House of Commons. The feeling of the hon. Member for Birmingham is that the suffrage is the birthright of every Englishman, and that an unenfranchised adult is outside the Constitution. What, then, is his political creed? If the monarchy is to be contingent upon the highest standard of personal excellence which a Sovereign can attain, but failing that is to be not hereditary, but I presume elective—if the House of Peers is not to be hereditary but also elective, and if the House of Commons is to be chosen by universal suffrage, what becomes of the British Constitution, and how far are we removed from a Republic? Why, if there be any meaning in words and any force in language, the political principles of the hon. Member for Birmingham, as publicly propounded in the face of his countrymen—I do not presume to judge of his personal and individual feelings—his political principles, I say, are the principles, not of an Englishman, but of an alien. He is not a believer in the British Constitution, but he must be as thorough-going a Republican as President Johnson himself. But this is the confidential adviser and director of the head of the Cabinet, and the director and, so far as depends on Lord Russell, the director and dictator of the Liberal party—that Liberal party which, as we have been reminded by the Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), only six months ago followed Lord Palmerston as its leader. Now what is involved in a change from the policy of Lord Palmerston to the policy of the hon. Member behind me? It would be a greater change of policy than has in our time ever been effected by the transfer of Government from one side of the House to the other. But happily that change has not been accomplished, and I do not think it is likely to be accomplished. But the nation, however, has had a great escape. The death of Lord Palmerston brought on a very serious crisis. Two months ago the hon. Member for Birmingham had, apparently, command of the situation. Every moment of the recess was fraught with peril. But with the assembling of Parliament the crisis has passed; for no sooner did Members congregate together and compare opinions and the opinions of their constituents, and discuss the situation, than an almost universal feeling pervaded this side of the House, the real character and effect of which will make themselves known when we come to the second reading—if, indeed, we ever do come to the second reading of the Bill. [*Laughter and cries of* "Divide!"] I do not expect that what I am saying is palatable to Gentlemen in that quarter of the House. But what I do say is, that the first and most imminent peril being now over, it is for the Liberal party calmly to re-consider its position and its duties as to the future. We have seen that a succession of weak Ministers have been driven by the necessities of their position to give to a small minority of extreme opinions an importance utterly disproportionate to their number in this House or to their influence out of it. The consequence has been that the whole Liberal party, against its convictions, and still more against its interests, has been drifting towards Democracy. Nothing can be more injurious to its character or more fatal to its stability, as many Liberals of moderate opinions are now beginning to discover. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, two Gentlemen say "No!" but only two. [*Laughter.*] And it has brought political parties to this state—we have now a prospect of a succession of short Governments and frequent dissolutions, all tending to that confusion which every moderate man must deprecate as most surely contributing to the ascendancy of extreme opinions. Therefore it is, Sir, that in my heart I believe that much of the future of England may depend on the spirit with which the new House of Commons realizes and rises to the discharge of its first and most responsible duty. But I will tell my right hon. Friend who cheers me what that duty is. It is to vindicate the supremacy of constitutional opinions—to spurn the dictation of an intolerant minority—to make it a first condition of the occupancy of that Bench that the Ministers of the Crown shall be men of unquestionable attachment to the principles and the policy which are so deeply implanted in the convictions and cherished in the hearts of educated Englishmen—those principles of freedom which have not been successfully defended against the encroachments of monarchs and the passions of multitudes to be now surrendered at the feet of a more ignoble tyranny, that policy of progress — of sound and peaceful and constitutional progress, which has hitherto reflected the growing intelligence of the nation, and can only be arrested or fatally driven back by the successful machinations of those who would trade alternately on the weakness of Ministers they despise, and the presumed ignorance of the masses, whose contempt for the abortive agitation of the last four months has proved how deeply sensible they are of the blessings of the institutions under which they live, and that they have become too enlightened to be deluded, and too distrustful of demagogues to be betrayed.

MR. LOWE moved the adjournment of the debate.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: There can be no objection on the part of the Government to the adjournment of this debate under the present circumstances of the discussion, but it is exceedingly desirable that we should proceed with the debate to-morrow. My hon. Friend the Member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray) has, however, a Motion on the paper relating to the important question of the Irish Church Establishment, and I, therefore, appeal to him if he will be kind enough to waive that Motion. ["No, no!"] In the event of the hon. Gentleman failing to be successful in the ballot to-morrow, we would assign an early day for his Motion.

Sir JOHN GRAY: I shall be most happy to do everything in my power to accommodate the right hon. Gentleman, and I should be very sorry to interfere with this measure. If, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman will name any day positively for my Motion, I shall be glad to accede to his request.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: If the hon. Gentleman fails in the ballot, we will undertake to give him a day.

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MUTINY BILL.—THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH called attention to the circumstance that the Bill had not been printed, and urged the importance of its being printed and circulated among the Members in future.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, the hon. Gentleman seemed to think that the doctrine held by the Government was that the approval of the Mutiny Bill by the House was a mere matter of form. That was not the case; but, as the words were from year to year unchanged, it was not deemed necessary to print the Bill. His noble Friend had inquired into the matter, and he thought that by making arrangements for greater dispatch in the office of the Judge Advocate General, where the Bill was prepared, it could hereafter be printed and rendered accessible to Members. It would be unnecessary to circulate copies among the Members, but all who wished to see the Bill would be able to do so before the second reading.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time and *passed.*

LABOURING CLASSES' DWELLINGS BILL.

(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Bruce.*)

SECOND READING. [BILL 9.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. CHILDERS, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said, he hoped the House would allow him to state, in fulfilment of his pledge, the manner in which the Labouring Classes' Dwellings Bill differed from the Bill of the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens), and the course the Government proposed respecting both. The Bill which he had the honour to introduce would simply empower the Government to make advances through the agency of the Public Works Loan Commissioners towards the erection of labourers' dwellings in populous towns. It would not, however, give compulsory powers for pulling down dwellings unsuited for occupation. With respect to individuals, the Bill was somewhat novel in England; but it was not a new thing in Ireland, for there at the present time the Public Works Commissioners possessed the necessary authority for lending money to persons to erect labourers' cottages. With regard to public bodies, however, in England, under the Act of 1851, loans could now be granted to them for the purpose of erecting labourers' dwellings, and it was simply to extend the powers of that Act that the present Bill was brought forward. It had been intended that the money should be lent at 4 per cent, and the repayment spread over a period of thirty years. That would involve an annual payment of 5½ per cent on the capital lent for interest and repayment. But it was represented that the dwellings of the labouring classes in populous towns seldom paid more than 5 per cent, and therefore it was now proposed to postpone the time of payment to forty years, the interest being calculated at 4 per cent. There were some minor Amendments which he would explain in Committee. Coming now to the Bill of the hon. Member for Finsbury he wished to state in what respects it appeared to him faulty. In the first place, he thought that compulsory power to take property should not be obtained only by the order of a Secretary of State; but that some order of a judicial tribunal should be necessary. Then there was this great objection to the Bill, that under it public money to be advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners would be applied not to half the value of property as in his (Mr. Childer's) Bill, but often to double the value of the new buildings. For the whole expense, both of buying the old buildings and of rebuilding them would be provided in this way, and there was no doubt that under the compulsory clause far more than their value would have to be given for the old buildings. The result would be that local bodies would either refuse to burden themselves with these heavy loans, or if they did would get into difficulties and want to be released from their debt. Again, under this Bill an indefinite quantity of house property would become vested in local authorities—a result which might be a grave political danger. He, however, thought that the hon. Member's Bill contained valuable matter, and might be worked into a useful shape. If the owner of this property, instead of having a premium for allowing it to become a nuisance and taken under compulsory power, were subjected to the risk of getting no more than the bare value of the land (their houses being pulled down) and provision were made for condemning buildings of this kind by a judicial process, and for lending money to rebuild them on condition that they should not vest for any length of time in public bodies, he thought a very useful measure might be brought into operation. The Government, shadowing out this as the general principle which they would favour, were prepared to support a reference of the hon. Member's Bill to a Select Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Childers.*)

SIR MATTHEW RIDLEY thought that it would be expedient to grant powers to local authorities in small towns beyond the limits of the metropolis to purchase bad buildings. Could not the provisions of the present Bill be grafted on the Local Government Act?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that no discourtesy was meant by the Government towards the hon. Member for Finsbury in suggesting that his Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, while they did not propose that course in the case of their own Bill. The fact was the Government Bill contained no novelty, but only enlarged a principle already recognized.

MR. M'CULLAGH TORRENS said, he cheerfully adopted the suggestion of the Government, and would be glad to have his Bill thoroughly examined by a Select Committee composed of Gentlemen from both sides of the House.

MR. KINNAIRD also thought it advisable to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. It was not the metropolis alone that was looking to this measure. His hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. M'Laren) intended to move an Amendment with the view of making the Bill applicable to Scotland.

MR. MORLEY expressed his opinion that buildings such as those the erection of which was contemplated by the Bill could be erected so as to give a fair return for the money expended on them, but he thought the rate of interest proposed was too high.

SIR MINTO FARQUHAR said, there were very good reasons why the Government should not lend money at a lower rate than was now proposed. He thought that the Government Bill also ought to be referred to a Select Committee, who would have the measure proposed by the hon. Member for Finsbury before them.

MR. AYRTON hoped it would be understood that in reading the Bill a second time the House did not pledge themselves to any particular scheme. There was no principle recognized beyond the latent desire that people should get better houses, for until the House saw the provisions by which it was proposed to give effect to that desire, they were not pledged to anything. His own opinion was that the building of houses for the people in towns was an extremely profitable undertaking; and he believed that the people could do much for themselves in this way if the Government amended the Acts relating to investments.

MR. AKROYD thought 4 per cent was higher than ought to be charged by the Government. The rate of interest charged ought not to be higher than 3½ per cent. A good deal had been done in this direction by benefit building societies. That was the agency which he thought ought to be employed in the erection of improved buildings for the working classes. He had employed that agency himself. He thought from the two Bills together a very good measure might be produced.

MR. LOCKE said, the principle of the Bill was clearly admitted. It would be absolutely necessary that there should be some intervention on the part of the Government, in order that many wretched abodes should be destroyed, and others of a more suitable character erected.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

LAND TAX COMMISSIONERS' NAMES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. CHILDERS, Bill to appoint additional Commissioners for executing the Acts for granting a Land Tax and other Rates and Taxes, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. CHILDERS and Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER.

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Bill to facilitate the Administration of Trusts in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by The LORD ADVOCATE, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND, and Sir GEORGE GREY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 65.]

SUMMARY PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Bill to improve the Administration of the Law as respects Summary Procedure before Justices of the Peace in Scotland, and to amend "The Summary Procedure Act, 1864," *ordered* to be brought in by The LORD ADVOCATE, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND, and Sir GEORGE GREY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 64.]

POOR RELIEF (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Bill to provide Superannuation Allowances to Officers employed in parishes in Scotland in the Relief of the Poor, *ordered* to be brought in by The LORD ADVOCATE, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND, and Sir GEORGE GREY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 66.]

WRITS REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Bill to improve the system of Registration of Writs relating to Land in Scotland, and to amend the Law relating to Inhibitions and Adjudications, *ordered* to be brought in by The LORD ADVOCATE, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND, and Sir GEORGE GREY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 63.]

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 13, 1866.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Mutiny.*

Second Reading—Jamaica Government (29); Marine Mutiny *; National Debt Reduction * (32).

Report—Sale of Land by Auction * (48).

Third Reading—Princess Helena's Annuity * (39); Prince Alfred's Annuity * (40), and *passed*.

Royal Assent—Consolidated Fund (£1,137,772); Savings Banks and Post Office Savings Banks.

CATTLE PLAGUE RETURNS.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON said, he wished to make a suggestion to the noble Earl the President of the Council relative to a matter of some importance at the present moment—he meant the Cattle Plague Returns. They were now arrived at that stage of the cattle plague which made it of the utmost consequence that the Returns issued by the Privy Council should be reliable and trustworthy; but for some four or five weeks past the Returns issued by the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council Office had been very inaccurate; for it appeared that a number of the Inspectors, either from being overworked or indolent, had failed to send in their Returns, and there were no less than 246 districts, the Returns from which were in arrears. Legislation upon the subject was perfectly useless, unless something reliable could be obtained from it. It would be better that the Returns should be made every fortnight, or even three weeks, to have them correct, rather than that they should have weekly Returns which were professedly incomplete and incorrect, and upon which no dependence could be placed. He suggested that the publication of these Returns should be delayed until the Privy Council was able to make them reliable. He did not ask for an immediate answer, as he had not given the noble Earl notice of the Question.

EARL GRANVILLE said, it was very inconvenient to call attention to subjects of this important nature without giving some notice. If notice had been given at least two hours beforehand it might have been possible to give some explanation, and the time of the House might not have been taken up to no purpose. He had made inquiries on the subject not many days ago, and in consequence inspectors had been sent down to various districts from which no Returns had been made to see what could be done. He doubted whether a mere extension of time would do anything to make the Returns more correct.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY urged that, as the Privy Council had the power, something should be done to enforce correctness in these Returns.

JAMAICA GOVERNMENT BILL.

(NO. 29.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

EARL RUSSELL said, the object of the Bill to which he now asked their Lordships to give a second reading was to enable Her Majesty in Council to establish an entirely new political Constitution for the Island of Jamaica. As their Lordships were aware, in 1833 an Act was passed by the Imperial Parliament by which a complete change was made in the condition of the West India Islands. We thereby abolished slavery in those islands, and placed those who had hitherto been in the relation of master and slave in the relation of employer and workman. It was to be expected that so great a change would cause great disorder, great cessation from labour, and consequent ruin of the proprietors, and an indisposition to work on the part of those who had been slaves. These anticipations have not however been realized to the extent expected, and if the returns relating to the production of sugar were to be taken as an indication of their condition, three of the islands showed no falling off in labour and production. For instance, in Barbadoes, during the last six years of slavery, the production of sugar was 338,793 cwt.; in Trinidad it was 293,862 cwt.; and in Antigua it was 173,079 cwt. In 1864 the 338,793 cwt. raised in Barbadoes had become 539,706 cwt., the 293,862 cwt. of Trinidad had become 670,793 cwt.; and the 173,079 cwt. of Antigua had become in 1863 (the year 1864 being a year of drought) 202,483 cwt. On the other hand, whilst the total quantity of sugar produced in all the sugar colonies in the last six years of slavery was 4,346,853 cwt., in 1864, it was only 4,314,691 cwt., thus showing that the falling off in the production of sugar was not great, and was not so great as might have been anticipated. In Barbadoes the amount of the black population was such as to create great competition for employment, and by that means production had been kept up; and in the island of Trinidad there was a great immigration of coolies, and as they were exceedingly industrious, that accounted for the increase in the production of sugar in that island. In Antigua, although wages were low, still there was sufficient labouring to produce the amount of sugar he had just named. But the state of the island of Jamaica had been unhappily far different from that of the other islands—there the supply of labour was so deficient, that no less than 2,500,000 of acres had been left entirely unproductive, and the production of sugar instead of being, as it was in the last years of slavery, 1,356,628 cwt., was, in 1864, no more than 471,521 cwt. It was difficult to account for so great a difference in Jamaica; but in that island the relation of master and slave, which had produced so much calamity and ill-will during the period of slavery, had, since slavery had been abolished, given place to another state of things equally unfortunate. The working population of the island complained that they were told, and that they expected that they were entitled to a certain amount of wages without any reference to their continuous labour, and without reference to that profit which every employer must expect to obtain from the application of his capital. They were told that they would be paid certain wages, and that they ought to expect them. He was not going to allude to the unfortunate occurrences of last year, for, doubtless, when the Royal Commissioners made their Report, it must attract the attention of Parliament, but to allude only to the state of things which had existed in that island previous to the late unfortunate outbreak. There has been representative government in Jamaica, but it has been very imperfectly constituted since the period of slavery, and has been productive of various abuses. The Assembly has usurped various powers, the body is very much divided, and it does not at all represent the population of the island. Thus they found that in a population of about 450,000—namely, 13,000 whites, 81,000 coloured people, and about 380,000 blacks—there were only 2,000 on the voting lists; and, in fact, the representative body did not represent more than about 1,500—so that neither the whites nor the blacks were adequately represented. Unfortunately the Assembly had pursued a very impolitic course. It had very much increased the debt of the island; and though the minority was small they were able to keep up an incessant agitation; and the consequence was that at length the Assembly themselves came to the resolution of entirely changing the government of the island, and to have a Council nominated partly by the Crown and partly elected, and to abolish altogether that Constitution which had so long existed, and which had been productive of so much evil. The object of the present Bill was to enable Her Majesty to assume the power transferred by the Act of the Assembly, which was to come into operation immediately it had received the assent of Her Majesty in Council. The proposed Constitution corresponded to that of the island of Trinidad, which had been blessed with prosperity and good order, compared with the condition of Jamaica. Upon these grounds he asked their Lordships to assent to the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^a.—(*Earl Russell.*)

Lord DUNSANY said, that some papers which he had moved for in 1864 showed that grounds other than those mentioned by the noble Earl might exist for putting an end to a Constitution which had existed for 200 years. From that Correpondence he did not feel himself, under present circumstances, at liberty to quote more than a single extract, but it would show what were the position and views of Governor Eyre. Writing in 1864, he said—

> "My own tenure of office, too, has always been so very uncertain that I have felt unwilling to take any step, which, however right in itself and necessary to maintain my position properly, might, if a change in the administration of the Government took place, suddenly create difficulties and embarrassments for any new Governor who could not have that knowledge of the country and the people necessary to enable him to understand and grapple with them. There is scarcely any position so difficult and delicate as that of the temporary administration of a Government like Jamaica, where promptness, vigour, and independence of action are essential to inspiring confidence and commanding respect. I have unfortunately been in an anomalous and doubtful position during the whole of my administration. My first nomination was only for twelve months. A considerable amount of feeling existed in reference to the Governor whose place I took, and as he was expected to return I was bound to consider carefully how any acts of mine might affect his position upon his resuming the administration. After it was decided that Sir Charles Darling was not to return, I was never informed that I was to remain for any definite period, but I have simply been left to stay on from month to month, never knowing that any packet which arrived might not bring me an order to retire. This extreme uncertainty has had a most prejudicial effect upon my position. It has enabled those who were hostile to me to keep the public mind in a constant state of excitement, by circulating fresh reports of my recal, or of the appointment of a new Governor, on the arrival of almost every packet; it has prevented the colonists from having confidence in the stability of anything I might inaugurate, seeing I might not remain to carry it to a conclusion; it has deprived me of much of the active support which a more settled position would have ensured . . . . and it certainly has made me feel unwilling to take many steps which, though right in themselves, might have led to temporary embarrassments, which some other person, newly appointed, might perhaps have been called upon to meet. I am unwilling to refer to matters of a more personal and private nature, further than to remark that since the termination of my first year's service the absence of my family and my inability to make any other than temporary arrangements as regards my establishment have, perhaps, rendered my continued tenure of office less acceptable than it might have been if there had still been a lady to preside over the society, and a more complete and organized establishment kept up in maintenance of what is termed the dignity of the position. I do not make these statements as in any way complaining of the position I have been placed in, or as justifying any imperfections in my administration, but I wish your Grace, when reviewing my career here, to bear in mind how very unusually and exceptionally I have been circumstanced for the long period of fully two years. I am anxious that your Grace should be able to feel satisfied that if I have not succeeded in accomplishing all that could be desired, I have at least done all which my peculiar position permitted, and that in the path of duty I have never shrunk from encountering the personal obloquy, misrepresentation, and opposition which must ever attend a Governor in Jamaica who discharges his duty faithfully and fearlessly."—[*Jamaica Return* (1864), p. 89.]

The facts detailed in that letter showed that there were other points worthy of consideration besides the shortcomings of the Jamaica Legislature, over which Her Majesty's Ministers now sought to write the epitaph, "Died of a bad Constitution." He would, however, add, "And of bad doctoring." Surely, a Governor appointed by the Home Government was not to be held answerable for the evils of the Colonial Administration?

Lord TAUNTON said, that anybody who had been called upon to consider the position of Jamaica and the causes of the miserable condition of that island must be aware that its evils were of long standing, and of no ordinary character. He need hardly say that the spectacle of a great colony coming forward and asking that its local Legislature might be put an end to, and the colony itself governed directly from home, bespoke a state of things of the most extraordinary and anomalous character. And anybody who had looked into the history of Jamaica must know that there were few of its evils and misfortunes which could not be traced distinctly to the action of the Colonial Legislature. The sins both of omission and commission of that Legislature were more flagrant than in any other of the colonies: and there were defects in the constitution of the House of Representatives there which were enough to ruin any similar Assembly. To-morrow, if these defects were introduced into the House of Commons, they would corrupt and ruin its influence, and give rise to a demand for an immediate change. In the first place, there was vested in the Jamaica House of Representatives a power of originating money votes without the sanction of the Crown; and during the interval between Sessions it prolonged its existence by the appointment of committees, who virtually governed the country, giving rise to a pernicious system of local corruption and jobbing, and usurping the functions of the Executive. What had been the results? They had ruined the finances of the country utterly. In a mere party conflict they refused to continue a Revenue Bill, and threw to the winds a very large sum of money properly belonging to the public. They never carried into effect any proper system for the supply of labour to the colony, and thereby ruined the sugar cultivation. Their finances having become involved in irreparable confusion they came to this country some years ago for a loan; and the Government consented to guarantee that loan, insisting, however, on certain stipulations, which did, to a certain degree, in practice improve the working of the Colonial Assembly. He hoped their Lordships would not suppose that the example of Jamaica was at all conclusive as to the failure of negro emancipation, or as a proof that black and white could not live together. With the exception of Jamaica, he believed that as much sugar was now exported from the West India Islands as at any former period, and from the Mauritius sugar was supplied to the markets of the world. It was to the faults of the Legislature and to no other cause, he believed, that the wretched condition of Jamaica was attributable. Under good government he hoped that the resources of the colony would now be developed, and that it would become the glory, as it had been the disgrace, of the British Crown. In 1839, at the time that he had the honour of filling the station of Under Secretary to the Colonies, it was his duty to ask the House to agree to a Bill somewhat similar to that now introduced. The measure was violently opposed by the Jamaica Legislature of that day, and by the great party opposite, it being much more the fashion then than it happily was now to make colonial topics a ground for party struggles. The Ministry accordingly were obliged to withdraw the Bill, which would have proved so important to the true interests of Jamaica, and to substitute for it a measure of a most imperfect character.

Earl GREY: My Lords, I entirely concur with my noble Friend who has just sat down in thinking it of much importance that the very unsatisfactory results of the abolition of slavery in Jamaica should not be attributed to any inherent fault of the negro race, when the difficulties which have been felt have arisen really from the conduct of the Legislative Assembly. Having taken a deep interest in this question for more than thirty years, I think I may now venture to ask your Lordships' attention while I review the proceedings which have brought the fine island of Jamaica into so deplorable a condition, and have at length led to the necessity for passing the present Bill. To this measure I give my most hearty support. I regard as the single wise political measure that has ever emanated from the Jamaica Legislature, the act by which they committed political suicide, and on which the Bill now before us is founded. The Assembly of Jamaica, up to this time, has been in possession not only of the usual powers which belong to a representative Assembly, but also of many powers which, in a Constitution modelled on our own, rightly belong to the Crown or the Crown's representative. These usurped powers were exercised by the Assembly under the authority of various local acts, most of which were passed many years ago. In this manner, in addition to the sole power of granting money, the Assembly, as my noble Friend has pointed out, had secured for its members, under the name of Commissioners of Public Accounts, the right of expending the grants made for the public service, and that of collecting the revenue. These unconstitutional powers had been grossly abused. In collecting the revenue, the Members of the Assembly habitually neglected to enforce the payment of the taxes due by themselves and their friends with the same strictness which was used towards others, and corruption and jobbery prevailed in every branch of the Administration. The result has been that for a long series of years the finances of the island have continued to become more and more embarrassed. But even the financial mal-administration of the Assembly has been productive of less evil than its persistent resistance to the mother country—first, with reference to the change in the social condition of the colony, and afterwards on the question of commercial policy. It is now more than forty years since the struggle between the Imperial Government and the Jamaica Legislature respecting the emancipation of the slaves first commenced. That struggle began in 1823, when, on the Motion of Mr. Canning, the House of Commons passed its celebrated Resolutions for the adoption of measures for the gradual abolition of slavery. The Assembly of Jamaica, in common with the other Colonial Legislatures refused to pass any effective measures of the kind contemplated by Mr.

Canning's Resolutions. In justice to them I am bound to say that I do not think they deserve the severe censure that they have incurred by this refusal, since I am convinced that the whole scheme of what is called gradual emancipation was essentially unsound. The result was, however, that nothing effectual having been accomplished in ten years for the mitigation and ultimate extinction of slavery by the Colonial Legislatures, Parliament took the matter into its own hands, and passed, in 1833, the Act for the abolition of slavery. Unfortunately, this Act was founded on a principle which at the time I was convinced was a false one, and which was soon proved to be so by experience. I ventured to oppose the system of apprenticeship from the first, because I believed that the opportunity was being lost for adopting those measures which were required for organizing the new state of society, and placing the negro in a situation which would lead him to work as efficiently as a free labourer, as he hitherto had done as a slave. The warnings of myself and those who held the same opinions were disregarded, but our forebodings with regard to the system of apprenticeship were speedily fulfilled. The object which the Colonial Legislatures attempted to effect was, to retain as much as possible the essence of slavery, and having received compensation for the emancipation of the slaves, to grant as little benefit as possible to the negro. A state of things consequently arose which this country would not tolerate. A cry was got up for the immediate and total abolition of the apprenticeship, and this cry became so strong and so general that the Government of the day could only resist it by proposing that Parliament should effectually guard by very stringent legislation against the abuses that had been brought to light. Accordingly, an Act was passed in 1838 which so fettered the power of the masters over their apprentices, that the Colonial Legislatures unanimously agreed that the system of apprenticeship, so fettered, was not worth preserving. They all, therefore, passed laws putting an end to the system, but in doing so they still showed their desire to cling as far as possible to the vicious principle they had been compelled to give up, by the spirit of their legislation, which was at once unfriendly towards the negroes, and yet neglected to subject them to that discipline which the change in their social state had made so necessary. The laws passed by all the colonies were ill-calculated to facilitate the transition from slavery to freedom, but in none were they so defective as in Jamaica. In that island the manner in which the Assembly dealt with the fiscal, police, and other arrangements, was utterly opposed to all the dictates of political science and political economy, and it was not at all to be wondered at that failure should be the result. The island continued in a most unsatisfactory condition, and the Assembly entered into a long controversy with the Home Government with respect to abuses it refused to remedy. This led, in 1839, as my noble Friend (Lord Taunton) has remarked, to the suspension of the authority of the Jamaica Legislature being proposed. This measure was urgently required, though I thought then, and still think, that that proposal was not made in the form best calculated to obtain the sanction of Parliament. That Bill did not pass, a matter deeply to be regretted, for if it had I firmly believe that the condition of the island would be very different from what it now is; but the West Indian interest, supported by a very powerful opposition, and by some of those who called themselves colonial reformers, proved too strong for the administration of Lord Melbourne. The measure consequently failed, and the Assembly remained in possession of unchecked power to mismanage the affairs of the island. In 1846 it was determined by the British Parliament that there should be free trade in sugar. That measure led to a most violent opposition on the part of the West Indian party, and every opportunity was made use of for the purpose of thwarting the Government in all its measures, with the view of compelling it, if possible, to abandon its policy, and recommend to Parliament the restoration of protection. The opposition of the colonists was successful in defeating most of the measures designed for their benefit, but they totally failed in their real object of regaining the protection they had lost. And when a few years later the Administration was changed, the new Government, though composed of the statesmen who had been the great supporters of the planters, and from whom they expected so much, found that the abolition of protection had been attended with so much advantage to our trade and finances, that they did not attempt to induce Parliament to alter the policy which it had adopted. During the whole time, from 1834 onwards, the state of Jamaica continued to become worse and worse, but I entirely deny that the decline in the condition of the island is attributable either to the abolition of slavery or the establishment of free trade. The proof that it is not so is to be found in the fact that in other colonies, having fewer advantages and greater difficulties to struggle with than Jamaica, free trade and emancipation have in the end proved beneficial instead of injurious. Look, for instance, at the case of Trinidad. Trinidad, in 1846, when the sugar duties were altered, was in a most distressed condition; its planters and merchants were on the brink of insolvency, its finances were so embarrassed that it was with the greatest difficulty that the Government could find the means of providing for the most necessary expenses. But by the adoption of sound principles of legislation, by eschewing jobbery and corruption, by adopting a sound fiscal system, and by the wise administration of my noble Friend Lord Harris the colony was brought through its difficulties, and Trinidad is at this moment in an extremely prosperous condition. The production of sugar has been largely increased, its pecuniary difficulties are at an end, and there is an annual excess of revenue over expenditure, in spite of the large sums of money that have been expended in public works. In many of the other sugar colonies, and especially in Guiana and in Mauritius, where the Crown possesses, as in Trinidad, a larger authority than elsewhere, there has been a similar change for the better in the state of affairs, and in the prospects of the planters, notwithstanding their loss of protection. I confess this result is very gratifying to me, because it proves that the policy of 1846, which I assisted in recommending to your Lordships, was sound in its principles. During five years I had to discharge the painful and laborious task of maintaining both in this House and in the official correspondence with the colonies the policy of giving free trade to the colonies, and I am glad that the results have proved that the course adopted by the Government of that day was right. The adoption of this principle, so far from having been the ruin of the colonies, has, on the contrary, when accompanied by proper local measures, been the means of placing their property on a more stable footing than ever, since in the West Indies in former times, although the planters occasionally made large profits, but few years passed without their suffering extreme embarrassment and distress, which was the natural and necessary consequence of the artificial system in which they were placed. Having laboured for many years under great difficulty, and in spite of great opposition to maintain this principle, it is satisfactory to me to find it now clearly proved by the result that we have by adhering to it placed the prosperity of these colonies upon a far sounder and better basis than before. This contrast between Jamaica and the other sugar-producing colonies shows that it is not the abolition of protection or the abolition of slavery that is the cause of the misfortunes of the former. These misfortunes are the natural result of the gross mal-administration of the affairs of the island by the Legislature we are now going to abolish. It is now nearly twenty years since I pointed out to Sir Charles Grey, the then Governor of the colony, what would be the certain consequences of the policy to which the Assembly so obstinately adhered, and also the principles of the legislation required for the improvement of the population, and for placing society in a wholesome state. In the present state of affairs we see the result of refusing to act upon this advice. I am glad, however, to find that Her Majesty's Government have proposed a Bill in the shape of that now before the House; and I do not think it so wonderful, as some people do, that the Assembly of Jamaica has assented to this act of political suicide. As my noble Friend has shown, the political power in the island has hitherto been confined to a very few persons. The planting interest has had the power mainly in its own hands; and this interest is not composed of persons having a permanent interest in the colony, but of agents and overseers who are anxious to keep up the old abuses for the time, so as to enable them to make their fortunes and return home as speedily as possible. My late lamented friend Lord Elgin pointed out this fact to me as the most despairing feature in the state of the colony, that those who exercised the chief ascendancy were men who cared little or nothing what might follow, provided the system could be made to last their time. But, much as the colony has suffered in its commerce and industry from the false policy and mal-administration of the Assembly, still the negroes by slow degrees have acquired property and a corresponding amount of political influence; and it has lately become clear, looking to the various symptoms of a coming change, that in a short time the political ascendancy would have passed out of the hands of the whites into those of the negroes had the existing constitution been allowed to remain in force. This fact explains the readiness of the Jamaica Parliament to commit political suicide. Her Majesty's Government have acted most prudently in accepting that sacrifice, and in proposing to place the government of the colony under the authority of the Crown, restricted only by the responsibility of the Ministers to Parliament. From all the evidence I have been able to collect, I have come to the conclusion that for many years to come the negroes will be unfit to exercise political power, and, therefore, in my opinion to have abolished the authority of the oligarchy and to have placed the political power in the hands of the blacks would have left the colony in a worse position than before. I confess I should look with great alarm at a proposition to place the political power in the hands of those who wield the brute physical force of the colony. I should also regret the adoption of any half measure such as that which was originally proposed by the Assembly — namely, to place the power of legislation in the hands of a council composed partly of members appointed by the Crown, partly of members chosen by electors having a high property qualification from among the residents in the colony. Such a system would have maintained to a large extent the power in the hands of the existing oligarchy, and would have relieved the Crown from that responsibility which will now rest upon it. I therefore entirely approve the form of the Bill at present before us. I am particularly glad that the clause restricting the operation of the Bill to three years has been struck out by the other House—a restriction for which I saw no necessity It is sufficient for Parliament to legislate with the view of remedying present evils, leaving it to future Parliaments to give the colony such a government as its altered condition may demand. I am persuaded that in the first instance full power should be given to the Crown, and I hope that such power—which I trust will be unanimously granted by both Houses of Parliament—if used judiciously, will soon greatly alter for the better the condition of the colony. From all the evidence brought before me, I am persuaded that there is no peculiarity in the black race which will prevent their improvement; they are a people capable of great industry, although, doubtless, very excitable, and having certain faults that in time will disappear; but they are capable, when placed in proper circumstances, of earnest and persevering industry. But they must have some powerful motive to make them submit to toil, and in this they do not differ from whites. The real difficulty of inducing the negroes in most of the colonies to do regular work since emancipation has arisen from the fact that the cheapness and abundance of land has enabled them to supply all their wants with very little exertion. This difficulty might have been averted if proper means had in the first instance been taken to compel the negroes to pay such a price for the land they required as to make it necessary for them to do a fair amount of labour. This was the principle originally suggested by the late Mr. Gibbon Wakefield, which was earnestly pressed by myself and others on the West Indians in 1833. The present state of things in Barbadoes is a proof of the soundness of the theory of Mr. Gibbon Wakefield; there no complaint has been made of want of industry in the negroes, simply because they must work or starve; and it was a great blunder at the time of emancipation not to endeavour artificially to place the negroes elsewhere in a somewhat similar situation, which might then have been easily done. I am quite aware that the time has gone by when measures that would have been easy thirty years ago could be adopted, but still I am persuaded that the principle might with proper caution even now be acted upon at least to some extent. All depends, however, upon the manner in which the powers granted by this Bill are exercised by Her Majesty's Government and by those employed by them, and especially on the fitness for the duty of the persons into whose hands this great task of restoring prosperity to the island shall be committed. We should have in that colony not only a Governor of first-rate ability, but we should also have the assistance of men—not such as were usually found in a colony, but of men of the highest talents and acquirements sent from this country. These men should have a full acquaintance with all those great questions of social organization which have of late years attracted so much attention, in addition to a knowledge of the principles of political economy. This knowledge is absolutely essential in men who are to be engaged in putting the legislation of Jamaica on a satisfactory footing. I trust that the persons employed will be chosen with the view of carrying out this great object, and that Her Majesty's Government will not practise the false economy of sending out underpaid men to a tropical and unhealthy climate, but will give liberal salaries, which will enable them to send out men of talent and energy to work out the problem of organizing labour, and of making this magnificent and fertile island again one of the most productive of the West Indies.

Lord LYTTELTON said, that of all the deplorable features exhibited by the Jamaica papers the most distressing was that describing the demoralized state of the people, especially as regards those in the matrimonial state. Whatever authority was about to discharge the government of the island, he trusted attention would be given to the matter he had referred to, because without that no mere political arrangement could confer the least benefit upon the people of Jamaica.

The Earl of LONGFORD trusted that when the case of Governor Eyre came before Parliament consideration would be given to the fact that he had been left so long a time to administer the affairs of a considerable government in a position that was calculated very much to weaken his authority. It was not surprising that differences of opinion should have arisen between the members of the local Assembly and the Governor, when the latter could not tell from month to month whether he was Governor or not. He had visited many colonies, and spent much time there; but he had never in the whole course of his communication with colonists heard a good word for the Colonial Office. Indeed, one very respectable Chief Justice had expressed to him, in language it would not do for him to repeat, a very strong wish that "those fellows at home" would learn to leave the colonies alone. It was to be hoped that the recent history in Jamaica would tend to direct politicians at home to the whole question of colonial administration, which, in his opinion, was in a very unsatisfactory state, and was naturally held in very little favour, either at home or abroad.

The Duke of ARGYLL remarked that the present condition of the colony arose from their being left to their own devices, and from the Crown having no power to carry into effect the measures the Imperial Government thought necessary for the prosperity of the island.

Motion *agreed to*: Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

House adjourned at a quarter past
Six o'clock, to Thursday next,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 13, 1866.

MINUTES.]—New Writs Issued—*For* Louth, *v.* Right hon. Chichester Samuel Fortescue, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; *for* Tewkesbury, *v.* William Edward Dowdeswell, esquire, Chiltern Hundreds.

Public Bills—*Ordered*—Real Estate Intestacy*; Representation of the People.

First Reading—Representation of the People [68]; Real Estate Intestacy * [69].

Committee—Labouring Classes' Dwellings * [9].

Report—Labouring Classes' Dwellings * [9].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

ARMY—VENTILATING GUSSETS.

QUESTION.

Colonel SYKES said, he rose to ask the Secretary of State for War, What Reports have been made by Commanding Officers of Regiments to whom Merritt's Ventilating Gussets were issued with the regimental clothing in 1864, and whether he will lay them upon the table of the House?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, in reply, that those articles were issued during the last year for trial to six regiments. The Reports with regard to them would not be received till after the 31st of the present month. There would be no objection to laying the Reports on the table.

POOR RELIEF (SCOTLAND).

QUESTION.

Mr. CRUM-EWING said, he wished to ask the Lord Advocate, Whether, in consequence of a recent decision of the House of Peers, finding the practice which has prevailed in several Parochial Boards, in times of general distress, of granting at their own discretion assistance to able-bodied persons to be illegal, it is his intention to introduce such a measure as will render those proceedings lawful?

The LORD ADVOCATE said, he understood the Question of the hon. Member to relate to a recent decision in regard to the right to give relief to the able-bodied poor, and he had to state that it was his intention to bring in a Bill on the subject.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—QUESTION.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce any Bill in the present Session with reference to the Public Schools?

Sir GEORGE GREY: The Government intend to lay a Bill on the table of the other House on an early day after Easter.

EGYPT—THE SUEZ CANAL.

QUESTION.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in the Agreement or Convention recently entered into between the Porte and the French Authorities on the subject of the Suez Canal, there is any security taken against the employment in future of forced labour on those works, and whether such forced labour is, in fact, altogether discontinued?

Mr. LAYARD said, in reply, that forced labour had been discontinued for some time past in Egypt, and that the Convention recently entered into between the Porte and the French Authorities on the subject of the Suez Canal had reference only to the territorial rights of the Sultan.

MUNICIPAL SAVINGS BANKS.

QUESTION.

Colonel WILSON PATTEN said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been directed to Private Bills introduced during the present Session, giving powers to corporate bodies to establish Savings Banks on the security of corporate funds, and, if so, what are the intentions of the Government with respect to them?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, the attention of the Government had been called to that subject—as one of very considerable interest and importance—by the parties connected with one or both of the Bills now before that House. One of those Bills related to the town of Bradford, the other to the city of Manchester, and their object was to enable municipal bodies to establish municipal savings banks. Considering that the Government were themselves directly interested through their connection with two systems of savings banks—namely, both the old and the Post Office savings banks—he had felt a certain delicacy as to interfering with those proposals, and was exceedingly anxious that they should be brought fully under the notice of the House, so that the House might pass its own impartial judgment upon them, because it was quite clear that the Government ought not to be allowed to object to them upon the ground of competition, while, on the other hand, the question was one of very considerable importance, and it was very desirable that the attention of the House should be called to it. However, as the matter did not appear to have been taken up in that House, the Government had been in communication with the parties. There could be no doubt whatever as to the security which those municipal bodies might offer for any deposits intrusted to them. One or two other points were perhaps more doubtful. It was doubtful whether that was a question altogether to be dealt with by a private or by a public Bill; but it was quite plain, upon principle, that what one municipality might claim another municipality might claim also. The other point was what means municipal bodies who had no ordinary banking facilities could possess for the immediate satisfaction of all claims which might be made against them. He could only say that his right hon. Friend (the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) had been in communication with the gentlemen who were interested in the prosecution of the Bills referred to, and he hoped that in a few days he would be able to arrive at some conclusion in the matter. In that event he would convey to the House the resolution of the Government in reference to those Bills.

MR. ROEBUCK said, he wished to know, whether the Bills in question were to be treated as Public or Private Bills, believing this to be a point of importance on which the House ought to be informed?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that in many instances it was very difficult to decide whether a Bill should be treated as a private or a public Bill, and no Member of the Government was any authority in determining the matter. He presumed, however, that on a future occasion the Government would state distinctly its views in reference to the Bills in question. He felt that the subject was one of great public interest, and he had no hesitation in saying that it would have been much more satisfactory to him if they had been dealt with as public Bills.

CATTLE DISEASE.
RINDERPEST AMONG SHEEP.
QUESTIONS.

MR. LONG said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Government were taking any steps to ascertain if the disease resembling the Rinderpest which has recently been observed among sheep in different parts of the United Kingdom be really the Rinderpest, or not.

MR. H. A. BRUCE said, in reply, that during the last six months the attention of the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council had been specially directed to this subject, and during that time twenty-six different phases of the outbreak of what was supposed to be the rinderpest had been reported in eleven different counties, as many as nine occurring in the county of Norfolk alone. The conclusion at which the veterinary surgeons of the Privy Council had arrived at, was that the disease was identical with the rinderpest among cattle. The soundness of this conclusion was greatly doubted in various parts of the country, but especially in Scotland. He would, therefore, briefly state the grounds upon which the veterinary surgeons had arrived at their conclusion. The first experiment made was upon a sheep confined in a pen in which a cow had died of the rinderpest, and the sheep was attacked by the disease and died. The next experiment was more conclusive. At the Veterinary College some sheep were inoculated with a quantity of rinderpest *virus*, when they were invariably attacked, and all, excepting two, died of what appeared to be the rinderpest. The two surviving sheep were then inoculated with smallpox *virus*, but that disease immediately seized them, and from this fact it was clear that the malady which attacked them in the first instance was not smallpox. The local inspectors consequently had been directed to deal with diseased sheep in the same way as with cattle attacked by the rinderpest. He might add that the disease did not appear to spread from sheep to sheep as readily as it did among cattle. In Scotland some attempts had been made to convey the rinderpest to sheep by exposure under circumstances calculated to induce it, but unsuccessfully, and hence arose the peculiar disbelief in that country that the disease now afflicting the sheep was the rinderpest.

MR. DENT said, he wished to know who were the veterinary surgeons?

MR. H. A. BRUCE: Professor Simonds and Professor Brown.

MR. LONG said, he would beg to ask, what steps the Government have taken to check the spread of the disease?

MR. H. A. BRUCE replied that the steps taken were identically the same with those which had been taken with regard to cattle.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY (IRELAND.)
QUESTION.

SIR HUGH CAIRNS said, he wished to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Why the vacancy in the Senate of the Queen's University, Ireland, has not been filled up, and why the summonses issued to fix a day for the Convocation of the University to hold an Election for such vacancy were rescinded; whether the Government propose to ask the Senate or the Convocation to surrender the existing Charter of the University; and whether he was of opinion that it is *intra vires* of the Senate to make any such surrender?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) said, there were now several vacancies in the Senate of the Queen's University. The number prescribed by the Charter was twenty-four, but not more than eighteen had been appointed. There were now two vacancies occasioned by deaths, one of which would be filled up by the Crown, and the other by Convocation. He presumed the Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the vacancy to be filled up by Convocation. The Senate was the body to summon Convocation, but he had ascertained by telegram from Dublin that day that no summonses had yet been issued, and consequently no summonses had been rescinded. With respect to the two last branches of the Question they were matters of law, and being still under the consideration of the Law Officers of the Crown, it would be premature and improper for him to pronounce any opinion upon the subject.

TURNPIKE TRUSTS.—QUESTION.

Mr. WHALLEY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in reference to Turnpike Trusts, Whether he intends to give any and what effect to the Report of the Committee of 1864 as to the abolition of Tolls, therein stated to be—

> "Unequal in pressure, costly in collection, inconvenient to the public, and injurious as causing a serious impediment to intercourse and trafic;"

and that the "Abolition thereof would be beneficial to the community?"

Mr. BARING said, in reply, that effect had been given to a certain extent to the recommendations of the Report referred to by the hon. Gentleman. With respect to the general recommendations of the Committee, however, it would be more convenient to the House that any lengthy explanation which might be necessary should be deferred till the second reading of the Bill dealing with those matters.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

QUESTION.

Sir FITZROY KELLY said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he is able to inform the House at what time he proposes to bring forward the Budget?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, I will give the hon. and learned Member the best answer in my power. If the debate on the Electoral Franchise Bill be concluded to-night, and the Bill be brought in, our intention is to propose its second reading on the 12th of April, which is regarded as the first day for the dispatch of serious and important business after the Easter recess. Our intention then is to prosecute the proceedings consequent on the second reading of the Bill to their completion without any interruption from any business under the control of the Government, and to bring forward the Budget on the first Government night after those proceedings shall have been completed.

OUTDOOR CUSTOMS OFFICERS.

QUESTION.

Mr. BLAKE said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of Government to increase the salaries and alter the classification of the outdoor Officers of Customs, as has been recently done in the instance of the clerks of the indoor department?

Mr. CHILDERS, in reply, said, the officers to whom the hon Gentleman alluded were the tide-waiters. Their salaries had been considered some time ago, and there was no intention now to alter them. The salaries had been increased at the out-ports, and there was no intention on the part of the Treasury to make any general alteration in those rates at the present time.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—WOOLWICH ARSENAL.—QUESTION.

In reply to Sir Matthew Ridley,

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, that there were at present thirty-five pairs of horses engaged in Woolwich Arsenal at a cost of 8*s.* 8*d.* per day each. They were principally employed to convey the heavy guns from the factory to the proof-house, and to remove stores from the wharves to the store-houses. There were more than 50,000 tons of coals landed at the arsenal each year, and large quantities of iron and other stores were also imported. The arsenal spread over 260 acres, and consequently the distance which some of the stores had to be removed was very great. When the subject was fully examined he was convinced the hon. Baronet would not think the item in respect of horses contained in the Army Estimates was excessive.

THE TAME VALLEY VIADUCT.

QUESTION.

Sir ROBERT PEEL said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he has any objection to state to the House the contents of the Report which he had received from the officer who had been sent down to make an examination of the Tame Valley Viaduct?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON replied that he was unable at that moment to state what the contents of the Report were. There would, however, be no objection to lay it on the table of the House.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM—REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. SECOND NIGHT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [12th March], "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend the Right of Voting at Elections of Members of Parliament in England and Wales." (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. LOWE: Sir, in the course of a long and illustrious career this House of Commons has gathered into its hands a very large proportion of the political power of the country. It has outlived the influence of the Crown; it has shaken off the dictation of the aristocracy; in finance and taxation it is supreme; it has a very large share in legislation; it can control and unmake, and sometimes nearly make, the executive Government. Probably, when the time shall arrive that the history of this nation shall be written as the history of that which has passed away, it may be thought that too much power and too much influence were concentrated and condensed in this great Assembly, and that England put too much to hazard on the personal qualifications of those who sit within these walls. But, Sir, in proportion as the powers of the House of Commons are great and paramount, so does the exploit of endeavouring to amend its constitution become one of the highest and noblest efforts of statesmanship. To tamper with it lightly, to deal with it with unskilled hands, is one of the most signal acts of presumption or folly. When we speak of a Reform Bill, when we speak of giving the franchise to a class which has it not, of transferring the electoral power from one place to another, we should always bear in mind that the end we ought to have in view is not the class which receives the franchise, not the district that obtains the power of sending Members to Parliament, but that Parliament itself in which those Members are to sit, and for the sake of constituting which properly those powers ought alone to be exercised. To consider the franchise as an end in itself; to suppose that we should confer it on any one class of persons because we think them deserving, that we should take it away from one place because it is small, or give it to another because it happens to be large, is in my opinion to mistake the means for the end. The franchise is an enormous advantage to this country—we are naturally enamoured of it; but when we look upon it in the light which I have just mentioned, and regard the conferring of it as the ultimate effort of statesmanship, as a matter of Reform, we, it appears to me, fall into the same error as the man would do who, having found that money had contributed much to his pleasure when young, and to his power in middle life, should, when he was approaching the close of his days—when pleasure could charm him no more, and power was no longer within his grasp—turn his attention from the end to the means, and terminate by loving money for its own sake. I mention this because I have, I think, some right to complain of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the manner in which he introduced the great subject under discussion to the notice of the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us, in substance, that he feared he had much to say to the House, and that he would not, therefore, take up our time by entering into the arguments or reasons in favour of a revision of our electoral system, or the extension of the electoral franchise. Now, Sir, I wish to speak on this matter with perfect temper and good humour; but I cannot help believing that my right hon. Friend will be of opinion that in taking the course I have just mentioned he did not deal altogether respectfully with the House. It is not right that a great Assembly like this should be called upon to entertain a proposition of the very utmost moment, touching most nearly a most vital part of our Constitution—effecting, in fact, if carried into law, an immense re-distribution of political power and an enormous alteration in the constituencies of the country—it is not right, I say, that such a proposition should be introduced to us, without having the reasons which induced the Government to lay such a proposition before us stated by the Minister by whom it is introduced, so that we may have something to guide us in estimating his scheme and the principles upon which it is based. For my own part, I am not very particularly wedded to anything just because it exists, and I am quite prepared to follow experience and expediency as my guide in political matters wherever they may lead me. I have no prejudice in favour of the existing state of things. I care not, as far as any feelings or prejudices of my own are concerned, what the amount of the franchise is, or what the place in which Parliamentary power is vested. These are questions I am free to consider, because I wish to be guided by experience and induction, which, from their very nature, are always open to new light, from whatever quarter it may come, and by which everything is repudiated which savours in any degree of dogmatism. If, therefore, I complain of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this matter, it is not because I am not willing to give the best consideration in my power to any proposal which the Government may make with the view of improving the constitution of this House; but although I am perfectly ready to entertain such a question, I do think it is but fair to existing institutions to say that the burden of proof is in their favour—that the presumption is in favour of that which is until it is removed by some argument which shows that that can be replaced by something better. The way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed this great change without condescending to offer a word depreciatory of the present system, points out its faults and suggests remedies for them, leads to the conclusion that he assumed the burden of proof to be in the opposite direction to that which I have indicated, and that the defenders of the Constitution are bound to answer in the first instance the arguments of the innovators instead of waiting until the latter have made out their case. I, for one, deprecate that spirit of innovation which assumes that what exists is wrong, and introduces a proposal which distinctly calls upon us to pull down the noble work of our forefathers before a single word is said to show why we should assail it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer found plenty of time to deal with a great many subjects much less important. He discussed with the utmost sagacity and felicity the difference between "annual value" and "gross estimated rental," while he was eloquent in distinctions—in which we could not all follow him—with respect to compound householders, tenants of flats, lodgers, and other abstruse personalities. But, although he ably entered into all these matters, and with a detail which reminds me more of a speech on the Budget than on Reform, he did not find—so pinched was he for time—a moment to say a single word why the Constitution under which we have lived so long might not be left to us a little longer.

Passing from that subject, I will state in a few words to the House all that I deem it to be necessary to address to them with respect to the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman asks leave to introduce. This Bill proposes, in short, to increase the whole electors of the country, whom he estimates at 900,000, by 400,000—that is to say, nearly one-third. [An hon. MEMBER: One-half.] Yes, one-half of the present constituency, but only one-third of that which will exist if the Bill passes into law. That is, nearly one-half of the existing number, and one-third of what the number would be. He proposes to make in the counties 171,000 new electors, and in the boroughs 204,000, the latter being almost altogether derived from the single class of persons renting at £10, or under £10. It will be almost entirely so, but there may be some slight difference—144,000 are absolutely and the rest pretty nearly so. With regard to the county franchise, I have only one observation to make. The proposition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will very much enlarge the electoral area, enormously increase the expense of elections, and create a great re-distribution of political power. That may be right, or it may be wrong, but before we pass it we should be told the reason why. Then coming to the boroughs, the case is much more serious. The right hon. Gentleman opposed the voters in counties as being of the middle class to the voters in boroughs as being of the working class; and, according to the right hon. Gentleman's showing, if this Bill pass, we are to have 330,000 voters in the constituencies belonging to the working class, and 360,000 in the constituencies not working men. That is the system he proposes for our adoption. This leads us to a very grave consideration, because not only the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, but the statistics laid before the House show that the number of persons belonging to the working class already admitted to the franchise is 126,000, or about one-fifth of the whole amount of electors. That is a most grave and momentous fact. Look what it proves. It proves in the first place that the Government were entirely mistaken as regards the main ground on which they introduced the present measure. The main ground they put forth for bringing in the Bill—until they came to bring it in, when they thought it expedient to put forth no ground at all—was that the best of the working class were excluded from the franchise. The authority on which I make this statement is an authority which no one can dispute—it is a work on the English Government and Constitution issued by Lord Russell twice in the course of last year—once in the spring, and again in the autumn. This is a passage from the Preface to the work—

> "But may there not be still improvements?"

—in the Reform Bill, the noble Lord means; and this is the answer he gives—

> "Each of the last four Ministries have been willing to add as it were a supplement to the Reform Act. For my part, I should be glad to see the sound morals and clear intelligence of the working classes more fully represented. They are kept out of the franchise, which Ministers of the Crown have repeatedly asked for them, partly by the jealousy of the present holders of the suffrage, and partly by a vague fear that, by their greater numbers, they will swallow up all other classes. Both those obstacles may be removed by a judicious modification of the proposed suffrage."

That proves most clearly that, in the opinion of Lord Russell as expressed last autumn, the best of the working classes had not the franchise. Is that true? Take the right hon. Gentleman's own statistics in your hands, and compare them with that Preface. Can you reconcile them? No, for they are absolutely irreconcilable. It is quite clear that Earl Russell wrote under a delusion, which was shared in by every gentleman who used the argument, and that I believe comprehended almost every Gentleman on the Treasury Bench. He was under the delusion that we all more or less shared in and believe that the working classes were excluded from the franchise, and that there was a sharp line drawn at the £10 franchise, above which the working men could not penetrate. That being the whole proposition which the noble Lord put forward with respect to Reform, and that being proved to be founded upon a mistake—I want to know upon what principle it is that the Government, having received the statistics which my noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) advised them to obtain, showing that these people, for the sake of whom they asked for a Reform Bill, were already represented—I want to know why they now go on at all with a Bill in respect of the representation of the people. Surely this was worth explaining. We could have perfectly understood it if these statistics had not been there; my right hon. Friend would have told us at once that it was to enfranchise the working men; but these facts being as they are, my right hon. Friend says absolutely nothing, but assumes that this House is going to entertain a proposition without knowing in the least what his adhesion to it in his own mind is based upon, or what reason there is for asking the House to accede to it. These statistics prove a little more. They prove a thing for saying which I have been greatly reproved—that the franchise was, in fact, in the power to a great extent of the working classes. I have been reviled in the best and in the worst of English for the statement, and nobody has taken me to task more severely than the noble Lord whose Preface I have read, because he has introduced a fresh series of paragraphs into his Preface to the last edition merely for the purpose of castigating me for saying anything so unkind and so untrue as that the franchise was in their power. All I can say is, if it is not in their power, how did they get there? These statistics prove something more still, and what is also very well worth the notice of the Government. It is this—I do not apprehend we have any statistics to show us when it was that this great increase in the constituencies took place, but I think no one who knows the history of this country can doubt that it is owing to the great expansion of everything during the last twenty or thirty years. We know the causes at work which produced the expansion, but are they permanent or are they transient? The first cause was undoubtedly the discovery of gold in California and Australia, and the consequent depreciation of the precious metals gave an apparent increase of prices both in wages and in commodities. This led to higher rents and to higher wages—though I do not wish to embarrass the subject by going into figures. Another cause which kept up the rate of wages was the great emigration which took place, and is still taking place, from Ireland. Another cause was the vast extension in our trade and commerce, making labour every day more and more in demand. Therefore, I am not wrong, I think, in considering that these causes which have existed hitherto have their efficacy by no means spent, and what we have a right to look at is, that the process of spontaneous enfranchisement that has been going on since the passing of the Reform Bill will go on hereafter, and probably with redoubled vigour. We have to build upon an admission — I cannot extract many principles from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, but it is impossible to manipulate figures and statements without implying something—and one thing that he laid down was that he did not wish to see the working classes in a majority in the constituencies in this country; at least, he said he did not much care himself, but for the sake of weaker brethren he would not like to see that. And, therefore, he rejected—with a bitter pang no doubt—the £6 franchise, and took the £7, because the £6 would have given 428,000, which would have been a clear majority of 362,000, whereas the £7 franchise gives 330,000, which leaves a very small majority the other way. But it must be remembered that we are not speaking for a year or two, but for the future, and I would ask the House what are the prospects of the constituencies—what are the chances that the principle which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not screw his nerves up to face would remain inviolate? Is it not certain that in a few years from this the working men will be in a majority? Is it not certain that causes are at work which will have a tendency to multiply the franchise—that the £6 houses will become the £7 ones, and the £9 houses will expand to £10? There is no doubt an immense power of expansion; and therefore, without straining anything at all, it is certain that sooner or later we shall see the working classes in a majority in the constituencies. Look at what that implies. I shall speak very frankly on this subject, for having lost my character by saying that the working man could get the franchise for himself, which has been proved to be true, and for saying which he and his friends will not hate me one bit the less, I shall say exactly what I think. Let any Gentleman consider—I have had such unhappy experiences, and many of us have —let any Gentleman consider the constituencies he has had the honour to be concerned with. If you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness, and facility for being intimidated; or if, on the other hand, you want impulsive, unreflecting, and violent people, where do you look for them in the constituencies? Do you go to the top or to the bottom? It is ridiculous for us to allege that since the Reform Bill the sins of the constituencies or the voters are mainly comprised between £20 and £10. But, then, it has been said the £10 shopkeepers, and lodging-house keepers, and beerhouse keepers, are an indifferent class of people; but get to the artizan, and there you will see the difference. It is the sort of theory the ancients had about the north wind. The ancients observed that as they went further to the north the wind got colder. Colder and colder it got the further they went, just as the constituencies get worse and worse the nearer you approach £10. They reasoned in this way—If it is so cold when you are in front of the north wind, how very warm it would be if you could only get behind it. And, therefore, they imagined for themselves a blessed land we have all read of, where the people, called the Hyperboreans, were always perfectly warm, happy, and virtuous, because they had got to the other side of the north wind. It is the same view that my right hon. Friend takes with respect to the £10 franchise—if you go a little lower you get into the virtuous stratum. We know what those persons are who live in small houses —we have had experience of them under the name of "freemen"—and no better law, I think, could have been passed than that which disfranchised them altogether. The Government are proposing to enfranchise one class of men who have been disfranchised heretofore. This class, dying out under one name, the Government propose to bring back under another. That being so, I ask the House to consider what good we are to get for the country at large by this reduction of the franchise? The effect will manifestly be to add a large number of persons to our constituencies of the class from which if there is to be anything wrong going on we may naturally expect to find it. It will increase the expenses of candidates—it will enormously increase the expenses of management of elections, even supposing that everything is conducted in a legitimate and fair manner—and it will very much increase the expenses of electioneering altogether. If experience proves that corruption varies inversely as the franchise, you must look for more bribery and corruption than you have hitherto had. This will be the first and instantaneous result. Then, there is another which I wish to point out to hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House—their own experience will bear me out if they would frankly admit it—and that is, that by a singular retribution of Providence the main mischief will fall on the promoters of this Bill. A great many of these new electors are addicted to Conservative opinions; I do believe the franchise of the Government, if carried, will displace a number of most excellent Gentlemen on this side, and replace them with an equal number of Gentlemen from the other side of the House. But all this is merely the first stage. The first stage, I have no doubt, will be an increase of corruption, intimidation, and disorder, of all the evils that happen usually in elections. But what will be the second? The second will be that the working men of England, finding themselves in a full majority of the whole constituency, will awake to a full sense of their power. They will say, "We can do better for ourselves. Don't let us any longer be cajoled at elections. Let us set up shop for ourselves. We have objects to serve as well as our neighbours, and let us unite to carry those objects. We have machinery; we have our trades unions; we have our leaders all ready. We have the power of combination, as we have shown over and over again; and when we have a prize to fight for we will bring it to bear with tenfold more force than ever before." Well, when that is the case—when you have a Parliament appointed, as it will be, by such constituencies so deteriorated — with a pressure of that kind brought to bear, what is it you expect Parliament to stop at? Where is the line that can be drawn? The right hon. Gentleman has said to us that he does not pledge Government to any re-distribution of seats, but if the Government should bring it forward he thinks this Parliament might be kept alive in order to effect that re-distribution. I am very much obliged to my right hon. Friend; but for my part I think Parliamentary life would not be worth preserving on those terms. Look at the position Parliament will occupy. As long as we have not passed this Bill we are masters of the situation. Let us pass the Bill, and in what position are we? That of the Gibeonites—hewers of wood and drawers of water, rescued for a moment from the slaughter that fell on the other Canaanites in order that we may prepare the Bill for re-distribution, with a threat hanging over our heads that if we do not do the work we shall be sent about our business and make way for another Parliament.

Thus much for the two main features of the Bill. But there is another feature in the Bill—that it is only a Franchise Bill, and does not deal with re-distribution of seats at all. That was the advice given to the Government by the hon. Member for Birmingham in his speech at Rochdale, and they have followed his advice. I do not make it matter of cavil against them that they did so. It is lawful to be taught by an enemy; how much more by a friend? But the hon. Member for Birmingham was not always of this opinion. I will read a passage from a speech of his which, I think, will convey a rather different impression—

> "Repudiate without mercy any Bill of any Governments whatever its franchise, whatever its seeming concession, may be, if it does not distribute the seats which are obtained by the extinction of small boroughs mainly among the great cities and towns of the kingdom."

MR. BRIGHT: What are you reading from?

MR. LOWE: I will tell the hon. Member. But he has made so many speeches that it is not always easy to distinguish which. I am quoting from the speech delivered by him in 1859 at Bradford. There is a little bit more yet. He says—

> "The question of distribution is the very soul of the question, and unless you get that you will be deceived, and when the Bill is passed you may possibly have to lament that you are not in the position in which you would wish to find yourselves."

I read this not for the purpose of getting a laugh at the hon. Member for Birmingham, though I have no particular objection to that. I read it in order to point out to the House the working of the hon. Gentleman's mind. I have not the least doubt that the hon. Member for Birmingham, notwithstanding the apparent inconsistency of his speeches at Rochdale and Bradford, was perfectly consistent all the while. I believe he always had distinctly in view the re-distribution of seats. He has certain objects to obtain—which are not my objects, nor are they, I believe, the objects of many Members of the House—and having those objects, the hon. Gentleman felt, I think very justly, upon consideration, that the way to get a re-distribution of seats—at least such a re-distribution as he wants—is not to seek for it in the first instance. The present constituencies do not furnish a sufficiently powerful instrument for the purpose. He wanted an instrument to pulverize the representation, and therefore, like a good workman, he says, "Let us make the tools first, and then we shall speedily construct the machine." The tools for the construction of that machine are the House to be created by the Bill of the Government, brought in at his own instance, excluding the consideration of the re-distribution of seats until the Franchise Bill shall be carried, and an Assembly much more democratic in its nature than the present can be brought together. That is what I have to say with regard to the Bill of the Government. We shall have an opportunity of considering it on the second reading, but I earnestly hope that hon. Gentlemen will weigh what I have said.

And remember this, that there is another principle assumed throughout the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which is this—that you cannot possibly make constituencies too large so long as you do not put flagrantly improper people into them. That is, I believe, a mistake. It is quite possible to make constituencies so large as to deter from sitting in this House men of moderate opinions and moderate means who would be very valuable Members. It is easy to conceive that constituencies may be so large as to divide the representation between millionaires, to whom any expense is of no moment, and demagogues, who compensate for want of money by pandering to popular passions. The House must remember that Members of Parliament have thrown on them another duty than that of merely representing the people. It has been ever since the Revolution of 1688, and, if we do not destroy the conditions under which the arrangement subsists, it will continue to be the happy lot of this country, that the leading offices of the executive Government have only approached it through the vestibule of the House of Commons. If you form your House solely with a view to numbers, solely with a view to popular representation, whatever other good you obtain you will destroy the element out of which your statesmen must be made. You will lower the position of the executive Government, and render it difficult, if not impossible, to carry on that happy union between the two Powers which now exists. The Reform Bill of 1832 has certainly invigorated our legislation; but it may be a question whether it has been equally efficient in invigorating our executive Government.

And here, if I have not already trespassed too much on the indulgence of the House, I would just pause to inquire what reasons can possibly be alleged—the Government have given us none—for bringing in this Bill at all. Is it that it is demanded out of doors? The working classes have gone very wisely, as I myself would go, ten miles to hear the hon. Member for Birmingham; but have they demanded this Bill? Has there been any energy in the demand for such a franchise as this? There have been meetings at St. Martin's Hall and elsewhere, but the resolutions have always been for universal suffrage. ["No, no!"] Almost uniformly they have spoken very disrespectfully of the hon. Member for Leeds and his proposition. Have any petitions been presented for this Bill? The last account I heard of the petitions was that four had been presented; how many more are there? Those who met in St. Martin's Hall have spoken out. Mr. Odgers moved the first resolution, but what he said he wanted was an Act of Parliament to keep up wages. There was another man, a mason, I think, who soared to a higher degree of patriotism, and asked, "Why don't you pass an Act of Parliament to make Ireland happy at once?" I therefore conclude that there is no very overwhelming pressure for Reform from that quarter yet. Is it from the constituencies the pressure comes? Why, I have read a passage from Lord Russell's letter in which he says that it is on account of the selfishness of the constituencies that the working men are kept out. That is, in other words, the constituencies are not favourable to Reform. Well, is it from the Members of this House? There, again, I call the same witness. The noble Earl said to a deputation which went to him with very extreme views on the subject of Reform, "I agree with you in most of what you have said; but I anticipate the greatest difficulty from the House of Commons." Lastly—and owing to the delicacy of the question I would not put it only the public interests require that I should do so—is it from the Cabinet? There, again, I call on Lord Russell, because the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham asserted at a meeting that on the occasion of receiving a deputation, or on some other occasion, he found the noble Lord as ardent as possible for Reform, but that he told him he had immense difficulties to deal with in his Cabinet.

MR. BRIGHT: I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was at that meeting; but I say that there is not a word of truth in the statement. Lord Russell has never said one word to me that would in any way inform me what the opinion of any Member of his Cabinet was. I have no recollection of having said anything such as the right hon. Gentleman alleges. If he is quoting anything that he has read, it is something which I never said—something which was incorrectly reported.

MR. LOWE: I have no wish to persevere in attributing anything to the hon. Gentleman which he denies having said. What I have quoted I read in *The Star*, though, of course, I am quoting from memory. I take in *The Star* when I want any information about the hon. Member. Well, now let us come to reason on the thing. It is said that it is in deference to public opinion this Bill is brought in. It is not because the working man is excluded. I have shown that. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that hon. Gentlemen on both sides have entered this House committed to Reform. Now, this is a question of high morality, and I wish hon. Gentlemen to turn this matter seriously in their minds. I apprehend that any Gentleman who enters this House does not enter it as the Member for any particular borough or county, but as a representative of the whole country; and he enters it bound by an obligation which no promise he has given can add to, or take away from, one jot or tittle. That obligation is that to the best of his ability he will honestly do his duty to the country. Well, then, if a Gentleman finds himself hampered by pledges which touch his honour, there is always a course open to him to take. If he has got into a situation incompatible with honour, he should get out of it. If he remain in it he will be in that position described by one of our greatest poets—

"His honour in rooted dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful made him falsely true."

I hope, therefore, whatever may be the fate of this question, we shall not hear that hon. Gentlemen are pledged to act contrary to their consciences, and to do what they believe will be injurious to their country.

I have now very little more to add in respect of the reasons for introducing this measure. I find nothing so difficult as to get a Reformer to assign his reasons. The plan is to assume that there are reasons. Bring in the Bill; *solvitur ambulando*; by walking into the subject. In the arguments put forward on this subject we very seldom hear a Gentleman take it up and argue it from the beginning, so as to show us why we should have Reform at all. I do not now say we should not have it; but I say that you should not argue the Reform question as if the franchise were a boon which you had at your disposal, and of which you should make an equal distribution. You should not deal with it as if it were the Banda and Kirwee prize money which you were going to distribute. Is it a consideration of that kind which should form part of the political system of a great Empire? In fact, we have *à priori* grounds of all kinds alleged. But the franchise is not to be given on an *à priori* principle of justice. This is not a question to be decided *à priori*, or on what a Gentleman can evolve from the depths of his inner consciousness. It is a question of practical experience of the working of our laws—one as to the best machinery we can have for the work we have to do. I can well understand how such notions get root among the people. When the common people are told that there is anything to be got, they think that, as in the administration of justice, there should be equality to all. They think the Government ought to distribute everthing equally, as if something was to be divided between co-partners. But that is an entire misunderstanding of the real business of a Government. Government does not deal with justice. It deals with expediency. The object is to construct the best machinery for the purpose to which it is to be applied. We may violate any law of symmetry, equality, or distributive justice in providing the proper machinery to enable us to do what is required of us. That being so, I will now state what I think the Government really ought to have done, and which it has not done. As this Bill, though it works on the constituencies, really is a Bill to alter the Constitution of the House, and to redistribute power in the House, I say it is the bounden duty of the Government to begin their inquiries by a minute examination of the state of this House—to see wherein it has succeeded and wherein it has failed. When that is done, let them still further improve what they find good if they can do so, and remedy what they find to have failed. It is the duty of the Government, like any other physicians, to study the case with which they have to deal. If they do otherwise they are acting like a physician who spends his time in mixing drugs and sharpening lancets, and never takes the trouble to see what is the matter with his patient. As the Government do not appear to have conducted such an examination as I have suggested, perhaps we may with advantage do a little in this way for ourselves. I have the most unfeigned respect and veneration for this House, and therefore I should not wish to see its constitution altered without good grounds; but let us try to do what is the most difficult of all things—let us endeavour to acquire self-knowledge; let us try "to see ourselves as others see us." This House has been called the "mirror of the nation," as if the nation had nothing to do but look at this House in order to see itself as in a looking-glass. Now, I want the House to look at itself in this mirror. I think, then, we may say, without self-praise, that this House holds—not only in England, but throughout the whole world—a position far above that ever held by any other deliberative Assembly that ever existed. It is more respected all over the world, its debates are more read, and they exercise more influence on mankind than those of assemblies infinitely more popular. Ought we not to be proud, then, of the position which this House occupies in the body politic of nations? Well, I think I may go further, and say that the functions which it has principally to discharge—those of finance—it has discharged with greater success than any other deliberative Assembly. Of course it is not perfect, nothing human is. I dare say there are people who think that the Votes for the army and navy are outdoor relief for the aristocracy, that the Church is in the same category, and so forth; but the majority of the people of this country are satisfied that the finances are managed by the House in a manner creditable both to the House and the nation. If I go further, it must be said of this House that it never has been deaf to any appeal for the protection of the humbler classes. I know there is a clamour that the poor man is not represented in this House. But can any one say that the interests of the poor are neglected here? Look to the debates we have had on the cases of poor women who have been removed in steamers from this country to Ireland. In this House immediate attention is given to everything affecting the poor. It is impossible to find a remedy always, but such cases always receive attention. I will not say what this House has done in legislation; I said it last year, and I will not repeat it. But I think I may say this House is a very orderly assembly—one of the most orderly of deliberative assemblies. When we go to other places—and indeed we need not go further than a place not 100 miles from us, we find that the House of Commons will bear comparison with any other assembly for the regularity of its proceedings. It is independent also. Whatever may have happened 100 years ago no one will say that there is any personal corruption in the House of Commons now. It is industrious, too. We labour more hours, and get through a greater amount of business, than any other Assembly in the world. These are great merits. I want to know, will the Bill which the Government have proposed leave all these things as it finds them? Will the constituencies in their altered character have no influence on the House? As the polypus takes its colour from the rock to which it affixes itself, so do the Members of this House take their character from the constituencies. If you lower the character of the constituencies, you lower that of the representatives, and you lower the character of this House. I do not want to say anything disagreeable, but if you want to see the result of democratic constituencies, you will find them in all the assemblies of Australia, and in all the assemblies of North America. But this House, like all human institutions, possesses imperfections, and I will point out one or two of them. In the first place, a great change has been operating since the year 1832, which no one has noticed, but which, I think, ought to have been taken into consideration. That change is this, that the House of Commons is now much nearer its constituents and much more influenced by them than it was before. In old days when a man left his constituents there was a great gulf between him and them, but now the constituents have a second function in addition to electing their Members. They can communicate with them by railway and by telegraph, and sometimes it has happened that the vote of a Member has been changed in the course of a debate by a telegram received from his constituents. A measure is sometimes proposed but not fully gone into, and the local press, although insufficiently informed on the question, takes it up and argues upon it, and the result is that the constituents make up their mind on the subject before they have heard the real issue to be raised, and they force their conclusions on their representatives though these may be far better informed. The less informed tribunal, therefore, acquires more influence than it should over the superior and better informed tribunal. These are small blots, perhaps, but they are worth mentioning, because I want to ask whether more democratic constituencies would be inclined to give their Members more freedom than they have at present? Would they be more tolerant of the opinions of the honest and able man who does not follow the whim of the moment? Would they be more patient, more tolerant, and more inclined to respect real dignity and consistency of character than they are now? Then there is another subject, and a very serious one indeed, which I have already touched upon—that is, the relations subsisting between this House and the executive Government. Now this House and the executive Government working together form a most invaluable institution. The House derives support from having a Government to lead it, dignity from its power of access to the very fountains of all political knowledge, and authority and information from being able to exercise the privilege of interrogating the Ministers of the Crown—a privilege of which it has largely availed itself this evening. On the other hand, the Ministers of the Crown derive strength and many advantages from being placed in immediate contact with the Legislature. They are not placed in a position like that of the Secretary of Finance in America, who is obliged to get a private Member to propose his financial measures. Here all the Departments of the Government are represented—its Members sit in this House and have in debate the support and assistance of their friends and colleagues when the policy of the Government is attacked. I hold, therefore, that they gain infinitely by contact with each other, and that anything which would tend to sever the connection between them must be dangerous and most mischievous. It is painful to observe that the first Reform Bill, however successful it may have been in legislation, has not been equally successful in this matter. Since I have had the honour of sitting here it has been painful to observe the increasing weakness of the executive Government in this House. Formerly, if a Gentleman moved for Papers which, in the opinion of the Government, ought not to be produced, or which it would be unwise to put the country to the expense of printing, the Ministers resisted the Motion, and inconvenience or expense was saved to the public. But who resists such Motions now? Formerly, if a Committee were asked for, to inquire into a subject which had been already threshed out and examined into, or one which it was not proper to investigate, the Minister of the Department to which it related could get up in his place and say, "I cannot grant such a Committee." What Minister can say so now? Our ancestors, when they had once settled in their own minds that a thing was right, acted according to their convictions. Now, however, if a question is important and difficult it is delegated to a Committee; if not to a Committee, to a Commission, or it is delegated to some local authority, or it is made an open question. The whole machinery, in fact, has fallen a great deal too much into the hands of this House, and the effect necessarily must be, if the process goes on, to injure the influence and standing of this House; because, if the House should appoint a Committee to transact the business of every public office behind the Minister, it would incur an immense amount of responsibility and blame which is now laid upon the shoulders of the executive Government, and which the Government on its dissolution carries away with it as the scapegoat carried on its head the sins of the whole congregation. All these things are matters of very serious importance. You are aware that the wise men who founded the Constitution of America knew that, with its democratic foundation, it would be absolutely impossible to have the English system, so they established a system under which the executive Government and the Legislature should exist for a different period of years, and should be elected by different authorities, in order that they might have no point of contact with each other. The feebleness which that quality imparted to the Executive and the Legislature in America may be seen in the discord which has broken out between the head of the Executive and the Legislature. So long as we retain our present Constitution such a state of things could not exist for a moment in this country. And, therefore, it seems to me quite evident that if this House means to maintain the great power and influence which it exercises over the executive Government, it must beware of putting itself on too democratic a foundation. In proportion as it does so it will lose the power of working the existing system, until at last it will be driven, as the Australian and other colonies will ultimately be driven, to appoint the Executive for a number of years certain, whether the Executive be, or whether it be not, in harmony with the Legislature of the time. Now, I ask the House again whether with America and Australia before us, and with proof that it is the democratic state of their society and institutions which mainly renders a system like ours unworkable in those countries, it is wise in us to push forward in a direction which, though it may make this House more popular, will deprive it of the noblest property it possesses, that of working in accordance with the executive Government. Then, again, elections are day by day becoming more expensive—I refer, of course, to legitimate expenses. It is not difficult to account for this. A torrent of wealth is flowing into the country, and persons naturally seek a seat in this House—some for political purposes, and some for purposes non-political. There are, for instance, the representatives of great companies and great interests, and gentlemen wishing to get into society under the stimulus of their wives and daughters. I say that this is a most serious matter, because it is only through this House that the most important Members of the Government can enter the Government; and if you require, in addition to the immense labour and the vicissitudes to which public life is subject, that the aspirants to office should expend more in conciliating their electors than they receive from the public, you will make public life impossible to the class of men which you wish to have. I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how long he thinks the small boroughs would exist after a democratic Constitution has been brought into effect—those small boroughs on behalf of which he made so eloquent a speech in 1859, as the places which sent to Parliament such men as Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Canning, and Peel. How long does he think those boroughs would survive the measure which he has brought in without a word of explanation on this important branch of the subject? And will the right hon. Gentleman tell us how, when these boroughs are thrown away, he proposes to supply their place? For, unless this House is willing, like the Congress of America, to put an end altogether to its connection with the executive Government, it is necessary either that something of the kind should be kept up or other means devised for bringing about the same result. It is better that the truth should be told at once than that we should go on encouraging people in the belief that the Government which we now happily carry on can be carried on under conditions inimical to its existence.

Then there is the question of the "Private Business" in the House of Commons:—And I must say that I view with the greatest jealousy and alarm the degree to which this House has become a machine for the transaction of what is called "Private Business." We fancy that we are investigating the schemes of people who have raised capital for the purpose of carrying them out, and that we are simply ascertaining whether the public assent ought to be given to those schemes or not. But, in reality, we are doing nothing of the kind. We are investigating schemes got up by people with no capital at all in order that they may sell the approval of this House in the Stock Exchange. Then, Sir, there are other affairs equally unpleasant, such as Government subsidies and contracts. Now, I cannot express how much I wish that an end could be put to this state of things; but do you think that by lowering materially the franchise below the present £10 you will redress any of these evils? Is it the result of our experience, looking at America, and at the democratic institutions there, whatever merits they may have, that the people are jealous of the moral character of their representatives? Did you ever hear of a man who was ostracized from public life in America in consequence of his having committed a murder, a forgery, a perjury, or anything of that kind? Things which would not be tolerated for an instant in England are passed by without notice in America. For however impetuous and impatient democratic constituencies may be of the acts of their Members in matters where their prejudices are affected, they are singularly loose in their requirements in other respects.

I think, then, that I have shown that such a Bill as the Government intends to bring in, while it would not in any degree alleviate any of the faults which I have taken the liberty with all respect to point out in the constitution of this House, would aggravate every one of them, and there is not a single merit described in this imperfect sketch which it would not injuriously affect. Now, I want the Chancellor of the Exchequer to show us how this measure would work in regard to this House. My sketch is imperfect, and possibly may be entirely erroneous, but let the Government make their sketch or theory upon the subject. Let them tell us what are the faults in the House of Commons, and how the present measure will remedy those faults; but let them not fling the measure on the table and say that we must adopt it, without hearing one single reason in favour of or against a state of things which has existed so long and so happily. It has been said, indeed, that precisely the same arguments have been used now as were used in 1832; but you must remember that to make a good argument two things are requisite—first, that the principle itself be sound, and secondly that the fact corresponds to the fact which it assumes. Now, the arguments against Reform in 1832 were excellent, only they did not correspond to the facts of the case. The question which hon. Gentlemen beg in representing the two cases as parallel is—Are the facts of the case now the same as they were in 1832? Well, Sir, that is a question I am not going to enter into; but I may just point out this—that in 1832 the controversy was perfectly defined. The question was—Did the system then existing work well or not? One side maintained that it did work well, the other contended that it did not; and the country decided very rightly, as I, for one, think that it did not. But that is not the controversy now. It is now admitted that the system does work well; and the controversy now is, ought we not still to alter it? Take, for instance, a very clever letter, signed "H.," which appeared in *The Times* of yesterday. In reply to the question what good a Reform Bill could be expected to accomplish, the writer said—

> "I am quite willing, for the sake of this argument, to answer 'none.' Nevertheless, I reply, even if that be so, the passing of a Reform Bill is a positive advantage,"

—simply, as I suppose, because gentlemen are, as they call themselves, "committed." That is, for the sake of preserving our consistency, we are to do that which we know to be injurious to the best interests of the country. You must also make this distinction between the present time and 1832. The grievances that were complained of in 1832 were practical grievances. Do not believe for a moment that the House of Commons was reformed simply on account of the anomalies of the system. The House of Commons was reformed because the public mind was revolted by things which they thought bad in the legislation and government of the country, and seized upon those anomalies as the weapons to abate the nuisance. That, being a practical grievance, has been redressed, and led for a certain time to a settlement of the question. But, Sir, nobody ever settles a question by remedying a mere theoretical grievance, and that is just the grievance we have now to deal with. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us in his speech, as one great inducement to pass his Bill, that we should find in it a complete settlement of the question, and that he hoped that impracticable persons—I do not know whether I was one to whom he referred—if for no other reason, would be induced to give their assent to the Bill because it would be a settlement of the question. Settlement? What significance does the right hon. Gentleman attach to that word? He stated that you are to go on with this Bill for twelve nights in this Session, and if you cannot pass it in twelve nights, it is to be left to the charities of private Members, and those charities are, we know, very cold. Thus, probably, the measure might go over this year, and begin over again next year, and when we have disposed of it we are to be refreshed by a Franchise Bill for Scotland and a Franchise Bill for Ireland, about which we were told that the information was rather than not in a state of preparation. Then, when we have done with the three Franchise Bills, three Re-distribution Bills are to follow; and even then we shall not be out of the wood, because there is to be also a Boundaries Bill, one of the most difficult and irritating subjects which can be imagined—and after that we are to come to a Registration Bill, which is also a matter of great difficulty. We have now reckoned up eight measures, and there is one more yet, enough to make any man shudder to think of, and that is an anti-corruption Bill. So that the prospect of a settlement, which the right hon. Gentleman holds out, is that we are to begin *de novo* with the whole of our electoral system, and to go through the whole of it in measures which, according to his own enumeration, amount at least to nine; and that he holds out as a settlement, so that if we will pass this Bill we may possibly, if we behave well, employ ourselves in going through this amount of work. That, however, is not my idea of a settlement, and I am quite sure that in addition to that there are unsettling causes which the right hon. Gentleman did not tell us of. Supposing the Bills are passed—as they will be passed, if at all—in mere deference to numbers at the expense of property and intelligence, in deference to a love of symmetry and equality—at least that is the name under which the democratic passion of envy generally disguises itself, and which will only be satisfied by symmetry and equality—I feel convinced that when you have given all the right hon. Gentleman asks you will still leave plenty of inequalities, enough to stir up this passion anew. The grievance being theoretical and not practical will survive as long as practice does not conform to theory; and practice will never conform to theory until you have got to universal suffrage and equal electoral districts. I say, therefore, that there is no element of finality in this measure, and though, as I have before said, I am perfectly willing to consider anything that may be brought forward, I crave leave to say that I shall consider the guidance of my own vote and conduct with reference to its influence on the good or bad working of the House of Commons, and not with reference to any theories about the ideal of good government, which, according to one great thinker, consists in everybody having a share in it—just as I suppose his ideal of a joint-stock company is one in which everybody is a director.

Well, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman, who had not time to give us a reason for introducing the Bill, found time to give us a quotation; and it was a quotation of a very curious kind, because, not finding in his large classical *repertoire* any quotation that would exactly describe the state of perfect bliss to which his Bill would introduce us, he was induced to take the exact contrary and make a quotation to show us what his Bill was not.

> "Scandit fatalis machina muros,
> Fœta armis,"

he exclaimed, "and that," he added, "is not my Bill." Well, that was not a very apt quotation; but there was a curious felicity about it which he little dreamt of. The House remembers that among other proofs of the degree in which public opinion is enlisted in the cause of Reform is this—that this is now the fifth Reform Bill that has been brought in since 1851. Now, just attend to the sequel of the passage quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. I am no believer in *sortes Virgilianæ*, and the House will see why in a moment—

> "O Divum domus Ilium, et inclyta bello
> Mœnia Dardanidûm ! Quater ipso in limina portæ
> Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedêre."

But that is not all—

> "Instamus tamen immemores, cæcique furore,
> Et monstrum infelix sacratâ sistimus arce."

Well, I abominate the presage contained in the last two lines; but I mix my confidence with fear. The intentions and actions of the new Parliament are as yet hidden by the veil of the future. It may be that we are destined to avoid this enormous danger with which we are confronted, and not, to use the language of my right hon. Friend, be fated to compound with danger and misfortune. But, Sir, it may be otherwise; and all I can say is, that if my right hon. Friend does succeed in carrying this measure through Parliament, when the passions and interests of the day are gone by I do not envy him his retrospect. I covet not a single leaf of the laurels that may encircle his brow. I do not envy him his triumph. His be the glory of carrying it; mine of having to the utmost of my poor ability resisted it.

Mr. C. P. VILLIERS: Sir, I fear that after the applause which the able address of the right hon. Gentleman has just received, it will appear somewhat presumptuous in me to follow him; but it is, I assure him, from no want of respect for his influence, but the contrary, that prompts me, as a Member of the Government, to make a few observations upon some things that he has said, and in the first place let me say, that amidst so much in which I differ from him that there was one suggestion that he proposed to us in the propriety of which I entirely agree. He observed that on this question we should endeavour, if possible, to regard ourselves as the world outside are regarding us. That, Sir, is a wholesome maxim, and I would especially recommend it for re-consideration by my right hon. Friend himself—for I do not hesitate to say that the view that is taken of this House on this subject is peculiar, and I am afraid not very flattering, for it is now upon this question, as it has been in all times past, one of suspicion and mistrust, and, for this obvious reason, that the question is one of this House reforming itself, and wherever you go, and whoever you meet, you will find a common feeling of doubt and question as to the sincerity of the House in consequence. It is known that a Reform Bill touches the interests of Members themselves, and that plausible reasons are always devised for getting rid of any such Bill whatever it may be. People know that there are always plenty of clever and ingenious people in this House who will, for their own purposes, as well as for those of others, devote their talents to this particular object. It is well known how many sinister interests may be affected by the change, and what strong motives there must be on this account for defeating a measure of this kind before the House; and, indeed, if at this moment the public are believing that this measure will also succumb to the influences that are usually exerted on such occasions, I am not sure, judging from appearances this evening, whether they will be disappointed. My right hon. Friend says that when he was a Reformer the thing that puzzled him most was to give a reason for the Reforms that he advocated, and he was usually obliged to assume those reasons. ["No, no!"] Those were the words of the right hon. Gentleman. I do not know why hon. Gentlemen opposite should object to them, and we may assume, I suppose, that this is what puzzles him on the present occasion, though apparently it does not embarrass him. He cannot understand why there should be a reform of this House, and says that my right hon. Friend has given him none, that is, none to satisfy him. [An hon. MEMBER: He gave none!] Yes, my right hon. Friend gave one reason, which with some people will have weight—namely, that the honour, the morality, and the title to respect of every one of those Ministers who have at different times advised Her Majesty that the representation of the people was defective and required amendment are involved in making a proposition for reforming this House—and more than this, the pledges and the promises that those all around him gave at the last General Election, that the long established complaint of what was unfair in the constitution of this House should be considered, and upon the faith of which assurances they were elected, makes it somewhat necessary that the subject should not be ignored by them. But, independently of this consideration, my right hon. Friend is alarmed at the precise measure proposed, and especially so because it proposes a reduction of the suffrage; but that I think must astonish the friends of the right hon. Gentleman, for, if I am not mistaken, his name figures but a few years ago in a majority in favour of a Resolution which caused a dissolution of Parliament on the question, and which was to this effect—that no Reform would be satisfactory to the country at large which did not reduce the franchise. I presume that I am correct? [Mr. LOWE: Quite right.] Well, but then, with the right hon. Gentleman's authority for that opinion, will the House consider what it has been listening to from him for the last half hour, and will they say what weight is to be attached to all the terrors he has been seeking to awaken in our minds, traceable, strictly and especially according to him, to lowering the elective franchise? There is nothing else that alarms him in the present measure, for there is nothing of that dangerous character in it which the right hon. Gentleman will remember was once broached here, though reprobated immediately by the House, of treating the charters of incorporation, or the title deeds of municipal bodies, as musty parchments, that should not be heeded. Nothing of that revolutionary kind is before us—nothing but a simple reduction of the elective franchise, of which he once approved, but from which he expects us now to believe that all the evils that he has shadowed forth will follow, and from which he expects a realization of all the hasty sayings that he has gathered together of what may have been uttered at public meetings. But my right hon. Friend, with his usual dexterity, generalizes all the sources of his fear by one term, and with which he expects especially to alarm his auditory. This is the word Democracy, and he sees in this measure the fatal tendency to Democracy, and dilates upon that theme eloquently—and what is it that he sees so alarming in that? Why, that this means whatever will increase the power of the people. But I ask why he dreads that, and if he does, what he has been about himself for some years past, and what has this House been doing, with his entire sanction? Why, that which is most calculated to level the distinction that exists between different classes of society, or rather, between the poor and the rich. What are the great distinctions in society? Are they not those founded on ignorance and poverty on one side, and wealth and knowledge on the other? What has he been urging forward himself especially but the education of the people, and who knows better than the right hon. Gentleman that he has not used a single argument against Parliamentary Reform this evening that has not been used in former times against the education of the working classes? He knows how even clever men, favouring the prejudices of the time, predicted the disturbance of all the relations of society as the consequence of what they called educating the lower orders, and why? Because it tended to put them on a level with those above them. I remember that, on the first circuit I ever went, the learned Judge at the Assize made a most eloquent address to the Grand Jury upon the mischief that would attend the new idea of educating the labouring classes, and the Grand Jury were so pleased at hearing their own views set forth upon such authority that they ordered the charge to be printed and circulated. What was the chief plea offered for the recent change in the commercial policy of this country? It was to remove the restraints on the industry of the working class, by which they were kept poor and degraded, and which, by extending the market for their labour, would render them more independent. Who has advocated more warmly than the right hon. Gentleman the advantage of liberating trade, or recognized more fully its effect upon labour, thereby elevating the condition of the now-called dangerous classes? Well, but neither the House or the right hon. Gentleman stopped there, for they have supported not only the policy of educating the poor, but of giving them every access to knowledge and removing every impediment to its being brought home to their doors—and for this purpose have we not removed the taxes on newspapers, abolished the duties on paper itself, and given in various ways facilities for the diffusion of information among them without any fear of the consequences to ourselves or any alarm about democracy? and yet surely these are the things that are calculated to establish that equality which we are now told is not consistent with the safety of the Constitution, from which, if there was anything to apprehend from the working classes, it would really be alarming. Why, does my right hon. Friend really believe that if the people were as ill disposed as he supposes them that they could not carry out the objects now which he says they have at heart. Surely before the people are so maligned, and before we are to believe the evil designs with which they are charged, we ought to have some evidence submitted to us on the point. It is notorious that the people have more intelligence and education, and consequently more power than they ever had before, and surely then there would be no difficulty in learning precisely what are their views and intentions. It has certainly not been usual of late years to hear them charged in this manner either here or elsewhere, but the contrary. Where do they assemble themselves, then, to discuss these objects? Where are the political combinations that they are forming? To what works or address can the right hon. Gentleman point to where the Crown, or the Church, or the House of Lords, or the other institutions of the country are assailed especially by the working class? Why, my right hon. Friend knows well, that just in proportion as the people have had more liberty and more education, that there has been a diminution of all vituperation of this kind. He knows that in days gone by that strong feelings were expressed in this sense; but now there is no candid man reviewing our position who will not admit that our institutions are more secure just in proportion as the people have become more free and intelligent, and have reason to believe that justice is attainable. My right hon. Friend thinks then, perhaps, that the Constitution of this House is perfect. I do not know whether he has been as long a Member of this House as I have; but I am not one who am in a condition to say that the improved legislation of this House has purely resulted from the manner in which this House is constituted, or the general interests are represented, or that Reforms have either been voluntary or attained without enormous sacrifice. I will not go into the history of the Reform Bill of 1832—but I will say that the old Parliament was defended by some for its past results as this House is, and that the Reform of itself was effected by other considerations than that of any sense of the wrongs which the people had endured. My right hon. Friend knows well what a long and painful agitation, since the Act of 1832, was needed to effect any change in the economical policy of the country; and that for nine years successively an agitation almost revolutionary was necessary to redress the greatest wrong that was ever inflicted by, and to confer the greatest advantage that was ever gained by, the people, by a repeal of the Corn Laws; and I am not here alluding to the only measures that have been at last obtained without reference to, or the conviction of, this House of their merits. The right hon. Gentleman says that this Bill has, however, been introduced wantonly and without reason, since all men are satisfied with the actual working of the present system, and that it has only been at the instigation of some of whom he has spoken with no respect. That can only be asserted in forgetfulness of what has passed of late years, and of the complaints that have been continually made for a greater length of time of certain defects in the Reform Bill of 1832. A great compromise was made on the passing of that measure with a view to its success; but it was never denied that the apprehensions of that time, with regard to the franchise, was carried too far, and that it was fixed at a point higher than was right. This declaration, if I mistake not, was made some years ago by its author, Earl Russell, who said that the franchise was placed higher than was necessary to allay the alarms which prevailed in certain quarters on that occasion. I have been just furnished with his very words, which I will read to the House. It was in 1852 Lord Russell said—

> "At the time of the Reform Bill, in placing the right of voting in householders where the value was £10 a year, we did what I think it was right t odo, and what it was our duty to do, we placed the suffrage rather higher than it was necessary to fix it."—[3 *Hansard*, cxix. 260.]

But it was not only in late years that this defect in our system has been observed. It was discussed at the time, and no unimportant person remarked with confidence on its impolicy. Sir Robert Peel very deliberately called attention to the circumstance. He recognized the policy of the Constitution in allowing the working men to have a share in the direct representation of the country; he witnessed without approval the provisions made to withdraw from the people those old franchises by which numbers of them had used to exercise the privilege of electing Members to this House, and by which they would be eventually disfranchised; and he warned the noble Lord in one of his celebrated speeches—

> "The objection is this, that it severs all connection between the lower classes of the community and the direct representation in this House, and he asked him to consider what would be the effect of cutting off altogether the communication between this House and that class which is above pauperism, and below the arbitrary line of £10 rental. He said he (Lord Russell) ought to be cautious how he subjected a great, powerful, and intelligent mass of our population to the injury, if not the stigma, of uncompensated exclusion."—[3 *Hansard*, ii. 1346, 1347.]

That speech made an impression on many in the House at that time, and probably had been remembered by some of his Friends when they came again into power, for I find that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) more than thirty years afterwards had to consider this subject. He, with all the advantage of subsequent experience, declared, in the following words, what his opinion was then of the title of the working men to the franchise, and said—

> "When I know that my fellow-countrymen, the working men of this country, were within the last thirty years considerably improved in everything that distinguishes men and makes them safe subjects, I do not think it a degradation to a borough or to any other constituency that a portion fo those fellow-countrymen should have through that legitimate channel a share in the franchise."—[3 *Hansard*, clii. 1067.]

I quote the right hon. Gentleman as one who enjoys the respect of his political friends, and whose sagacity is admitted on all sides, though I am aware upon this point at the time he differed with his friends, though it is no secret, I believe, that in the opinion that he then expressed, and in the Reform he was ready to support, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge entirely coincided. Well, but are there two Members who, in this House, or in the country at large, are considered better judges of what real Conservatism consists than those two Members? and is it not known that, looking to all the circumstances of the case, they thought that the reduction of the franchise, from £10 to £8, was perfectly safe, and all the more desirable, because their other friends had proposed to reduce the county franchise to a lower figure than is here proposed? and yet my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne is raising all this cry and alarm at the consequence of democracy, because the measure before the House carries the reduction farther by £1, and proposes the franchise to be at £7 instead of £8 rental. This is really no bad criterion by which the country may judge of the character of the measure, and of the character of the opposition offered to it. Sir, I venture to say that we are in a different position from those who had to contend against the Bill of 1832—proposing a change of a system which had prescription in its favour, and proceeding in a direction with which the country was not familiar—and it is not inappropriate to refer to the predictions which were then made, grounded on the mistrust of their fellow-countrymen. Let me read for the advantage of my right hon. Friend one or two specimens of the views and the fears entertained by the clever men of that day. Here is one of a noble Lord, then a Member of this House, eminent in the legal profession, and one whose character and talents are respected by all, I mean Lord Kingsdown, who was then Mr. Pemberton—

> "What prospect of tranquillity did this measure hold out to the country? In each succeeding year would the registering barrister go his round scattering dissension as he went along. The seed time of discord would come round as regularly as the seed time of husbandry, and would, he feared, produce a much more certain and abundant harvest. We should have the worst curse of the American system without its advantages."—[3 *Hansard*, xi. 448.]

Again, let me read what was said by one who most of us here remember, a late Member of the University of Oxford, the much-esteemed Sir Robert Inglis—

> "He believed that the other House of Parliament could not save themselves though they threw up the National Debt, the Corn Laws, the Church, the Courts of Justice; and all the arguments which had been heard in that House upon the question of Reform went all equally against an hereditary peerage. There was no stopping, no holding back, until we had sacrificed first our agricultural system, then our courts of law, then our Church, then the public creditor, until nothing was left to tell even of the wreck of our former glory."—[3 *Hansard*, xi. 438, 439.]

Well, here is another authority (Mr. Croker) who went for much in his day, though who, certainly, is not much considered now, but doubtless a very able man—

> "If this Bill shall, unhappily, pass and become a law, I will assert—and I believe it from the bottom of my heart, and that reluctant belief has been formed after the most anxious and agonizing reflections—that it will put an extensive power in the hands, not of the people, but of the populace, who will soon destroy their own work like a toy, and scatter to the winds all those complicated and contradictory clauses which it has cost you two painful and fruitless years to frame. But will it end here? No. They will go on from bad to worse, having no other guide than their passions, for you will have eradicated from their minds every principle by which mankind are controlled. Anarchy, with all its horrors and miseries, will ensue. The appetite for change will go on increasing so long as there remains food on which it can be indulged, and will lie down at last, like the wild beast, appeased and quiet only when it is satiate with having devoured all that is within its reach."—[3 *Hansard*, xi. 479, 480.]

Let me here read also what view was taken of the Bill by a sagacious Scotch Member then in the House (Sir John Malcolm), who, speaking of the Bill in 1832, observed—

> "One consequence of this Bill would be to crowd their table with petitions upon the questions of Indian Government and Indian trade, which might eventually lead to most disastrous consequences."—[3 *Hansard*, xi. 427.]

But now, in contrast with the views of these gloomy prophets, let me refer to some comments made in this House on the Reform Bill, which fell from one of the most distinguished Members that ever had a seat in it, and who curiously enough was at that time the Member for Calne, I mean Mr. Macaulay. That celebrated man remarked that—

> "The arguments urged against this Bill would apply with equal force against any plan of Reform whatever. A large majority of the Opposition called themselves moderate Reformers, but the objections which they offered to the present Bill could be applied to any measure of practical Reform. They talked of anomalies; could any plan of Reform be devised in which anomalies would not exist? . . . They might take population, or assessed taxes, or whatever test they pleased, but there would always, as they had already seen, be mathematicians ready to prove that their mode of computation would produce anomalies. . . It, therefore, became moderate Reformers who objected to the Bill on the ground of anomalies to consider whether any plan of moderate Reform could be produced in which there would not be no anomalies. . . . Of every plan of Reform it might be said that it was the first step to revolution. It would always afford an opportunity of making allusions to the scenes of the French revolution—to the guillotine, to heads carried upon pikes, and all the horrors of that eventful period."—[3 *Hansard*, xi. 459, 460.]
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> "There was no universal form which could be assured of good Government. He would not make institutions for all ages and all nations. He gave his assent to the Bill because he thought it was adapted to this country at present; but he should think it unsuitable, because too democratic, for Hindostan, and because not democratic enough for New York. He had no more idea that a Government could be called good which was not in unison with the feelings, habits, and opinions of the people governed, than that a coat could be called good which was not suited to the size or shape of the person for whom it was in-

tended. A coat that does not fit is a bad coat, though it has been cut to suit the Apollo Belvidere. He did not support the present Bill because he thought that democratic institutions were best for all ages and for all countries, but because he thought that a more popular Constitution than that which now existed in this country and in our age would produce good Government." —[3 *Hansard*, xi. 456, 457.]

Most confidently do I agree in the good sense contained in the views thus expressed by Mr. Macaulay, and contend that in our day we have only to consider what is suitable to our time and country; and when this moderate measure is considered, together with the requirements of the case, it is some answer to those speculative fears which, upon some abstract reasoning about democracy, it is sought to alarm us. I do not myself believe that any of these dangers will follow from this measure, and I may reply to my right hon. Friend that he has given us no reason himself for expecting them. I advise him to look at the facts before him before he jumps to conclusions again in the way he has done, and he will then discover abundant proofs of late years afforded of the good conduct, patience, and forbearance of the working people that will make him wonder at the chimeras he has conjured up, and almost ashamed of the unjust reproaches he has put upon them. The moment chosen, indeed, for casting a slur upon the working people of this country for their want of conduct, honesty, or intelligence is most unfortunate. Are we not fresh from admitting the patience and fortitude with which the people in Lancashire bore their recent suffering, and is there a person in this House who would now withhold from them the credit which is due for their exemplary conduct upon the occasion of the cotton famine? In my judgment there are higher qualities than mere patience under want which might justly be ascribed to the working class upon that occasion, and that superior wisdom, offering an example to all around them and above them, was exhibited by them during the Civil War in America. I was in a position to hear much about their feelings in Lancashire during that time, and I believe that much of the patience referred to arose from the decided and distinct opinions which they had formed respecting that great struggle as much as it did from any other cause; and I believe that everything which was done to induce them to clamour for a departure by this country from a policy of strict neutrality and non-interference completely failed; and they could not be shaken in their steadfast conviction that it was an unrighteous war in its origin, and had been provoked for their own purposes by the Southern or Slave States, a matter which few will be found to deny in these days. I do not know whether my right hon. Friend agrees with the working men in their view of that matter; but, possibly not. I venture to think that their whole conduct upon this occasion entitled them to respect and confidence; and unless my right hon. Friend can adduce some other evidence than he has done yet to lead us to think that their purposes are evil, and that they desire to obtain power to give them effect, he has presented to this House no reasonable ground for objecting to this measure. Complaints have certainly been made by some persons that this measure is not comprehensive enough, as we have confined our measure to the franchise only; but it is curious to see how cordially these persons appear to be acting with those who have usually opposed Reform altogether, a circumstance which may possibly be ascribed to the objection which really they have also to any Reform. I do not admit the objection to the measure that it is too narrow in its scope, and that it is not sufficiently comprehensive in its character. It is what it professes to be, and does not in any way exclude the consideration of other measures. But to that argument of its not containing more, there is this reply that I think may be offered, that upon four distinct occasions the measures of Reform have failed, and most people have supposed that it arose from attempting too much by one Bill; and I think it is no bad test of the earnestness of those who have brought in the measure now that it has been especially framed with the view to its not sharing the fate of those that preceded it. In amending the representation there is abundant precedents for proceeding gradually, or, as it is termed, piece-meal, and during the last fifteen years Parliamentary Reform has been treated in its separate branches. We have had separate Bills for England, Scotland, and Ireland. We have dealt separately with the franchise in Ireland—first in 1829, and again in 1850—when the county and borough franchise were reduced. By a distinct Act the property qualification for Members of Parliament was changed, and by another Act entirely abolished; by another Act the law of registration was amended; by another the law as to the rating of compound householders was altered; by another, the period for taking the poll was shortened. By another Act the polling places were fixed; by another, corruption was punished. By distinct Acts Sudbury and St. Alban's were disfranchised; by a distinct Act the representatives of Yorkshire and Lancashire were increased. Bills have also been brought in by the Government,—one for the appropriation of vacant seats, and the other to check bribery. A very able speech was made last night by the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing). in which he argued, not like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne, that no Reform was needed, or that the representation was as perfect as it could be, but that there were many defects which ought to be dealt with, and he complained of the order in which we were proceeding. He said that we ought to deal with the distribution of seats before we extended the franchise. Well, that is a nice question. I think, however, the logic of the matter is the other way, and that we ought first to decide how many electors there are to be before we begin to re-distribute members among them. If after that it should appear that there was a great and inconvenient disproportion between the electors and the representation in particular seats, and great inequality in the distribution of representatives between different places, that would be a most proper subject for special legislation. But hon. Members know well that these matters are determined somewhat by policy, and that there is an honest intention on the part of the Government of dealing with the whole subject of Reform. The right hon. Gentleman disputes the policy of introducing any Bill whatever, and seems to rest upon the fact that it is not demanded. He says, Who calls for it? Where are your petitions? What is the necessity of the measure? Well, then, I am ready to contend that there is a policy in amending what has before been so frequently observed to be defective, though there may be no pressure at the moment. I say that it is unwise to leave such a disproportion as exists now between the voters and the male adult population of the country—a matter which has now become so notorious. Great emergencies may arise in this country, and when the Government may want the fullest support which the community can give it, I say it is not desirable upon these occasions that large sections of the people should feel that they have no share in the Government of the country; and I say it is, on the contrary, a wise policy to identify as large a portion of the people as possible in all the responsibility of Government. But nobody demands Reform, says the right hon. Gentleman. I say again, is that a proof that it is not required? Will hon. Members reflect for an instant upon how often that was alleged against other great questions being settled, and questions that we are now proud of having passed. I hardly know of one great important question that has not been deferred till almost the latest moment, and until it has been possible to ascribe the change almost to some unworthy motive. Many here remember the postponement of the Catholic Question, and the confidence with which its needlessness was asserted only one year before the Act of Emancipation was passed. Many must recollect the famous speech made in another place by a Prince of the Blood next in the succession, pledging himself in the most solemn manner to maintain the restrictions imposed upon the Roman Catholics. That speech spread joy in all the ranks of the opponents of the Catholics throughout the country. Most men believed that the Catholics were silenced for another generation. Meetings were especially held throughout the country, and fresh pledges were given by public men never to yield on a matter so vital to our Protestant constitution. Why, there are oak trees now growing up that were planted in that year by certain very distinguished men as symbols or pledges to the community of their fidelity to the cause, and yet such men were to be found only one year after as the active promoters of a complete measure of Catholic emancipation. Why, upon this very subject of Reform it is a fact that the noble Lord now at the head of the Government felt so discouraged by the indifference which was shown in the House on this matter that he avowed his intention of discontinuing his constant Motions upon the question. But that was in 1828, if I am not mistaken. If I was to name the time when there was the most complete hopelessness of success among the advocates of free trade than at any other moment after the agitation had commenced, it was in the year 1845. There had been a succession of good harvests, trade was brisk in consequence, railway speculation had reached its height, and no one seemed to care for free trade. During that year the speeches of free traders had been gloomy, and during the time that I had been connected with that question I had never heard more rampant speeches in favour of protection. This, however, did not justify the continuance of the Corn Laws—the suspense was accidental—and so was the sudden failure of the crops in Ireland, which happened in the autumn of that very year—the people were starving, and within one year monopoly and protection received its death-blow. What has occurred before may have its parallel in the case we are discussing. We hear the working people spoken of in the first place as indifferent to their enfranchisement, and spoken of disparagingly, as if they were disqualified by their character for political rights. We hear, indeed, already of a chance of the Bill being rejected on the first reading, but surely no man can think that such a question can be settled by adopting that course. Even if people should seem quietly to accede to such a course, may not that arise from deducing a moral from impolitic postponement in former cases, and think that such rejection may lead ultimately to a far more comprehensive measure of Reform. Are there many, however, who intend to reject this measure that will be pleased with such a settlement of the question? What is it that they would wish the people to infer from their refusal to deal with this question in a constitutional way? What is it, I ask, that those who desire to reject this Bill, would have the people do? They say the people do not want it, because they are so quiet and orderly. But if the people do desire it, what are they to conclude from this kind of argument? Why, that they must resort to other than constitutional means to obtain it—and is that the lesson that any wise man would wish to teach them? Here is a measure that could be passed quietly—that those who are enabled to represent the opinions of the people are ready thankfully to accept for them, though declaring what is notorious, that it falls very far short of what they consider they are entitled to; and I say that if we lose the very great advantage which the present opportunity offers to us of passing such a measure, we are totally disregarding the lessons which history and our own personal experience offer to us. I will detain the House no longer, and thank them for the attention they have given me. I only rose to answer the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman, who asserted that we had no reason or good motive for proposing this measure. I have endeavoured to show that the people are entitled to our confidence, and above all to the fulfilment of the promises deliberately made to them; and I have ventured to refer to reasons why it is most inexpedient in us, on every ground, to neglect the duty which, by our present position, we are bound to perform towards them.

MR. R. N. PHILIPS said, he was not one of those who thought that they were sent to the House pledged to vote for others and to carry out laws of which they did not approve:—he was not sent to this House by reason of any pledges, but by reason of the conviction of the constituents that, having passed his life amongst them, he would feel it his duty to stand up for their rights. In periods of privation and distress the working people had proved themselves worthy of the confidence of their fellow-countrymen, and they felt themselves aggrieved at not having a fair share in the representation. Knowing this, and knowing the difficulty the Government had in bringing forward a measure that would have any probability of passing, he, for one, begged to tender to the Government the expression of his intense gratitude to them for introducing one that would admit so large an additional number connected with the working classes to the franchise. In the borough which he represented (Bury), the constituents would be increased from 1,300 by the addition of about 400, and he would feel his own position enhanced in representing so much larger a number. He also thanked the Government for the bold manner in which they had come forward to make a change in the county franchise. It had been thought by many that the £10 franchise was best; but he considered that which had been proposed deserved the support of all Liberals both moderate and advanced. He should give the measure of the Government his cordial support.

MR. LEATHAM thanked the Government for the courage they had shown in bringing in this Bill. He was one of those who always wished to see the working classes fairly represented, and he thought that a percentage of the working men might have been permitted to be selected by themselves and placed on the electoral roll. He therefore thanked the Government for their courage in bringing in a Bill which would add 144,000 of the working classes to the constituencies. Many were afraid of admitting them, not because they doubted the intelligence of the working men, but because if it went further there might be a difficulty in dealing with them, owing to their large numbers. The proposal of the Government was, therefore, a very judicious one, and entirely met his views. There had been some mistakes relative to the numbers of working men now in possession of the franchise. There were many persons included among the class of working men who were not properly called by that name; as, for example, men who, though working themselves, employed others under them. A great many of these were entered under the head of working men, but were really master workmen. He believed the Bill before the House provided a fair adjustment of the county franchise. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Disraeli), introduced in the year 1859, contained much to commend it to the judgment of hon. Members, and he would have supported it had it not excluded the freeholders living in Parliamentary boroughs from voting at county elections. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in the present Bill had steered clear of many great difficulties, while he inserted certain propositions which would be highly acceptable to the people of this country. The proposal to give the franchise to depositors in savings banks was an excellent adjunct to the Bill. Indeed, taking the measure as a whole, he believed it would give great satisfaction. He protested against the time of the House being occupied, as it had been the previous night, by personal attacks upon hon. Members, and thought that those Gentlemen who had long held seats in the House ought to set the new Members a better example. Such conduct could not advance the great questions before the House. He should give the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman his hearty support, and he was convinced it would meet with the approval of the industrious, loyal, and contented people of the country.

Mr. ARTHUR PEEL said, it was with considerable diffidence that he ventured to step into the arena which had been made to echo with party conflict. He quite agreed with the opinion that had been expressed in the course of the debate, that the question before the House was not one of statistics, but a constitutional question. The statistics which had been laid before the House were not necessary for the formation of an opinion; but, at the same time, he thought they confirmed the opinion previously held, that a change was required in the electoral system, and they might help to give a finishing touch to it. Three classes of opponents set themselves in array against the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. The first naturally fell under the able guidance of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), the motto on whose banner was, "No Franchise below £10." That Goliah of logic seemed to attach an extravagant intrinsic importance to that particular sum. He, however, and those who entertained views similar to his, were really opposed, not only to the Bill now under consideration, but to any Bill whatever for the extension of the franchise. A second class opposed the Bill because it did not go far enough, and a third class ranged themselves against it, because it was not, in their opinion, a sufficiently comprehensive measure. He might be permitted to say that the Bill brought in was not such a Bill as he would have framed had it been left to him, because he preferred a £10 franchise in the counties, and a £6 franchise in the boroughs. Still, he did not see sufficient cause to justify him in offering opposition to it. He would not now consider the case of the counties; but, adverting to that of the boroughs, he should be content with the £7 rental franchise as a settlement of the question for years to come. He, however, trusted that the present Government and the present Parliament would have to consider measures dealing with the redistribution of seats, and with the question of purifying the process of elections and the simplification of the machinery, believing that they were subjects demanding speedy legislative action. He could not accept the objection that had been raised to the Bill now before the House, that the present electoral system adjusted itself, and that consequently they should not lower the franchise nor diminish the existing standard, which was yearly the means of adding fresh bodies of the working classes to the constituencies. But what was the actual fact? The House was told the other night by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that since the year 1831 the decrease of working men possessing the franchise was from 31 per cent to 26 per cent. The borough of Warwick, which he had the honour to represent, would afford an illustration of this statement. He found that the number of electors on the register of that borough in 1832-3 was not less than 1,300, but now the total number was but 760. The population, however, had not decreased, on the contrary, it had slightly increased; in 1831 the population numbered 9,000, but now it was 10,000. Another objection to the present measure was that the admission of the working classes to the franchise would simply be introducing the thin end of the wedge to all sorts of democratic innovation, and, therefore, it was argued that it would be much better to resist all attempts at extending the franchise. But there was a fallacy lying at the bottom of that argument, it being supposed that the working classes when they obtained the franchise would move as one great and united body. His experience in the city of Coventry showed this supposition to be a mistake. In Coventry no less than 70 per cent of the constituency consisted of the working classes, and against them the shaft of ridicule had often been launched. Many public men had pointed to that place, asking the question, "Will you have your boroughs like the city of Coventry?" because it was believed that there all the evils connected with democracy existed. At the time when the French Treaty came into operation the working classes suffered very severely. In the year 1862 he canvassed the constituency, and was exceedingly astonished to find the difference of political faith that prevailed among the people. Although poverty sorely pressed upon them, he frequently entered houses side by side, the inmates of which held political opinions as conflicting as those entertained by Gentlemen sitting on the Ministerial and Opposition sides of the House of Commons. He believed that the working classes would exercise the franchise in an honest and independent spirit, and not be so influenced by their leaders, as to follow them as sheep do their shepherds. He was convinced that the working classes were as capable of exercising the suffrage as any that now possessed it. No fear need be entertained with regard to the effects of the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, and he sincerely hoped that it would pass into law. He thought there was no use in exhuming the dry bones of past propositions—he preferred to consider the question on its substantial merits, and on its merits he felt it to be his duty, and the duty of others situated like himself, to adopt every means to promote the success of the measure, and rescue it from the slough of doubt and despond into which hon. Gentlemen had plunged it, and place it on the *terra firma* of legislative enactment.

MR. ALLEN said, the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer met with the general approval of hon. Members on the Ministerial side of the House; and doubtless, with the approval of the great mass of the people of the country. Speeches both for and against the measure, characterized by great ability, had been delivered in that House. The speeches of the two right hon. Gentlemen, the Members for Stroud and Calne (Mr. Horsman and Mr. Lowe), were remarkable equally for their ability and their length. When listening to the able speech in which the hon. Member for Calne had opposed the Bill, he (Mr. Allen) could not help thinking that it would have been much more fitting if the right hon. Gentleman had been sitting on the other side of the House. It was not extraordinary that the right hon. Gentleman should have alluded to the question of the redistribution of seats, because to him that must be a very painful subject. That, however, was not the subject before the House. They had now to deal with the extension of the franchise, and the simple question was, should they trust the people or not? The right hon. Member for Calne thought the people were not to be trusted. Representing so large and influential a borough, no doubt the right hon. Gentleman looked forward to the time when that borough would be swept away, and he would have to seek some other constituency. Very few Members on the Liberal side of the House shared that right hon. Gentleman's opinions. Representing a borough (Newcastle-under-Lyme), in which working men formed nearly 60 per cent of the entire electoral body, he (Mr. Allen) had been delighted, during his canvass of that borough, to find how much intelligence, political knowledge, and general good conduct was displayed by those working men. The way in which they had behaved during that election would put to shame many boroughs in which working men, instead of being nearly 60 per cent, formed only a very small fraction of the constituency. With regard to the statement that the working classes showed great apathy and carelessness on the subject of Reform, that very few petitions had been presented—in fact, that the working classes cared very little about the franchise, the absence of petitions for and of excitement about Reform was a good sign, for a judicious measure was far more likely to be judiciously discussed and carried out while people were calm and quiet than it would be in the midst of turmoil. The truth actually was, that though there was an absence of excitement there was a deep and settled determination on their part to have what they considered their just rights, and that unless the present moderate measure was passed they would very soon be irresistibly forced to pass a measure of Parliamentary Reform of a much more sweeping character.

Mr. SCHREIBER said: Mr. Deputy Speaker—Sir, when Her Majesty's Government have so lately placed in the hands of hon. Members a bulky volume of "Electoral Statistics," I hope that I shall not be thought to exhibit an inordinate appetite for that description of literature by appearing thus early as an applicant "for more." But at the risk of seeming to be unreasonable, and in spite of what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said last night about the fullness of our knowledge, I shall express the very strong opinion which I hold that this House is invited to approach the question of Reform on most inadequate and imperfect information. For some months past Her Majesty's Government, with commendable industry, have been boring vertically downwards through the successive strata of the rate book in quest, I presume, Sir, of that political wisdom which is from below. I would now ask them to turn their thoughts and researches upwards with the view of ascertaining, with some approach to scientific accuracy, the composition of the existing constituencies. And, Sir, as an English borough Member, I would be understood as referring solely in these remarks to the cities and boroughs of England and Wales. I would put it, then, to hon. Members on both sides of the House, and more especially to the eminent philosophers who sit below the gangway opposite, whether we do not live in a state of the most unphilosophical ignorance as to the precise distribution of political power in our several constituencies. Between what limits of rental does the real power reside? Who are our present political masters? A memorable passage in the political history of 1852 might indeed suggest the belief that they live in houses of less than £20 a year. Still, these are questions which we cannot answer; but which, on merely abstract grounds, it is most desirable that we should have the means of answering. But more than that, Sir, the information which I seek would possess at the present juncture a most important practical bearing. Great changes are impending; great additions to our constituencies are promised; and what the full effect of these would be it will be impossible to estimate, unless we are furnished with an accurate analysis of the bodies to which additions are to be made. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne, whom I am sorry not to see in his place—[Mr. Lowe here bowed from a back seat under the gallery opposite]—I beg pardon—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne, whom I am happy to see in his place, has seen this point with his usual sagacity, and expressed it with his accustomed clearness. Speaking last year of the effect of the Franchise Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds, he said—

> "Not only is it (the constituency) increased—it is diluted; and the additions being all of persons rated below £10, these have a sort of chymical affinity with persons of the same class a little above themselves, and the two united become masters of the situation. In these cases, therefore, the present constituency, including all the property and all the intelligence of the place, would be disfranchised without a prospect of escape; and this, I venture to think, would be a very great evil."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxviii. 1432.]

"A great evil!" Sir, it would be the very greatest that could be inflicted on this country; and how nearly any given change of franchise would inflict it can only be known when the composition of the existing constituencies has been accurately determined. I wish therefore, in the first place, to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will use his influence to expedite the production of the Returns, moved for at the commencement of the Session, and following the rentals in boroughs and cities upwards from £10 to £20, both figures inclusive? Then there is another part to which I ask the attention of the right hon. Gentleman; and it is this—In whatever other respects the new voters may differ from one another, in two particulars they will be all alike—they will be all members of the industrial or operative class, and they will be all exempt from the incidence of direct taxation. The question, then, arises for which it fearfully concerns this House to have an answer, in what numbers will the new voters find on the existing registers others who escape the burden of direct taxation? Because, if we go and blindly establish in every borough register a numerical majority interested in the remission of indirect, and the substitution of direct taxation, we can hardly expect much longer from the Chancellor of the Exchequer the language which I was delighted to see that he addressed to a recent deputation on the subject of the malt tax, "No doubt there were gentlemen who held that the taxes of the country ought to be raised from property or income; that was what was called direct taxation." [Mr. White: Hear, hear!] The hon. Member for Brighton consistently enough cheers that. "On paper such arguments appear to be irresistible, but as far as his (Mr. Gladstone's) experience went, the propositions were impracticable." Will the hon. Member for Brighton cheer that? "At all events, he did not see his way to the adoption of them." Words those, Sir, not lightly uttered, nor soon to be forgotten; and which I accept as a pledge from the right hon. Gentleman, befitting the high office that he fills, that he will guard the £330,000,000 a year assessed to the property and income tax in this country against the fantastic experiments of Mr. Robertson Gladstone and the members of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association. And yet, Sir, it requires no great sagacity to foretell that if the hon. Member for Birmingham and those who act with him succeed in carrying this Bill, the right hon. Gentleman will either have to revise those opinions, or to make way for some one who has long since discarded such antiquated maxims of finance. I therefore, in the second place, ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can inform the House what proportion of the electors on the existing registers are assessed to property and income tax; and till he tells us that, and into what proportions the £20 line divides the existing constituencies, I shall adhere to the opinion I have expressed, that this House is invited to approach the question of Reform on most insufficient and defective information. Before I sit down, Sir, I wish to express my deep sense of the indulgence which the House has extended to these imperfect observations.

Mr. LONG said, he thought that the House ought not only to have full information upon this question, but was bound to exercise great caution in dealing with the extension of the franchise. The measure appeared to him to be only the part of a complete scheme which the Government had neither the wisdom nor the courage to introduce. The measure itself was inadequate and unsatisfactory, and he hoped the House would hear from those hon. Members who sat below the gangway on the Ministerial side what were the grounds which induced them to give their assent to a measure so incomplete and unsatisfactory as that under discussion. In former measures proposing to extend the representation—in that, for example, introduced by the Government of Lord Derby in 1859—a franchise was given based upon an educational qualification; but in the present Bill no such proposition was contained. Again, the re-arrangement of the limits of boroughs so as to make the constituents within them fairer samples of the various classes of which the community was made up was, he thought, a scheme not beneath the dignity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; yet he took no step in that direction, as if he were satisfied with those constituencies as they now stood. He was, he must confess, surprised to find that hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, and, above all, the philosophic Member for Westminster, and those around him, could accept so calmly and with such perfect *bonhommie* the plan of Reform which was so contemptuously handed to them by the right hon. Gentleman. They would, he trusted, make a manly, straightforward, English declaration of what it was they expected from the Bill, for if not they must not be astonished to find that those who sat opposite to them put upon it a somewhat different interpretation from that which it appeared to bear on the surface. The Bill was either a sham or a reality. If it was a sham, it was unworthy of support from any quarter; if a reality, it must be looked upon as forming only part of a great scheme, and the House was, he thought, entitled to demand that that scheme should be laid before them in its entirety. To proceed on the opposite principle of presenting to them only a part first, was to act somewhat like a bankrupt who paid his creditors by instalments. The present Bill was the first instalment, when the second would be paid was very doubtful. For his own part, he protested against such a mode of proceeding, and he should strongly advise the right hon. Gentleman to take back his Bill and bring it back in a different shape. He was not disposed to look upon the question as a party question, but as one which lay at the very root of the Constitution of the country; and so far as it tended to affect prejudicially the institutions of which the House was the guardian and trustee, he, for one, was opposed to its provisions.

Mr. MELLER said, he entertained to the Bill several objections. It was not well, he thought, that institutions which had stood the test of time should be lightly abandoned; nor was there any good reason, so far as he could see, why the proposed change should be made. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) had that very evening descanted on the benefits which the late Parliament had conferred upon the country, and why the present Parliament should not be held to be capable of doing similar service he was at a loss to understand. He had heard of no grievance with which the House of Commons, as now constituted, could be held to be incompetent to deal. Did hon. Gentlemen opposite suppose, for instance, that such an extension of the franchise as was proposed by the Bills of the hon. Members for Leeds and Surrey would have bettered the condition of Ireland, and that if it had been an established fact Fenianism would not have existed in that country? Such views as he advocated on the subject of Reform might be characterized as Tory obstructiveness, but he called them Conservative consistency. The next reason he objected to the Bill was because it was an essential principle of the Constitution that all classes should be represented in that House. Now, he was inclined to believe that fully 26 per cent of the working classes were at present represented in Parliament; and, although he was not prepared to contend that there were not some anomalies in the existing electoral system, he felt assured the House of Commons fairly reflected the national interests. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the £14 occupation franchise which the Bill would give to counties would constitute in reality a middle class enfranchisement, but he (Mr. Meller) scarcely thought these £14 voters would have much sympathy with the land, while the leasehold and copyhold tenures would be biased rather by borough than county influences. As to the franchise being conferred on those who happened to have £50 in a savings bank, he could only say that, while he was an advocate of prudence and providence, he could not understand why it was that the claims of those who had money in the public funds should be ignored. The next proposal in the Bill was that which would enable a man in lodgings paying a rent of 4*s.* a week to obtain the franchise. This he considered a most democratic and revolutionary measure. In his own possession there was some property in what had once been a fashionable quarter, but now was let out in the way described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. These flats, so far from being occupied by the middle classes, were entirely occupied by the artizan class. It was said that, practically, the operation of the lodger franchise would only affect the metropolitan boroughs. But surely, when the re-distribution of seats came to be considered, claims for a greater proportion of seats would be put in on account of the increased numbers, and the effect would be wholly to alter the existing state of things. Assuming that the tendency of all these contemplated changes was in a democratic direction, democracy, they knew, led not to liberty, but to its very opposite. Allusion had been made to certain small boroughs, and because they returned a majority of Conservative candidates it had been insinuated that the Returns were ascribable to undue influence. As far as the borough which he had the honour to represent was concerned, he averred fearlessly that the Return was due neither to Conservative landlord influence nor to corrupt influence, but to the free action of the better elements of the constituency. He should look with all possible pleasure upon those who were proposed to be added to the constituencies, and should welcome them as the right hon. Gentleman requested, were it not that these new comers disturbed the fair equilibrium of the State. The Chancellor of the Exchequer begged them not to feel alarmed; but his allusion to the wooden horse he would answer in a few words—*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*

Mr. ACLAND said, he must express his regret that some Gentlemen professing to be Liberals, and some even who, in former times, expressed strong Liberal opinions, should have risen to stab the Government measure from the rear. In common with several leading Members of the Government, he himself had been a follower of the late Sir Robert Peel; but his convictions, like those of others, had moved on, and he was now a sincere and cordial supporter of the Liberal Government. During an absence from Parliament of eighteen years, he had opportunities of studying the feelings and learning something of the wishes of the working and unrepresented classes; and having been invited by the moderate Liberals to stand for Birmingham at the last election, he had learnt a lesson he should not soon forget; and, returning now in some degree with fresh blood, he felt sensitively for the honour of the House and of that great party of which he was a Member. After fourteen years dealing with this question those upon whom responsibility rested should suffer nothing to be done with their concurrence which might lead to the supposition that the matter was being trifled with. Speaking broadly, the arguments of the opponents to this Bill appeared to him to fall under two simple heads — either they were unwilling to have a measure passed that Session which it was quite possible to pass, or they distinctly and plainly avowed they were not Liberals and did not trust the people. Now he believed that they were safe in trusting the people, and that the House would not do its duty to the country unless it allied itself with popular sympathies, and unless it gave to the working classes that increased representation to which their superior intelligence and education entitled them. Experience of late years did not show that the constitution of the House needed no improvement. Questions in which the great mass of the people were interested had dragged their slow length along. Something more of popular sympathy was necessary to enable the Government to carry measures which the country required. On this ground alone, if there were no other, he was anxious to see one part of the Reform Question carried that Session, and that was the enlargement of the electoral body. With regard to the fear of democracy he left that question to be argued by hon. Members on the other side of the House. The Bill itself appeared to him to be marked by an honest and sincere desire to give the working classes a fair share, and not more than a fair share, in the representation of the country, and it redressed some practical grievances by admitting deserving voters to the franchise who were at present excluded by the operation of certain rules. As a Liberal county Member, he was glad to say that the measure would tend to strengthen the Liberal party in the county representation. He said this without any reference to the desire of strengthening his own position. But he wished to point out to county Members that if the liberal element were excluded from the county constituencies the effect on the landed interest might be very serious if nearly the whole of the county representatives were marked out as being pledged by their position to the maintenance of Tory views. He regretted that the right hon. Gentleman had found himself unable to introduce some of the so-called "fancy franchises," though he should rather call them "forethought franchises." The extension of the franchise to the working classes ought always to move in accordance with their self-organization, and he should have been glad, if it had been possible, to introduce a franchise founded on the provident societies and clubs of the working men, which were always regarded by them as the test of forethought and respectability, the members embracing the most intelligent portion of that class. Education, also, ought to be recognized as a test of qualification, there being many curates and Dissenting ministers in country places who lived in houses the rental of which was not higher than the lodger franchise, which he was glad to see inserted in the Bill, and hoped would meet the support of hon. Members opposite. He admitted that a large number of persons regarded Reform with some apprehension; but it was the bounden duty of Liberal Members to protest against arguments which were used in order to cut the ground from the very principles on which they were returned. Although some of his constituents might at first share in that apprehension, he believed that after due consideration they would come to the conclusion that the measure now submitted offered a fair and reasonable solution for the present of one important branch of the great question of Reform.

MR. WHITESIDE: Sir, though the measure of the Government will receive a more close and searching examination on the second reading, if ever it arrives at that stage, still I will venture to submit to the House one or two observations on the question as it now stands. I will, in the first place, venture to express a hope that the differences which are likely to arise between the hon. Member who last spoke and his constituents may be happily adjusted; but, so far as I understood the hon. Member, he seemed to be about to give a vote which is not likely to be satisfactory to his constituents—a fact which, at all events, shows that he understands the principle of Parliamentary representation. I only trust that further consideration may induce him to re-consider the opinions he has somewhat rashly uttered in regard to this measure, and to adopt an opinion more in harmony with those he represents. The principle of the Bill—or rather, I should say, the no-principle of the Bill—is beginning to be understood; and when the hon. Member who last addressed the House said that he would leave the Bill to be discussed by Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, he fell into a momentary forgetfulness of the course of the debate, which has been carried on by Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House, and scarcely any observations have been made by us sitting on the Opposition Benches, on a Motion which we are, of course, anxious to discuss, but which we naturally supposed would be best understood by Gentlemen on the Ministerial side. It is a remarkable fact that no one on the Treasury Bench has risen to address the House in support of the Bill since the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered his copious exposition, save the President of the Poor Law Board, who has made a speech in which he has shown in what thorough contempt he holds the British Constitution. Certainly some allowance is to be made for the eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman, but I took down one sentence he uttered to the effect that the first duty of the House was to decide on the number of voters and then to distribute the Members among them. Now, I should like to know what that means. So far as I understand the sentiment, it means that we are to upset everything in the country; and then, when we have blotted out the old county and borough and city constituencies, we are to parcel out the Members among the number of constituencies previously arranged according to the measure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think that a mischievous opinion, rashly expressed by a Cabinet Minister; and my only hope is that he really did not exactly understand what he was saying, and that no other Cabinet Minister will abide by the principle he enounced. With respect to the rest of the right hon. Gentleman's speech no doubt it was a very able speech, but it appeared to be more composed by the aid of the scissors than by the head, being interspersed with a number of quotations extracted from the speeches of defunct Cabinet Ministers in debates which occurred on the great question of Reform before some of the present Members of the House were born. I heard the right hon. Gentleman seize the opportunity of answering something which had been said by Mr. Croker, who has been in his grave forty years. Now, I have the advantage of having heard both Mr. Croker and the right hon. Gentleman, and I am fully alive to the contrast. Mr. Croker was a wit and a scholar, and if he were alive to vindicate his opinion, he would have proved that he understood what he said, and would have maintained his opinion with eloquence, spirit, and ability. But what is the use of quoting speeches made forty years ago? We want the ideas of the Ministers of the present day to prove that the present crude measure thrown on the table is worthy of the consideration of the House, and justified by necessity. Instead of doing that the right hon. Gentleman reads us long passages cut out of former debates, which I thought were supplied to him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who believes, perhaps, that better speeches were made forty years ago by Cabinet Ministers than are likely to be made now. What the right hon. Gentleman had to show was that the measure is not only in itself wise and politic, but a reasonable settlement of a great political question. The hon. Gentleman who last spoke (Mr. Acland) seemed to think that every Gentleman on the Opposition side of the House was opposed to an extension of the franchise. It is no such thing; but we are opposed to a measure of this nature, which unsettles everything and settles nothing. I am not altogether unacquainted with the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of Reform. When Lord Palmerston was alive everything was kept quiet, and there was no nonsense, except when he happened to be absent from the House; but about two years ago I received a hint that on a certain Wednesday in May a Bill introduced by the hon. Member for Leeds was about to be discussed; and somebody informed me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might come out on the occasion. Curiosity, consequently, attracted me to the House, and I heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer make, in the course of the debate, the usual Ministerial speech. The measure was said to be good, the hon. Gentleman was complimented, and then advised to withdraw his Bill for the present and to trust to the Government to look after matters for the future. If the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King) were in his place, I would ask him what he thought of the support he got from Lord Palmerston for his Bill for a £10 county franchise. The noble Lord's speech in reference to that subject was a charming example of the manner in which a politic Minister could say obliging things to the hon. Gentleman and then snuff him out. That was the kind of support which Lord Palmerston gave during his career to the subject of Parliamentary Reform, and those Gentlemen who sat in his Cabinet during the four or five years when Parliamentary Reform was proposed by sincere men contrived to make speeches which meant nothing, and let the thing pass by quietly. I am not impressed with the sincerity of Ministers who pursue that course, and my distrust is by no means lessened by the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer was seduced by the hon. Member for Leeds to undertake the support of his Bill, what was his argument? It was my lot to make a few observations in reply—not to his figures, but to his principles. He works poetically with the Rule of Three, and does with figures what he pleases. I distrust his figures very much. I heard the right hon. Gentleman use these words when supporting the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds. He asserted as a fact, "That the influence of the working classes was almost infinitesimal in the franchise of the country." Was that true? ["No!"] That is candid, at all events. But the right hon. Gentleman added that he wished "a soft and gentle influence exercised over the electoral body, through the admission of what he called the upper class of working men who ought to be as competent for the franchise as the lower of the middle class." Are these figures accurate? He said himself he was surprised at the result of the figures. It appears that the working classes represent 26 per cent of the borough constituencies, or perhaps more; and it has been demonstrated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), in a speech which has not been answered, that the causes which have operated to give the working classes such a share in the constituency now do and must continue to operate to increase it. To what recourse has the Chancellor of the Exchequer been driven in order to maintain his Bill? He said, "True, a great many of the working classes possess the franchise; but there are irregularities—a great many working men have the franchise in one place, but very few have it another." How does this Bill meet that case? There must be such inequalities, according to the necessities of the place and the number of working men who find employment. Therefore, to say that a sufficient number of working men are represented, but unequally distributed over the country, is to prove nothing, because our system of representation never was that men should be equally represented all over the country, but that their representation should somehow or other be felt. That was a sufficient answer that was given by the hon. Member for the Wick burghs (Mr. Laing). I have heard many speeches in this House, but I do not think I ever heard a more clear or convincing speech on the question of the inequalities of our electoral system than that spoken last night by the hon. Member. It was wise, politic, and constitutional. He did not mean to open the settlement of 1832; but he said, "if your theory of inequalities requires that you should open that settlement and redress those inequalities, then I can prove that the inequalities in the representaion of particular boroughs, as compared with great counties and cities, are far greater and more anomalous than the inequalities that exist in the electoral body itself." He proved that to demonstration by clear and logical arguments. And how was that met? What arguments have been urged since on the subject? The only argument I heard was this—and I am glad of the opportunity of answering it. It is impossible, we are told, to do everything at once. It is impossible to rectify all the abuses in our Constitution in a day; and therefore, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech, it is impossible for us to do more than we have done. With the view of doing full justice to the right hon. Gentleman, I will read two or three lines from his speech. The right hon. Gentleman asks this question—he being the only man living that could answer it—"Are we to have a complete measure?" How do I know? The right hon. Gentleman puts the question with infinite official composure, "Are we to have a complete measure? or are we to have one that is incomplete?" I will answer the question from my knowledge of the right hon. Gentleman's character;—he does not intend we shall have a complete measure, and I think he does not intend, from his manner, to give any measure at all. "I would ask next"—and it is an interesting question coming from a Gentleman of his experience—"I would ask, what is a complete measure?" Then he makes an admission which a speaker constantly does when he does not intend to act upon it. He says, "We are sensible of the immense advantage that would attend an operation whereby you would be able to deal with the whole range of the question at once." Operation is a very good description of his Bill—but does the right hon. Gentleman intend to be the operator himself? Although, as was truly observed by the right hon. Member for Calne, he gave no reasons for his Bill, he did not venture to repeat his non-exploded fallacy of casting the *onus probandi* on his opponents—he will reserve this for the last extremity in which the Ministry may be placed. Having put that case, he goes on to show how it was impossible that we should have a complete Bill. He says, "There must be a consideration of the franchise in England and Wales and Scotland. The subject of the Irish franchise, too, must be considered. Then comes the whole group of questions that are included in the common phrase, 're-distribution of seats,'" and he gives us some idea of those questions—"questions between the three kingdoms—questions between town and country—questions between total extinction and capital punishment, such as was inflicted in Schedule A, and the milder method of amputation such as was administered in Schedule B, or that yet milder method of grouping boroughs together adopted by my noble Friend at the head of Her Majesty's Government in 1852. All these are matters that must undergo careful consideration. Then comes the boundary question, then the machinery for elections, then the consideration of the state of the law with respect to corrupt practices at elections." And having shown us the political purgatory into which we are to be placed, he said, "All this lies before you. I now ask you, are you not content that we should only produce this measure regarding the electoral franchise?" assuring us that if we live nine Sessions of Parliament, we shall have a like measure of torture every Session. Now, I ask the right hon. Gentleman, why did he present to this House that awful category of questions? Why terrify us in this manner? Is this fair? Is it Parliamentary? Why are we to be subject to such Ministerial torture? And is it true that they could not bring in a complete measure? Then, does not that show what an unfortunate state we are in? The right hon. Gentleman has pronounced sentence on the capacity of his Ministry. He has proved one of two things—either Ministerial imbecility or Ministerial dishonesty. The history of the various Reform Bills was given very distinctly last night by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman). He subjected all the parties that mingled in these transactions to political anatomization. He skilfully cut them up, fairly and impartially, and he did not forget even ourselves, But there was one point he did not discuss, and that was the conduct of Earl Russell in his abstract Resolution. I never believed that he wanted to carry Reform. I never believed that Lord Palmerston wanted to carry Reform. I never believed anything of the kind, and I entirely acquit his Ministry of any such feelings. But Earl Russell sat down with his skilful colleagues to consider how he could stop discussion, and brought forward his abstract Resolution. This was the plan devised, and carried into execution for the express purpose, not of settling Reform, but to upset a Ministry and to prevent what he himself called a Conservative measure of Reform. Then, in order to show that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not the least atom of foundation for what he has said, I would ask the House to recollect the scope and object of the Reform Bill which was introduced to Parliament by Lord Derby's Government. In the first place, the nine questions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has spoken of are all disposed of by it, including the enfranchisement and disfranchisement of boroughs not fairly represented at the present time. And I beg to call the attention of the hon. Member for the Wick district to the fact that Honiton, the borough he mentioned, is among those the Bill proposed to deal with. Among those places that the Bill proposed to favour were Birkenhead and Staleybridge; and the measure also proposed to divide the West Riding of Yorkshire into three divisions, and Middlesex into two. The Bill provided complete systems of registration and of polling; it accurately defined the duties of the sheriffs, and, in addition to this, it provided a plan of enfranchisement and disfranchisement, and disposed of the whole question of the right of voting. Thus the several questions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced to the House with such elaborate pomp, declaring that they would of necessity require nine separate measures in order to dispose of them, are all, with the exception of the question of corrupt practice, treated of in Lord Derby's Bill, which Lord Russell helped to strangle in its birth. That is the truth upon the subject of Lord Derby's Bill; and I should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman expects any man of sense and ability in this House to believe that it would have been impossible to place the entire subject before the House in the way contended for by the hon. Member for the Wick district. I contend that that hon. Gentleman's assertion is undeniable when he says this question should not have been opened at all unless with a view to settle it completely and at once. Why do I say this? Having regard to the possibility of settling the whole question in one Bill, I believe it has been proposed to introduce it to the House in fragments, because of the observations which fell from the hon. Member for Birmingham. I believe that hon. Gentleman's sincerity with respect to this question; but never more so than when he remarked that there were three things to be done. First, we were to secure the extension of the franchise, and having accomplished that we were to rest satisfied awhile. Then we were to have the ballot; and after that a redistribution of seats. The design, Sir, is the main thing for us to look to, and if it were accomplished the conclusion of the right hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) would undoubtedly be demonstrated—whatever you may please to call our form of government, if the event hinted at were to occur it would then necessarily become to all intents and purposes a democracy. By this I mean, not that the form of the Constitution would be abolished, but that the entire power of the State would be lodged in this House; the House of Lords would be a pleasant so-so sort of place—a pageant; and as for the Crown, it would be a phantom. Then I have something to say with respect to the 40*s.* franchise. Lord Derby's Bill proposed to abolish the right of 40*s.* freeholders in boroughs to vote for county Members, on the ground that those who lived in counties should vote for the county alone, and those who lived in the boroughs for the boroughs alone. What was the 40*s.* franchise when it was created? Forty shillings in that day were worth as much as £40 would be now. They had no idea in olden times of a man having a vote unless he was in a position to exercise an independent will, and they thought it necessary that he should have sufficient property to insure that he was interested in the stability of the country. And what does the right hon. Gentleman propose to do with the anomaly which time has produced out of this originally sound arrangement? He proposes to aggravate it: and the incident brings to my mind something which occurred in Ireland upon the subject of this very franchise. A thick-headed Secretary came over to Ireland about fifteen years before the Union, and he said to Parliament, "We have the right of voting in England by virtue of 40*s.* freeholds; and we must introduce that custom into Ireland." But Sir Lawrence Parsons, a very able gentleman of Ireland, made a prophetic speech upon the occasion. He said that if they carried that 40*s.* franchise they would perhaps find it last for a time; but they might be sure that in a few years hence the priesthood would intervene between the 40*s.* constituency and the landlords, sweep away the power of the landlords, and establish the power of the democracy and the priesthood. The Bill was carried, and Sir Lawrence Parsons' prophecy came true, a pauper tenancy has been created, has come under the control of the priests, and has turned against the landlords. When Sir Robert Peel carried his Emancipation Act he said it would be impossible for the safety of the country to allow that franchise to exist and to carry his measure. Accordingly, he abolished the 40*s.* franchise, with great satisfaction to the country, which was covered with this pauper constituency. More recent legislation, however, has given us the franchise we have now in Ireland; and although the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not stated what he intends to propose when dealing with Ireland, I presume he thinks of lowering the franchise there also. All I can say is, that if it is done at the present time it will be done by a Parliament run mad. But at present we have got a good constituency in Ireland, in the £8 rating in boroughs, and the £12 rating in counties. The right hon. Gentleman also left the question of Scotch representation in obscurity; but I would remind him that both of these questions are of great importance to the people of this kingdom. This is another proof of the danger and mischief of dealing with this measure piecemeal, when we do not understand the whole scope and meaning of this Bill before Parliament assents to it. The belief that such measures as these can be taken *seriatim* seems to me to be most unphilosophical, especially when we consider how careful we should be when proposing to deal with so delicate a subject as the Constitution of the country. I defy any man to tell the result of adding some 400,000 electors to the present constituency; yet we are invited to introduce them first and then ascertain the consequences. Therefore, I say, Parliament has a right to ask what is intended to be done, not only as to the franchise, but the redistribution of seats and other matters in England, and also in Ireland and Scotland. It has been said we must elevate the working classes by giving them the franchise. No such thing. But I do not believe that we elevate them by giving them the franchise, though I can understand that they may elevate themselves by their economy and their prudence, and if they can do so and get the franchise, that is a wise and politic arrangement. I cannot, however, understand the principle which says that we are to go lower and lower in the scale of civilization to the electors instead of offering them an inducement, by prudence and proper conduct, to elevate themselves to a position to which they might fairly aspire. The policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to me to be mischievous and unconstitutional; and if the Cabinet—I do not include the younger Members—had thought about trying during the time of Lord Palmerston to have framed a wise and comprehensive Bill, having a precedent before them, they could very well have redistributed the seats and provided a simple form of registration. Purposely they avoid taking that course, and I must say the question you must ask is, What is the design in view in avoiding that rational, sensible, and constitutional course, and adopting one unwise, unfair, and unsafe? He was copious in the matter of figures, but sparing enough in stating the principle upon which the Bill was founded. No wonder hon. Gentlemen can get no answer to their inquiries as to what are the great evils in the present system. Every right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench smiles as that question is put. There are two classes of persons in the world—and in this House one class who are constantly at work to discover evils where they are difficult to find; and the other loyal and satisfied with the Constitution under which they live. If we look abroad and compare the state of the Continent of Europe with our own country, we find that whilst abroad they have been disturbed by convulsions and torn by revolutions, we have been happy in the enjoyment of a system of government which has managed to combine liberty with order and stability. It was the fancy of a philosopher that this beautiful system of representative government was invented in the woods; but whether it is a realization of that idea of wise men of old, or the result of happy accident, or providential arrangement, the result is that it combines private happiness with public freedom. There is no part of the world in which the arts of industry and peace have been more fully developed. And as I am satisfied that the Constitution rests upon a sound and satisfactory basis, I trust that those who are elected to this House will prove themselves the wise, the faithful, and the fearless guardians of the blessings that we enjoy.

MR. FAWCETT: I deeply regret that I should for one moment stand in the way of one of the most able Members of the Cabinet (Mr. Goschen, who had risen at the same time and had given way). I thank him for his courtesy; and I will endeavour to be as brief as possible in my remarks. I would scarcely have adventured, as a very young Member of the House, to have intruded myself into so important a debate, had it not occurred that some few weeks since a personal appeal was made to me by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) who seemed to think that I was deficient in courage, because I—he was pleased to call me a Radical and a representative of the working classes—had not expressed my opinion on Reform. If that appeal had come to me from a different quarter I would have immediately ventured to respond to it; but I doubted an appeal urged by a right hon. Gentleman who sits on the Liberal Benches, and is always enthusiastically cheered by the Conservatives who sit on the opposite side of the House. I think, however, the occasion has now come when any independent Member has a right to express himself on the question of Reform, and I most gladly give expression to my feelings on this occasion. If I do, in the least degree, represent the working classes, I am glad, as their representative, to be able to say that I accept this measure most thankfully, and I will do everything in my power to give it a most cordial support. It seemed to me that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud, delivered last evening, replete with brilliant epigram and telling antitheses, was a carefully-prepared essay on this theme—"Has Earl Russell been consistent? And is the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) a Republican?" Suppose he had proved both these positions—suppose he had proved the inconsistency of Earl Russell and the republicanism of the hon. Member for Birmingham, it would not have affected me in the slightest degree on this question. I think that on a grave and important question like this we have something more—something of far greater and nobler consideration—to deal with than the inconsistency of a noble Lord or the extreme opinions of an hon. Member. And I must say—I do not say what is the impression produced upon Members who have had more experience of this House than I have—but it seemed to me that the right hon. Member was sadly throwing away his brilliant gifts of rhetoric when on a great and important question like this he occupied an hour and three quarters in uttering miserable personalities ["Oh!"] and uttering—I will leave out that adjective, and I will say paltry—personalities against Earl Russell and the hon. Member for Birmingham. But we have listened this evening to a speech of altogether a different kind. You listened last year—I wish I had been in the House at the time to have enjoyed the intellectual treat—to a still more remarkable speech, a speech filled with deep thought and, I will frankly say, with earnest intention. But before I deal with one or two of the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), I wish to put a simple and homely question to him, and if he cannot answer it to my satisfaction I will tell him with that frankness with which he spoke that his arguments and his reasonings, acute and profound as they may be, will not much influence me, and I believe they will not much influence the country. The question I wish to put to him is this—Did he not join that combination which declared that no Government was worthy of the confidence of this country unless it reduced the borough franchise? I tell the hon. Gentlemen on the Benches opposite that if I had been in the House at that time I never would have joined that combination. I think the Willis' Rooms compact was a factious one, and was based—I think it was based—on insincerity, and I believe that that insincerity has for six years infected the political atmosphere of this country, and that it will require clear thought, vigorous action, and out-spoken language, before our deliberations can be re-invigorated by genuine party conflict. But I want to know something more than this. I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not become a distinguished Member of the Government that came into office expressly to carry an extension of the suffrage? I want to ask him whether he did not sit on the Treasury Bench when an extension of the suffrage was proposed wider than that which is proposed by the present Bill. At all events, he listened to that measure; he gave it his approbation by silence; and he remained a passive coadjutor of a scheme which as he now phrases it, "degrades the suffrage," and if the suffrage is degraded he said, in a brilliant epigram last year, that "one of two things would occur—either that his party would be ruined or that his country would be ruined." Now, Sir, it seems to me that every argument which the right hon. Gentleman has urged against the extension of the suffrage he must have been aware of when he sat on the Treasury Bench, and when that measure for the extension of the suffrage was introduced. He then, as now, had read his Bentham; he knew the passage from Aristotle; he had then seen Australia, and he had seen democracy there; he then knew the habits of the working-classes of this country. And why did he not then come forward and tell us of the imminent risk of this country being ruined, and of its institutions being overthrown? Possibly, it may be said that the right hon. Gentleman has changed his mind, and that every one has a right to change his mind. I admit that. But why does he not get up and tell the House what are the reasons which have induced him to change his mind? Two years ago no one would have had the slightest right to say but that the right hon. Gentleman was as earnest and as sincere a Reformer as any one in this House. What has quenched his reforming zeal? I hate personal insinuations, and would be the last to insinuate that that reforming zeal had been repressed by the strong reasons of the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne). I would be the last to say it, but I know it has been said out of doors in high life. But has anything occurred in the country? I think that something must have occurred in the country, and that what has occurred has been wrongly interpreted by the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends who now act with him on this question, for I find that not only he but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wick (Mr, Laing), and the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh)—all the Liberals, in fact, who spoke against Reform—all alike voted against the Government of Lord Derby. ["No, no!"] I believe that the majority which displaced Lord Derby's Administration—the division was taken on the 10th June, and I read the division lists this morning—and I saw the names of those four hon. Gentlemen. What, therefore, I say is, that I think some event must have occurred in the country during the last few years which has produced a general effect on their minds—an event which I think has been wrongly interpreted by them. I look to the history of this country during the last four years; and one event has occurred. But what is the lesson to be drawn from it? I say that the lesson to be drawn from it is an unanswerable argument, far more powerful than fifty volumes of statistics, in favour of the extension of the suffrage to those who at the present time are unrepresented. I need not say the incident to which I allude as having occurred during the last four years is that one of the most important branches of industry in this country has been paralyzed; the most important section of our labouring population was thrown out of employment; that they were reduced from comparative affluence to the depths of destitution and distress. How did they bear it? Did they then show that they were wanting in any social virtue? Did they come here in haste and ask for support? No. They exhibited a proud and a manly independence, and would almost have sold the clothes from off their backs before they would have asked any one to assist them. But this is only one and not the most important feature of this incident. It was thought by many in this country—it was thought by many of our leading statesmen—that if England were deprived of raw cotton the Lancashire operatives would have rebelled, and have demanded the cessation of the American blockade. What was their attitude? I went to Lancashire in the depth of their dire distress, and what was the feeling pervading that suffering population? The sentiment—the noble and glorious sentiment which prevailed was this—we would infinitely rather that our industry should be permanently prostrated—we would far sooner that a bale of cotton should never again be woven into cloth in a Lancashire mill—than that slavery should continue. I know that there are many brilliant pages in the annals of our country, but I think when the future historian of this country writes the events of the 19th century, his description of the conduct of our artizan population in their hour of trial will form not the least—I may say the most—brilliant page in the brilliant history of this country. This is the chief event that has occurred affecting the artizan population of our nation. I confidently ask those Gentlemen who have forgotten their reforming zeal whether this is the event which has induced them to change their opinions? The hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh) says, "I have come back from Australia. Look at that country, and you will stand aghast at the result of democracy." Now, I will say this, that I have looked at that country, and if I had been there, as he has been—if my energy there had met with great pecuniary success—if I had known, as he knows, that property there is as secure as it is here—that the laws are as well and as justly administered there as they are here—I should have been ashamed to come back from that country and speak of its people as if they were a horde of bandits. Why, every time I look at Australia or at any part of our Colonial Empire, I am the more proud of being an Englishman; for I think that our colonies are the centres of a civilization equal to our own. Greece had achieved many of the greatest intellectual triumphs of modern civilization; Rome had an Empire as vast as ours; but the freedom, the greatness, and the glory of those countries have departed, and have left no living testimony behind. But what seems likely to be the destiny of this country? We in every quarter of the globe are founding nations which image our own greatness, which inherit our institutions, which cherish our feelings, and which in ages yet to come will reflect the greatness and glory of the nation from which they have sprung. Australia to arrest popular progress! Why, there is not an Australian who will not agree with me in saying that not even in this country is loyalty to our beloved Queen a more dearly cherished passion—the people there are as free, as happy, and wealthy as are the people of this country. Property, as I have before said, is as secure; law is as justly administered; and they at least have not, as we have, a burden of destitution constantly reminding our statesmen that they have left their highest mission unfulfilled, and that is to wage successful war against pauperism. But there is another argument advanced by the hon. Member for Wick and the right hon. Member for Calne. The Member for Wick indulged in a mathematical illustration of his arguments, and drew an imaginary curve. I have studied in the same school of mathematics, and I understand his illustration. He says draw two curves, and wherever you find the greatest number of the working-classes there you will find the greatest bribery. The right hon. Member for Calne says, introduce more of the working-classes to the franchise, and you introduce those who are corrupt—those who can be bribed and intimidated. Now, I think I know as much of the working-classes as either of these hon. Gentlemen. I do not represent a small borough, but I represent a place which is peculiarly a working man's constituency. The right hon. Member for Calne went on to say that if you increase the number of working men in a constituency it will be impossible for any but a rich man to obtain access to this House. I do not like to enter into details of personal history; but in a case like this there is nothing like a little of a man's own personal experience. I went to the constituency which I represent unknown; I had not a single friend in the borough. The first thing I told the people was that I was an extremely poor man—that I could not afford to employ a paid agent or a paid canvasser—that all the income I possessed had been won by my intellectual exertions in a fair open field. I did not promise to subscribe a single shilling to any of their institutions—and the only pledge I gave them was this. I said, if you return me I will give up my whole time and energy to my Parliamentary duties. I believe the Returns show that there are 2,000 working men in Brighton; and nine-tenths or a larger proportion voted for me on these terms. And I now confidently throw a challenge to the Member for Wick. I know that he is a man of great commercial eminence—I have no doubt that he possesses vast wealth; but I will tell him this, let him go to my borough and squander wealth as profusely and profligately as he likes, and if I should do my duty to my constituents I defy him to shake the allegiance of the humblest or poorest man who recorded his vote in my favour. There are two other arguments to which I wish briefly to allude. The first is this. It is frequently stated that if you admit the working classes to the franchise they will overwhelm every other class by voting *en masse.* I think the argument is based upon a fallacy. I do not think you have any more right to assume that the working class will vote *en masse* than that the middle class or the upper class will do so. Look at the questions which affect them. Take them one by one, and I confidently say that they are as divided on these questions as other classes are. And I think also that hon. Gentlemen opposite are somewhat rash in concluding that hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House who are considered peculiarly to represent the working-classes are those who are most in their favour, because I think that questions which are likely each year to assume a greater importance in this House are questions affecting capital and labour, and many Gentlemen who now consider themselves the representatives of the working classes are notably capitalists, and on such questions are more likely to sympathize with their order than with labour. I will give an illustration. I will take a measure like the Factory Act which was passed in 1848. I believe that no measure has ever done more good. I believe that it has promoted the welfare of the working-classes and arrested their physical deterioration. I am deeply anxious that these Acts should be extended far and wide over the industry of this country. I believe that then the great reproach of this age will be removed—namely, the ignorance of the people, and with that you will remove all its attendant evils; and I also believe that if you extend these Acts you will achieve another great result—you will prevent that melancholy fact which is constantly forcing itself on my attention, that owing to the employment of juvenile labour there are tens of thousands of lives annually sacrificed in this country. The operatives have always been in favour of this factory legislation. But the manufacturers—and the hon. Member for Birmingham will bear me out in saying that he and others like him opposed the Factory Acts. Then with what favour will their constituencies look upon men who oppose measures such as these? But I can tell them that the labouring classes are almost to a man in favour of their extension, and if you increase the strength of the labouring population in the constituencies with no other object than that of giving them more power in the House to get this beneficent legislation further extended, I believe that a measure for the extension of the suffrage would work results which would soon convince every hon. Member opposite that it was one of the most beneficent pieces of legislation ever produced in this country. I will now give one or two other illustrations. A considerable section of the advanced Liberal party—so far as foreign policy is concerned—are always in favour of the strictest non-intervention. But they do not represent the opinions of the working men of this country. I went to many public meetings of working men when Poland was being ground down by Russia, and I have no hesitation in saying that the opinion of a considerable minority of the working men was in favour of intervention, and that they would have waged war on behalf of the rights of freedom and justice. Take another question on which they are divided amongst themselves. Hon. Gentlemen who have not mixed with the working-classes so much as I have think they are all in favour of strikes and trade unions. There is a very large number of them who think as strongly as any Member of this House that strikes cannot possibly benefit them, and they dislike and distrust those who advocate them. Take, again, religious questions. There is a section of the working-classes, and I believe a majority, who are bitterly opposed to the slightest encroachment on the Sabbath as a day of rest. But you may say that I omit the most serious allegations that can be made against the working-classes—that they are in favour of unjust taxation, and are ignorant of political economy. I think when the working-classes are taunted with ignorance of political economy hon. Members should recollect that there was a great party in this country who, year after year, maintained a wicked and unjust monopoly, and that the maintenance of that wicked and unjust monopoly was what the great author of political economy eighty years ago showed to be contrary to the first elements and the simplest axioms of political economy. I think I have brought forward one or two reasons to show that there is no fear of the working-classes voting as a class. There is one other argument. It is said that this Bill involves inevitable arithmetical degradation. It is only necessary to remark, in reply to that argument, that the same reason would have conclusively told against all Reform—it would have told with equal force against the Reform Bill of 1832. Then others say we shall not have a complete measure introduced into this House until we get a redistribution of seats. I wish we had it, and I look forward anxiously to the time when we shall have it; but if we have it, will not the same argument of arithmetical degradation apply to it? Will it not be said that if Manchester and Liverpool are given one Member more each, why should not another Member be given to other large towns, until you gradually give Manchester and Liverpool twenty or thirty Members each? Therefore it is that I distrust those hon. Members who so loudly and persistently call for a complete measure, because I believe when they make that call they are not very anxious to have any reform of the representative system at all. As I said at the beginning, I joyfully accept this measure, and I place confidence in the assertion of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he will not let the Reform question stop here, but that he will direct his great powers of statesmanship to bring about a complete reform of the representation of the country. But, in the meantime, I give my cordial support to this measure, which will introduce 400,000 more electors, because I believe there will not be 400,000 electors more independent, intelligent, or patriotic, than those upon whom it is now proposed to bestow the suffrage; and when I feel this, I think that we are supporting a measure which will tend to secure the permanent greatness of this country, and which will implant our institutions more deeply in the hearts and affections of the people. In the course of my studies I have been led to consider the conditions upon which the material prosperity of this country depends, and I have been sometimes struck with this consideration, that I believe there is only one real danger which can imperil our prosperity; and it is this—that if any other country should be able to offer to our labourers a more illustrious or happier career, we should lose those without whose strong arms and acquired skill the greatness of this country cannot be maintained. I know that it is repeatedly said to our labourers, as an inducement for them to leave England and go to Canada and Australia, that they there enjoy all the privileges of citizenship, whilst if they remain in this country they are deprived of them. I hope, however, the parent country will no longer foster this unfortunate policy; and I hope that day will come, step by step, and gradually, when the English emigrant will no longer be able to say that when he left his native country—a country he loved so well—he was considered to be somewhat dangerous, and that if he had a vote that the institutions of the nation would be imperilled; whereas when he emigrated he became the founder of a nation possessing the same institutions as our own, and which in time would be as free, as happy, and likely to be as great as the mother country. I thank hon. Members for the generous forbearance which they have shown towards me since I have been a Member of this House, and more especially for the patience with which they have listened to my observations this evening.

Mr. BRIGHT: Sir, although in the course of this debate I have been the subject of much remark, and of not a little that may be fairly termed unusual attack—I beg to assure the House that I have not risen for the purpose of defending myself, since I am ready to leave my course in this House and my political character to the impartial view of Members of the House, and to the just judgment of my countrymen outside the House. Nor have I risen for the purpose of entering into an elaborate defence of the Bill introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think, however, that there has been so much said which is not to the point, that it may be advantageous if I endeavour to explain to the House what I understand the Bill to be—to state some of the grounds on which it appeals to us for support, and to ask the House whether, under the circumstances of this question, and in the existing condition of the country, it is the duty of Parliament to permit it to pass into a law. One thing in the Bill is highly satisfactory to me—that both in what it does and the manner in which it proposes to do it; it is distinct, clear, without any tricks—without semblance of giving something in one clause, and then under a feeling of alarm withdrawing that something in the clause that follows. I have always been in favour of meeting this question and dealing with it in such a manner that every person in the country who is now an elector, or who is to be included in the Bill, should comprehend that it was a measure, so far as it went, fair and generous to the people of the country whom it was intended to enfranchise. I think I can show reasons—if we can for a moment get rid of the notion of a party combination—why this House should readily, and without hesitation, agree to this Bill. One portion of it will recommend itself, I am quite certain, to all hon. Gentlemen who are enthusiastic admirers of the Bill of 1832—and on this point I can confidently ask for the support of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe)—that is the portion of the Bill which is intended to remove all legal obstacles or difficulties by which many persons who were intended to be enfranchised by the Reform Bill have been up to this time deprived of their votes. The Reform Bill proposed to give a vote to every occupier of a £10 house in a borough. Well, it is shown—partly it may be owing to the wording of the Act, partly owing to the decisions of Judges and Courts—that this extension of the franchise was never complete—that by the operation of clauses which made it necessary to pay rates, and which made it necessary almost in effect that the occupier himself should pay the rates—many thousands—I know not the number—have been disfranchised from 1832 up to the very hour at which this Bill shall pass into law. In Scotland there is no such disqualification as that which this Bill proposes to remove, for there they have no ratepaying clauses, and they have no system of compounding which would juggle men out of their franchise; and the object of this Bill is to assimilate our law in this respect to the law of Scotland, and to give to the Reform Act of 1832 the same efficacy which the people expected from it when it passed both Houses of Parliament. Well, I suppose, although I dare say hon. Gentlemen will not admit it by any outward expression of opinion, they are not against such an improvement of the Reform Act as will give the vote which this part of the Bill is intended to give. The right hon. Member for Calne can certainly not refuse his assent, because if there be one thing besides the classical times of antiquity to which he is more devoted than another it is clearly the Bill of 1832. The next point to which I shall ask the attention of the House is that which the Bill proposes to do in respect to the county franchise. Here I must say, at the risk of saying what is not complimentary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his Colleagues, that I think the Government have shown a remarkable feebleness, which lays them open to great blame and to the expression of great surprise, not only on the part of the House, but of almost every person in the country who has expected a Bill on the subject of Reform. They propose to bring the franchise down from a £50 occupation to one of £14. The occupation franchise in counties was a measure of your own carrying in 1832. I do not say that to touch it would not have been necessary now if you had not then disturbed the ancient franchise of the counties; but when the county occupation franchise was fixed at

£50, and the franchise in boroughs at £10, he must have been a very dull man indeed who could not have foreseen that the county franchise must at some time not remote be greatly reduced. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke encouragingly in that Reform discussion many years ago, when the House carried the first reading of the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King); but from that time to this there has been a good deal more notice taken of this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire and his Cabinet—the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) being very intimately concerned with the then leader of the House in manufacturing a Reform Bill—they had not had much experience, and it was not to be wondered at that they bungled it somewhat. They brought in their Bill—a Bill containing some good things and some bad things—among others it proposed a £10 franchise in counties. They took, however, a considerable compensation by attempting to withdraw all freeholders within the limits of boroughs from the county franchise—transferring them to the electoral body within the limits of boroughs. But that does not in the slightest degree change this fact—that they did with due deliberation come to the opinion that £10 occupiers in counties were fit and proper persons to exercise the elective franchise. You do not suppose that they proposed to put some scores of thousands on the county lists of whose fitness they were not well assured, and then endeavoured to compensate for this by their proposal with regard to the freeholders in the boroughs. They believed, and believe now no doubt, that £10 was a proper and fitting franchise for the counties in England and Wales; and I should be glad to find them when the House shall be in Committee on this Bill proposing to reduce the sum of a £14 franchise to a £10 one. If they wish to have an easy victory over the Government, and to prove themselves consistent, and to extend the range of the county registration, I and a good many Members in this part of the House will be extremely happy to give them our cordial support—and I can promise them the support of the right hon. Gentleman behind me (Mr. Lowe), because he has fixed his affections on a £10 rental franchise. If he were to say he approved a £10 household franchise in boroughs he must do so also in the counties, because we all know that the £10 householders in counties are generally men in better pecuniary circumstances than those in boroughs. Now, as far as I have gone, I think at least I have shown that hon. Gentlemen opposite, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne, cannot offer any opposition to the Bill of the Government with regard to these two portions of it. I may say further, with respect to this proposition of the Government, that there was one illustration the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) might have made in his amusing speech — for, however much the country is going to ruin, the right hon. Gentleman can always be amusing in this House—there is one illustration he might have made. He might have said that in Ireland they had a £12 rating franchise for the counties, and that is as near as may be in value to £14 rental franchise. Therefore, the proposition of the Government—although I disapprove it—still it has the sanction of the course which has been taken in Ireland, and this, I have heard from Irish Members, is considered a not unsatisfactory condition of the county franchise. And, with the experience of a great number of years of this franchise in Ireland, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne might screw up his courage to support this proposition of the Bill. Now I come to the only point on which there is any difference. I think the world has never shown an instance of a great legislative Assembly such as this making a great disturbance among themselves, exciting themselves, getting into a violent passion, pouring out even cataracts of declamation like that we heard last night, and all upon the simple question whether the franchise in boroughs shall remain as now at £10 or shall be fixed for a time at £7. Hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to be surprised at the frankness with which I speak. The head of the present Government was laughed at for years because he spoke of finality in connection with the Bill of 1832. I should be very happy if it should so happen, as the right hon. Gentleman has suggested in his fervid imagination, that the working classes would in great number surmount the barriers of £7, and that ultimately it should be even equal to a household suffrage in the country. But does any hon. Gentleman opposite believe that he is carrying a Bill—did any hon. Gentleman sitting in this House ever vote upon any measure of arrangement and organization like this one, and could confidently assure himself that the measure should be final? He must have a very poor notion of what our children will be if he thinks them less competent to decide such questions for themselves than we are at present to decide them. Therefore do not think that because I use the phrase "for a time" I am not of opinion that this Bill if it be carried in all probability will put an end to Bills having reference to the suffrage—for such portion of time, at least, as this Bill will be found to meet the views of the intelligent—[*Laughter*]—allow me to finish the sentence—of the intelligent population of this country. Now, the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed in addition to the £7 franchise what he calls a lodger or tenant-occupation franchise. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire in his Bill proposed something of the same kind, but with a £20 qualification, while the present Bill proposes a £10 qualification—£10 being very nearly the same for a holding of this kind as £7 would be for a house. But the right hon. Gentleman opposite proposed provisions in his measure which would be extremely difficult, and I think would lead to an interminable perplexity. I have no doubt that the proposition now made by the Government is simpler than his, and likely to be carried out with less difficulty and more satisfaction to that class of persons in this metropolis who are interested in this part of the Bill. With regard to the £7 franchise, let us examine it for one moment. Somebody has said, and many persons have written, that this Bill is my Bill—that the Government made this Bill at my recommendation. ["Hear, hear."] I thought somebody would say "hear!" Now, I have not been able to find a point of the Bill which is what I recommended. I never was in favour of a £6 franchise, and I should never have proposed it. I believe in a household franchise for the boroughs of this country. But when I found a powerful Government like the last—and which was not as honest as it was powerful—proposing a £6 franchise, with the expectation that it would carry it, I was not to stand in the way of a considerable enfranchisement of the people, merely because I had an idea that household suffrage would be better. A £7 franchise is a proposition I have never said one syllable in favour of, and it never entered into my mind that the Government would split hairs in this fashion, and would leave the £6 franchise, their own proposition, and which nearly everybody in the country who has asked for a Reform Bill has expressed himself ready to accept, and would offer to the House a £7 franchise. But now here it is offered, and unfortunately, beggars in the House of Commons, like beggars outside of it, cannot be choosers, and we are sometimes in a position to take only what is given. Now, when the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks was brought in a very remarkable thing happened. Two most eminent and respected Members of the Government seceded from it, and took their seats on the third Bench behind, and I think I see one of those distinguished Members (Mr. Walpole) sitting there at this moment. They both made what we call a personal explanation to the House, and the explanation was that they differed from their Colleagues on this question of the suffrage. They do not like that the suffrage in counties should be brought down to the rate of the boroughs, and that the suffrage in the boroughs be continued at the same rate which it was at the time of the Reform Act. I am not sure whether these right hon. Gentlemen coincide in the opinion that the county franchise should be brought down to £10. I think the right hon. Gentlemen expressed some dissent—at least they were of opinion that the franchise in the boroughs ought to be reduced; and I know the right hon. Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley), in the words which have often been quoted since, expressed himself in favour of establishing a borough franchise at £8. Well, now the Government have been splitting hairs with regard to £6 and £7; I hope the right hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House will not split hairs between £8 and £7; because surely after the discussion this question has undergone—after the mode and manner the House has been brought into difficulty by past transactions—after the great expectations which have been raised throughout the country, I think it would show very ill statesmanship on the part of those right hon. Gentlemen and a needless obedience to the cause of party—it would hardly be becoming in them—if they were not willing to make the small concession of £1 in answer to the concession of £1 which I am willing or forced to make—and join with me in giving at least a friendly, if not an enthusiastic, support to the Bill of the Government. And, after all, this £3, what is it? The right hon. Gentleman behind me (Mr. Lowe) has conjured up a frightful apparition. The £10 is the salvation of the country. For thirty-four years its operation has been such as to extort from him unlimited approval. I do not know whether he will think £9 perilous, or £8 in any degree of doubtful utility, but £7 he considers to be actually destructive to the interests of the country; and he has shown moreover that it would destroy the connection between the executive Government and the House—that it would reduce us to all the evils which are supposed to exist in connection with the constitution of the United States, withoutany of its advantages; in fact, I know not that a more gloomy, discouraging, and appalling picture of the future of the House and the country was ever drawn by any Member of the House, and all the foundation of those horrors is that we should reduce the franchise in the boroughs to £1 lower than was recommended by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire and his Colleague the Member for the University of Cambridge. Now, I appeal to Gentlemen opposite whether they will allow themselves in considering the position of this question—it may be possible—I do not think they can, but it may be they can make it impossible—that this question of the suffrage should be got out of our way during this present Session of Parliament. If they do make it impossible—I am not much given to prophesy—but I venture to predict that there are many on these Benches now who will live to regret the course they have taken. Now, there is one other proposition—it is made in this Bill—which I hope the House will not listen to for a moment, and that is the savings bank franchise. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire had something like it—perhaps the very same thing—in his Bill. I disapproved of it then. I have no objection to enfranchise those who may be enfranchised by it; but I think conscientiously it is the very worst of all "fancy franchises" ever proposed. It will be unequal to the last degree, and it will be, I believe, the source of every kind of fraud. And I agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), who, I think, in speaking of it said he did not see why the investment of £50—the saving of it in a savings bank—should give a man a higher social and political position than the investment or saving of an equal sum in any other description of property where the investment could be fairly ascertained. I object altogether to giving the franchise to one man and shutting it out from another—that second man, it may be, being far more heroic than the other. For example, a man may have to provide a humble equipment for a daughter's marriage, a small sum for a son's apprenticeship—something may be taken out of his earnings for the education of his children, he may have under his roof an aged parent, and he may be performing to that parent the most sacred and most holy of duties, and these may cause him to withdraw £5 or £10 from his little fund in the savings bank, or may prevent his having any fund there at all, and the law steps in, and for doing so much, which in every rank of life is so honourable and so exemplary, his name is erased from the electoral list of the town in which he lives. I protest against this savings bank franchise. I think also it would be liable to great fraud, because three or four members of a family may invest in a savings bank in one name and so give to that one person a vote. I do not in the least object to any one person having a vote, but I do object to giving it under a system which, altogether apart from the usual processes of enfranchisement, is liable to the utmost inequality, and to a species of fraud which cannot be prevented. Now I have gone through the Bill in its main provisions, and I would ask the House what they think of it? The Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us—in fact, we well know—that we have in England and Wales about five and a half millions of men. Under this Bill he further tells us we should have 900,000 electors. [An hon. MEMBER: 1,300,000.] But not 1,300,000 when the double qualifications are taken off. Whatever that be, it will place within the franchise something perhaps a little more than one in five, and will leave out of the 5,500,000 more than 4,000,000 of grown men in England and Wales who will still not have the franchise. Of those he says there will be 330,000 working men. Well, this is a very—as I am quite confident whenever the matter is fairly looked into will be found out—exaggerated estimate. The right hon. Gentleman included 60,000 who now live in £10 houses to be admitted by the repeal of the ratepaying clauses. And more than that, he included every man between £10 and £7, although the experience of every one tells us that is not correct; and as to all those working men brought forward in those blue books, except the hon. Members for Coventry, I will undertake to say that there is scarcely a single Member of the

House, looking to his own canvass and his own constituency, who has not been astounded to be told that there are so many working men in the existing constituencies. I do not say the whole, but the half, of this statement is a delusion of the most transparent kind. I should only be too glad if it could be honestly ascertained that so many working men could be found on the register ; at least, I think it would do something towards confirming hon. Gentlemen in the view they entertain that the conduct of so many of those men as possess the franchise has hitherto been most exemplary in their exercise of it. Now, I appeal to hon. Gentlemen—I am very earnest in my wishes upon this question, because, notwithstanding the unkind allusion and imputation cast upon me sometime ago by a right hon. Gentleman who sits on this side of the House, there is nobody who has so great an interest as I have, in a certain sense, in a fair and early settlement of this question. I have had as much to do with it as any one, I think, in discussing it publicly out of the House and in the House. I have discussed it frankly, and whatever hon. Gentlemen may think to the contrary, I never spoke on any question in which I took a greater interest, or with a deeper conviction that I was serving the true interests of their class as well as my countrymen at large. I do not know whether I may appeal to the right hon. Member for Calne ; but I should be glad if he would give me an intimation that I have succeeded in converting him, because I think I have shown that everything this Bill proposes is really bound up in some shape or other with the Bill of 1832, or with the propositions in which he has been concerned. I have got here—it is really curious how things drop into your hands when you want them—here is a paper, *The Norfolk News*, of the year 1859. It contains an article headed, " Redeem your Pledges," and consists of extracts from the election addresses of hon. Members on this side the House—I am not sure about the other—and especially of Whig Ministers just previous to the election in June 1859. The first is from the election address of Lord Palmerston, who said there must be a Bill to alter the law regulating the representation of the people in Parliament. Then Lord John Russell said we should have to consider the great question of the amendment of the representation of the people in Parliament. Sir George Grey said that at the earliest period consistent with duty, the Government would be prepared to deal with the question of Parliamentary Reform. Then there were similar extracts from the speeches of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, from the speeches of the Attorney General of that day, and of the Solicitor General. Then there is an extract headed, "Right Hon. Robert Lowe, Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education." And what did he say in 1859, before the Government of the right hon. Gentleman opposite was discharged from the service of the House and of the country ? The Right Hon. Robert Lowe says—

> "It will be the duty of the Government to prepare a measure of Reform, and I have every confidence that it will be one which if not fully satisfying men of extreme opinions will be acceptable to the great body of the people."

I think the right hon. Gentleman has a very short memory, or else he trifles with this House. Is it conceivable that a man who wrote that in his election address in 1859 should stand up to-night and deliver such a speech as we have heard from him for an hour and a half. I am afraid, Sir, that when under these circumstances men change their opinions after they are fifty years of age there is not much expectation of turning them back again. I feel that I could not with much hope appeal to the right hon. Member for Calne, or to his Colleague the right hon. Member for Stroud—I do not know that I should appeal to the noble Lord the Member for Haddington (Lord Elcho), who, with the exception of the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh), is the only Member at this side of the House who cheers the sentiments of either of the right hon. Gentlemen. What is the reason, I ask, that Gentlemen who have been holders of office take this course with regard to the Bill of the Government ? I will not deal in any insinuations, but I will say that, from Gentlemen who held office with Ministers in this country, but happened to be left out of what may be called "the daily ministrations"—we had a right to expect a very minute account of the reasons why they change their opinions before we can turn round and change with them. These are the Gentlemen who all at once start up as the great teachers of statesmanship in the House and the country. Are they what the right hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich (Sir John Pakington) spoke of in the recess—are they "the foremost statesmen of the country"—and if so, is there to be a bid by them to take the place of Gentlemen who have not much succeeded as statesmen when in office? In office these right hon. Gentlemen are as docile as any other Gentlemen in office—but I fear, notwithstanding the ideas some people have of my influence with Earl Russell, that I am not able to offer them any arguments on his part that will tell upon them. I do not object for a moment to a Member of this House being fond of office. The Chancellor of the Exchequer lives much more happily in office than he would live if he were out of it—though I do not think he will live quite so long. I do not complain of men who are fond of office, but I could never comprehend the reason they like it so much. If I may parody, or, I should say, make an alteration in a line or two of a stanza of one of the most beautiful poems in our language, I might ask—

> " For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> That pleasing, anxious office e're resigned,
> Left the warm precincts of the Treasury,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ?"

What I complain of is this, that when place recedes into the somewhat dim past, that which in office was deemed patriotism vanishes with it. We have one wild howl of despair from these right hon. Gentlemen because it is proposed to diminish the franchise in boroughs from £10 to £7, and to add by so small a proposition as that something to the freedom of the people of this country. The right hon. Gentleman below me (Mr. Horsman) said a little against the Government and a little against the Bill, but had last night a field night for an attack upon so humble an individual as I am. The right hon. Gentleman is the first of the new party who has expressed his great grief by his actions—who has retired into what may be called his political Cave of Adullam—and he has called about him every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented. The right hon. Gentleman has been long anxious to form a party in this House. There is scarcely at this side of the House any one who is able to address the House with effect or to take much part in our debates that he has not tried to bring over to his party or cabal—and lastly, the right hon. Gentleman has succeeded in hooking the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. I know there was an opinion expressed many years ago by a Member of the Treasury Bench and of the Cabinet, that two men would make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable and so disinterested as the two right hon. Gentlemen, we may hope to see for the first time in Parliament a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two is like the Scotch terrier that was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail. The right hon. Member for Calne told us that he had some peculiar election experiences. There are men who make discord wherever they appear. The right hon. Gentleman on going down to Kidderminster got into some unpleasing altercation with somebody, and it ended with his having his head broken. But I am happy to say, and the House will bear witness, that with regard to his power now it is probably as strong as before he took his leave of Kidderminster and went to Calne—a village somewhere in the West of England. The right hon. Gentleman found on the list of electors of Calne about 174 names, of whom, according to the blue book, about seven were working men. I suppose three or four of them were probably keepers of shops, and some of those whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer I think improperly included in his list. When the right hon. Member went down there he found a tumult even more aggravated than at Kidderminster. They did not break his head, but they did something that in the eye of the law was much worse, for they shut up the police in the Town Hall, and the little mob of this little place had the whole game to themselves. The right hon. Gentleman has told us of the polypus, which takes its colour from the rock on which it lives, and he said that some hon. Members take their colours from their constituencies. The constituency which the right hon. Gentleman represents consists of 174 men, seven of whom are working men; but the real constituent of the right hon. Gentleman is a Member of the other House of Parliament, and could send in his butler or his groom, instead of the right hon. Gentleman, to represent the borough. I think in one sense—regarding the right hon. Gentleman as an intellectual gladiator in this House—we are much indebted to the Marquess of Lansdowne that he did not do that. And now, Sir, I said that I want to explain the particulars of this Bill, and to appeal to the good sense and patriotism of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I ask them not to take the disparaging view of their countrymen that has been presented to them by the right hon. Member for Calne and the hon. Member for Salisbury, who, I presume, from their former residence at the Antipodes, seem to take a Botany Bay impression and a Botany Bay view of the character of the great bulk of their countrymen. Why the right hon. Gentleman some nights ago, when I was not here—I recollect I went out to send a letter up to the gallery—said that I, even in the matter of the cattle plague, set class against class. [*A laugh.*] The hon. Gentlemen opposite, who from the ease with which they are amused must be a most amiable party, laughed at this observation. I ask any man in this House, is it possible to do a thing more perilous than that which is done by the right hon. Gentleman and his Australian Colleague the hon. Member for Salisbury—namely, to make it appear that there is a gulf that shall not be passed between the highest and most powerful and a portion of the middle classes, and the great body of the working people, who are really the heart of this great nation. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that by-and-by, if everybody will wait long enough, everybody will get over this barrier and be inside the franchise. Well, that is no great consolation, if what he has said be true, that by the Bill of the Government we, or our children, shall be eaten up at some future time. Would it not be infinitely better to show our trust in the people now? Of all the follies and crimes which Governments commit, that of a constant distrust of their subjects, of their citizens, of their country, is about the wildest and most foolish. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud and somebody else who followed him tells us the people are very indifferent about this matter. I think I just caught the hon. Member for Salisbury in the hubbub of the House as he rose to speak, making an observation about the number of petitions, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne said he thought their number was not more than four. Well, how many petitions were there previous to 1831? Bear in mind that Lord John Russell had for some time discontinued bringing forward his annual Motion for Parliamentary Reform. In 1821 one petition was presented to the House in favour of Parliamentary Reform. In 1822 there were twelve, in 1823 there were twenty-nine, in the six years that passed between 1824 and 1829 there was not a single petition presented to this House in favour of Parliamentary Reform; and in 1830 there were fourteen petitions—ten more than those with which the right hon. Gentleman made himself merry to-night. And what took place in 1831-2? Why some of you were running for your lives—in the midst of a storm—which you had not foreseen, but which was as inevitable as any storm that arises in the heavens. It was an accident that brought it about—the French Revolution. Well, there are always accidents. A great portion of the things that happen in our lives, so far as we can judge, have the appearance of accidents. But with the accident there was material for a conflagration, and a conflagration arose. I recollect that Mr. Francis Place and others well known to many hon. Members of this House went to the Duke of Wellington as a deputation when he took office after the fall of Lord Grey's Government, and they remonstrated with the Duke—he was not a man who much liked that sort of thing—and they told him what was going on, how dissatisfied the people were, and how perilous they thought the course of the Government in opposing Reform. And what did the Duke say? He was standing warming himself at the fire. He said to these gentlemen, "Whatever comes I am prepared for it. You have got heads on your shoulders, and I would advise you to keep them there." Two or three days afterwards the Duke of Wellington was obliged to resign. The popular feeling in the country and in the metropolis was such that this great soldier who knew no such thing as fear, and who was as honestly disposed for the good of the country as many of us are—such I say was the alarm and the feeling prevalent in the country, that he was obliged to resign, and Lord Grey permitted to come back, and the Reform Bill was eventually carried. Now, I ask, do hon. Gentlemen think that no accidents will ever happen again? That accident was in Paris; and in 1848 there was another accident in Paris which was followed by a succession of accidents in other parts of Europe. I recollect at that time a noble Lord who was a Member of this House and who sat on the other side came to me to assure me that he had always been in favour of a great extension of the suffrage. I always had the belief that he was afraid of what was coming, and was not quite sure that I should not be a Member of a Provisional Government. I ask hon. Gentlemen whether it is not better to accept a measure so moderate, and if you like, as may be said by many in the country, so inadequate, but still to some extent so good? Is it not better to accept this measure, and show your confidence in the people, than to take the advice of the right hon. Member for Calne—the most revolutionary advice that was ever given in this House—and shut your doors against five millions of people, and tell them that unless they can scramble over this £10 barrier none of them shall ever find a direct representation in this House? The right hon. Member for Stroud talked loudly last night about constitutional rights and constitutional principles. But who was it that made the Constitution of England almost more than any other men in our history? Why surely the men of the first and second Parliaments in the reign of Charles I. Are there not on the Journals of the House—the Clerk could easily find and read them for you—Resolutions of this House which declare that wherever there is not some direct interdiction or contradiction the ancient and common franchise of the people of this country in the towns is the householding franchise? And do you mean to tell me that Lord Somers, who lived in an after time, was not himself a great authority, and to a large extent one of the builders of our existing Constitution; and yet Lord Somers, being on a Joint Committee in the House of Lords, told a Committee of the House of Commons in conference, that although the Lords were of opinion that no man by birth had any right to an office, yet that by birth he had a right to a vote, ["No, no!"] and that the possession of the vote was the only true security which an Englishman had for the possession of his life and property. ["No, no!"] Well, I am not saying that is my opinion, I am giving you the opinion of a man, one of the greatest in the Parliamentary and historical annals of this country, and therefore I say you, as a party, are neither constitutional nor wise if you put yourselves in opposition to a Bill which is so moderate as this, and by which you might give great satisfaction to vast multitudes of the people of this country. Now, if this Bill be rejected you will show that you are against all Reform. You will show that you have no confidence whatever even in that portion of the population which lives in houses between £10 and £7; whereas if you pass this Bill you will show that you are not cut off altogether from sympathy with the multitudes of your people. I say that there is peril in this, and that every day increases that peril. You have a population divorced almost entirely from the land and shut out from the possession of the franchise. My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) touched on the question of emigration; the right hon. Member for Calne spoke of the intelligence of the people in this way—of their combinations and their associations. We all know that they are reading, debating, thinking, and combining, and they are well aware that in all our colonies, as well as in the United States, the position of their class is wholly different. Now, I think if you do not moderate your tone and your views with regard to the great bulk of the working classes, you will find your country gradually weakened by a constantly increasing emigration. And you will find some accident happening when you will have something more to do than you are asked to do to-night, under threats, and it may be under the infliction of violence. Now, Sir, I said at the beginning that I did not rise to defend this Bill. I rose for the purpose of explaining it. It is not the Bill which, if I had been consulted by its framers, I should have recommended; if I had been a Minister it is not the Bill which I should have consented to present to the House. I think it is not adequate to the occasion, and that its concessions are not sufficient. But I know the difficulties under which Ministers labour, and I know the disinclination of Parliament to do much in the direction of this question. I shall give it my support because as far as it goes it is a simple and an honest measure, and because I believe if it becomes law it will give more solidity and duration to everything that is good in the Constitution, and to everything that is noble in the character of the people of these realms.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Bright) appears to treat with contempt our discussions upon the question of lowering the franchise. He says that any one looking on would feel a profound contempt when he found that we were debating and raising our passions on a subject so trivial as that of the alteration of the franchise from £10 to £7. Now, I think it must have struck hon. Members as rather remarkable that the hon. Gentleman who treats with such contempt a discussion upon the lowering of the franchise from £10 to £7, should have executed not one but three tours through the provinces for the purpose of obtaining a reduction of the franchise from £10 to £6. The hon. Gentleman expressed his disappointment with my right hon. Friends behind me (Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley) because they were likely to object to the alteration from £8 to £7. But the hon. Gentleman attaches so much importance to the alteration from £10 to £6 as to be worth the agitation of the kingdom, and the reduction to £7 as worthy the approval of this House. We have had an exhibition to-night of what may be called a lovers' quarrel between the hon. Member for Birmingham and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now there was nothing said that was calculated to inflict a deep wound upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but just the amount of kind and gentle censure has been administered that would cover the pretence of their being a difference between the hon. Member for Birmingham and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and serve to disguise those common and conjoint intrigues which have been the occupation of the winter. Nobody ever asserted that the particular figure of the franchise was adopted at the instance of the hon. Member for Birmingham. We know that the Government have something else to look to besides that hon. Member; they have to look to certain great families, to whom it is not entirely convenient that the political power of the country should pass from the control of property; they have to look to the great Whig party, whose historic traditions are not in favour of democracy; and, consequently, it is possible or certain that the hon. Member for Birmingham has not been able to obtain the precise figure of the franchise he desires. In the main and most important point of this measure, however, the Government have scrupulously and obsequiously followed his dictation. On the chief question which everybody discussed throughout the winter, "Will the Government measure include a redistribution of the seats, or will it deal with the suffrage only?" there was a great difference of opinion among the Radicals. All the old-fashioned Radicals were entirely in favour of including a re-distribution of the seats in the Bill; but all the advanced Liberals, and most moderate Liberals, as well as the hon. Member for Birmingham, adopted a peculiar line of policy. They pressed upon the Government the expediency of dealing with the franchise in the first Bill, leaving the re-distribution of seats for a second Bill. As the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham is rather skilful in the art of denial, I will venture to read the words he used on this point. He said—

> "I agree, therefore, that it would be an incumbrance to a Suffrage Bill at this moment to interfere with the distribution of seats; it would make it more difficult to carry a Bill, and whatever distribution of seats you could now make must necessarily be trifling and unsatisfactory, and would leave that question still unsettled, even for the shortest possible period. You will carry such a Bill much more easily. Public opinion hereafter will be more ripe to deal with the question of the distribution when there are a larger number of electors returning your Members to Parliament. I mean a larger number in the different boroughs. You will have what a mechanic will call a larger lever and a better Parliament, which would deal more satisfactorily with all questions which may come before you."

Now, if I may call the attention of the House at this hour of the night from the declamation of the hon. Member for Birmingham to the sober, prosaic, and somewhat dull statistics on which the Bill is founded, I would earnestly press upon you the consideration of the real consequences of the abandonment of the question of the re-distribution of seats to which the Government has consented. Take first the counties. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has produced a measure which we should have expected from him. Throughout the whole of his political career—and he has passed through many phases of opinion, and shown great varieties of character; but there is one—if I may so call it—golden link, which connects them, and that is his persistent, undying hatred of the rural interest. I call the attention of hon. Gentlemen who represent counties to the manner in which this peculiar characteristic of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made itself seen in the Bill which he has presented to the House. The counties as they at present stand with respect to the boroughs have one or two great grievances to complain of. The first is the obvious one that they are to a great extent unrepresented. I believe sixty or seventy Members ought to be added to the counties if you would bring them up to the level of the boroughs in the representation according to population. [An hon. MEMBER: You would require 130?] That may be correct; I am not confident as to the precise number required. But that is not the only grievance under which the counties suffer. A great grievance of which they have a right to complain is this—that throughout many counties there are numbers of unrepresented towns, the inhabitants of which are purely urban in their sympathies, and as they enjoy county votes, in conjunction with the freehold votes in the represented towns, they almost entirely swamp the rural interest of the county. If Reformers were just, if their pretences of equity in the distribution of political power were anything more than a sham, they would long ago have recognized the enormous inferiority to which the rural populations are subject in the electoral system. But what is the Reform Bill to do? Does it remedy this inferiority? On the contrary, it aggravates it enormously. The right hon. Gentleman has made two proposals—one is that there should be a £14 occupation franchise, which is to extend throughout the counties, including the unrepresented boroughs; and the other is a £50 leasehold franchise. The result of this would be that the whole of the population of the boroughs who live in houses of the value of £50 would come into the counties and swamp the county representation. By this means the representation in perhaps more than a quarter of the counties of England would be turned into an urban representation.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The noble Lord has misapprehended what I stated. What I stated was that we intended to extend to copyholds and leaseholds within boroughs the same privilege as was provided in the Reform Act in reference to freeholds—that there should be votes in such cases for the counties.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: I still understand that £50 leaseholds in boroughs will give to the holder a vote for the county.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Not if they give votes for the borough.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: But still there would be a large number of instances in which, in such cases, votes were not given for boroughs, and to this extent it would intrude urban representation into the counties. What I wish to point out is that the county rural representation is largely overburdened with the urban element already, and instead of remedying that defect the Chancellor of the Exchequer only seeks to aggravate it. What I want hon. Members to observe is this—that if you are to have a Bill for the re-distribution of seats, you had much better have it along with the Bill for the extension of the suffrage, in order that you may be able to calculate the effect of each upon the other. The matter is most important in reference to counties, but it is still more important in reference to boroughs. If seats are to be taken away from certain places, they ought in justice to be given to those unrepresented towns which at present are overwhelming the counties. Feeling the extreme importance of this question, I must ask the attention of the House to a few statistics, that hon. Members may have a fair statement of the case. I have not heard in this House the number of boroughs which will fall entirely into the hands of the working-classes, if the franchise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer be adopted. The right hon. Gentleman told us that he had gone cursorily over the boroughs; but I wish, with his great intellectual power, he had gone carefully over them all; for had he done so, I think his conclusions would have been slightly modified. I have taken out of the list the boroughs which, if a £7 franchise be adopted, will be handed over to the majority of the working-classes; and if I may so far trespass on the indulgence of the House, I should very much like to read them. They are Beverley, Coventry, Greenwich, Maldon, Newcastle, St. Ives, and Stafford. Then I come to those towns which an £8 franchise would give into the hands of the majority of the working-classes — namely, Bridgewater, Birkenhead, Chatham, Devonport, Lincoln, Northampton, Nottingham, Canterbury, Lancaster, Leicester, Maidstone, Oxford, Ryde, Rochester, Salford, Southampton, Southwark, Yarmouth, Pembroke, Westbury, Worcester, and Walsall. Perhaps, however, the right hon. Gentleman will object to my including Devonport in this list, seeing that he proposes to disfranchise the *employés* in the dockyard; but from what has transpired in the course of the debate, I am led to believe that he will not. The boroughs that a £7 franchise would hand over to majorities of the working-classes, are, Chester, Hastings, Marlow, Scarborough, Cheltenham, Colchester, Durham, Bristol, Monmouth, Dover, Guildford, Hereford, Hythe, Marlborough, Newark, Newport, Shrewsbury, Tamworth, Derby, Birmingham, Bolton, Bury, Cambridge, Dudley, Gateshead, Hull, Liverpool, Macclesfield, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oldham, Peterborough, Preston, Rye, South Shields, Stoke, Sunderland, Warrington, Wigan, Winchester, Wolverhampton, Yarmouth, Beaumaris, Cardiff, Car-

marthen, Haverford-west, and Montgomery. The results are that in seven boroughs, which have thirteen Members, the working-classes have the majority at a rental of above £10; in twenty-two boroughs, which furnish forty Members, they have it at £8; and in forty-seven boroughs, which furnish eighty Members, they have it at £70. So that there is a total of 133 seats, which, if this Bill passes, would be absolutely at the disposal of the working-classes. I have taken these figures entirely from the statistics of the Government, but I have not allowed for those causes of incapacity or double register, some of which are to be removed by this Bill, and some of which will continue to operate, and I have taken no account of the proposed lodger franchise—two things which may balance each other. I think you may take it that 133 Members will be handed over to the working-classes if this Bill should pass. What relation have they to the 334 English borough Members in this House? They will not be a majority; you tell me that there are 201 remaining that are distinctly middle-class seats, against 133 working-class seats, which still leaves a considerable middle-class majority. Remembering these figures, I want you to consider the question of the re-distribution of seats. It so happens that almost all the cities that are likely to be disfranchised are on the middle-class side of the account, and not on the working-class side of it. In the Bill of the Government of Lord Aberdeen, introduced in 1854, which I take as the latest instance of disfranchisement, I find fifty-five middle-class seats taken from boroughs—a proposal which, coupled with this Bill, would hand over a majority of seats to the working-classes. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham, who has left the House, as he usually does, after he has spoken [" Not 'right honourable!' "] Oh, I was thinking of the rumours of the winter—told an audience some years ago, as the House has been already reminded by the right hon. Member for Calne, that any Bill for the re-distribution of seats should be repudiated which did not give a larger number to the large towns. It is a point to be noticed that, in the division I have drawn between working-class seats—constituencies where the working-class are in a majority—and the middle-class seats where they are not, the large towns fall on the side of the working-class, and the towns to be disfranchised fall on the middle-class. In the schedules of 1854 there are no less than forty-five Members who would be taken from middle-class seats, and according to the dictum of the hon. Member for Birmingham, who, we all know, advises the Government in these matters, would be transferred to the working-class side of the account. Add thirty-five to 133, and you will find you will have 168 Members who will be absolutely at the disposal of the working-class, and who will form an absolute majority of the borough Members in this House. I think hon. Gentlemen will admit I have made out my case, that it is of vital importance, before you consent to this particular reduction of the franchise, that you should see what are the schedules which the Government propose to introduce. Unless you can see them and have them in the same Bill, so that you can insure that the two will be carried together, you may be thrown over at any moment, and you may find that a franchise not introduced with the intention of leaving the working-class in a majority leaves them absolute masters of the country. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that a measure handing over the boroughs to a majority of the working-classes ought not to meet with the acceptance of the House. I think he used the word "sudden," as if he seemed to contemplate that the working-class might govern us at some future time; but, confining ourselves to the present, he did not seem to entertain any such opinion. With these prospects before us, we have a right to ask for some consideration for a class not much thought of now. What are we to say of the owners of property if such a Bill as this passes into law? We often hear of the anomaly of excluding a large number of working men from the representation. There is another anomaly in our Constitution of which we hear much less. We never hear of the great anomaly that the wealth and property of this country is absolutely unrepresented in a technical sense. The whole centre of gravity of the Constitution is placed upon the voters between £20 and £10. All the wealth that lies above them, all the numbers that lie below them, are equally excluded from direct representation. If you talk of anomalies, there is anomaly on both sides, and the policy of the Bill of 1832 was intelligible enough—whether rightly or wrongly I do not say—to trust to indirect influence on both sides, to trust to the influence of property from above, and to trust to the enormous influence numbers have below on the tradesmen they employ, in the hope of thus obtaining a fair representation in Parliament by giving to the central class the whole nominal power of the country. I have no objection to correct anomalies if you correct them fairly and fully. I have no objection to see our Constitution made as theoretical and symmetrical as you please; but if you are resolved to correct the anomaly by which numbers are excluded from the Constitution, you must correct also the anomaly by which wealth is excluded. It is madness to talk of correcting anomalies by putting weights into the balance on one side and not into that on the other. Those who entirely neglect, as the Government appear to do, the case of wealth, forget what this House exists to do. Its main object is the management of finance, the collection and the expenditure of taxes, and one would think *à priori*, if you introduce an ideal philosophy to determine what the Constitution should be, you would allow the people to vote in the expenditure of the taxes, somewhat in proportion to the amount they contribute. You would think that abstract justice would require that the man who contributed £10,000 a year should have rather more voice in the distribution of the taxes than the man who contributed £10 a year. But in that respect your Constitution is absolutely anomalous; you pay no regard whatever to the man who contributes largely; you allow your policy to be regulated entirely by those who pay smaller sums, and then you complain that your Constitution does not regard the claims of numbers. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Poor Law Board told us that there was a practical grievance he wanted a more Liberal Parliament to redress, and that was that it had taken a very long period to pass a measure of free trade. I was rather surprized at him advancing that consideration. He must have wholly overlooked the state of opinion in the democracies of the world upon free trade. I should have thought that, if there was one thing better established than another it was that in proportion as you advance in democratic form of Government, in that proportion is the doctrine of protection to native industry cherished. I would recommend free traders to study opinion in democratic nations—in Australia, the United States, Canada, and France. In each of these countries you have a much wider suffrage than you have here, in each free trade doctrines are scorned. The statement of the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) that the working-class, if admitted to the suffrage, would make demands inconsistent with our present views of what is expedient and just, was challenged by the President of the Poor Law Board. He stated that no such unreasonable demands were made. That seemed to me so direct a contradiction of notorious facts, that I obtained a statement of what the demands of the working-class really are, and what you will have to grant if you do—as I have shown you do by this Bill—give to the working-class a practical majority in the House of Commons. I wish to refer to some of the meetings to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne alluded, as the President of the Poor Law Board has had the hardihood to challenge the accuracy of the statement made with respect to the extravagant demands of the working-classes. At a meeting of delegates in St. Martin's Hall, I find that—

> "Mr. Odger, shoemaker, in moving the first resolution, said that the House of Commons and former Governments had not kept faith with the people on the question of Parliamentary Reform."

[Mr. BRIGHT: From what is the noble Lord quoting?] From the report in *The Times*. [Mr. BRIGHT: That does not prove it correct.] The hon. Gentleman is not, I believe, very fond of *The Times*, but if *The Morning Star* contains a more correct report, I shall be happy to refer to it. Now, Mr. Odger is an important man. He is a friend of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is the man who stimulated the right hon. Gentleman to make that rash pledge with respect to universal suffrage which he delivered some time ago. We all know how the Chancellor of the Exchequer influences us, and it is easy to conceive the person who influences the Chancellor of the Exchequer must be a very great man indeed. Well, then, Mr. Odger says that—

> "The House of Commons and former Governments had not kept faith with the people on the question of Parliamentary Reform."

That I believe.

> "A Reform Bill was promised, but nothing short of manhood suffrage would satisfy the working men of this country. It was necessary, moreover, that there should be no long waiting in this matter."

He then goes on to say—

> "Give them votes, and they would see that the poor man's daughter, who was worked twelve, fourteen, and sixteen hours a day, should have time to go abroad and view the face of nature."

As I understand it, therefore, one of the results of Parliamentary Reform would be to abridge the hours of labour for the poor man's daughter. Now, I have as great sympathy for the poor man's daughter as the right hon. Gentleman or the hon. Member for the City of London; but I should wish it to be explained to us by what special course of legislation the poor man's daughter is to be enabled to view the face of nature as a consequence of Parliamentary Reform. Mr. Odger proceeds—

> "They would prevent the poor agricultural labourer from working for 8*s*. a week. All men who were willing to work should have work provided for them."

Now, I would appeal to the apostles of political economy to know what is the nature of the legislation by which this result is to be obtained. These are things which are not regulated by wishes, but by the inflexible laws of supply and demand. That reminds me of one of the commonplaces connected with the French Revolution—I speak of the last, not of the old Revolution—one of the great achievements of which was to be that all men should have work who were willing to labour. There were to be *ateliers nationaux*, and such, I suppose, would be expected to be one of the first results of Parliamentary Reform. This is a matter of serious consideration when we are invited to give our assent to a Bill which will give the working-classes an absolute majority of the representation in the House of Commons. Even if the Bill should pass we know that they will not succeed in the attainment of these objects which are so much in violation of the truths of political economy, but the attempt to do so might be more disastrous than the success of the measures themselves. The very fact that the men whom they trust as their speakers and delegates at political meetings urge such subjects on the notice of their hearers, ought to be sufficient to warn you of the danger of the course upon which you are about to enter when you propose to give the working-classes entire and undisputed control over the policy of Parliament. I have heard no argument which should at all reconcile us to this danger, except the commonplace argument that the proposal which is made is a settlement of the question. Now, I should like to ask what is meant by the word "settlement?" Do you believe that if you pass this measure the question of Reform will never make its appearance again? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) endeavoured to show us how futile were the fears of those who dreaded the enfranchisement of a large portion of the population, and pointed to the Bill of 1832 as our model for the judgment we should form as to the future. But what, let me ask, does that precedent teach us? We know that the measure of 1832 was passed in the belief that it would be a settlement of the question; but we also know that no sooner was it passed than politicians were found who urged a further extension of the franchise and a more rapid progress towards democracy. We know that these men went on for a few years apparently disregarded and unable to influence the policy of the country; but what afterwards happened? If we take the events of the past for our guidance, we must conclude that something like this is a fair picture of the future:—"We shall pass this Bill and a measure for the redistribution of seats as a sequel. No sooner have we done that than the hon. Member for Birmingham, or, perhaps, some demagogue keener than he who may supplant him, will urge the further claims of the people based on such arguments as those of Mr. Odger. We shall again hear all the old arguments in favour of trusting the working-classes, couched in the same sentimental language to which we have listened to-night. We shall be asked to barter away the power of imposing taxation, and to hand over the right to expend it, not on any sound principle, or upon any intelligible security, but merely on the principle of giving a trusting and ungrudging boon to the people. After these arguments have been urged for a time the Minister of the day will find that he cannot keep the Liberal party together unless he gives some countenance to them. He will pledge himself to a Reform Bill. He will impress on his followers the expediency of passing such a measure. He will press it, forward it once, twice, or three times, and then perhaps withdraw it, and bid the country "rest and be thankful." But at last his own selfish and restless egotism will prevail over every other consideration. He will urge on his reluctant followers, and force by all the pressure of that machinery which party can supply, to introduce yet another reduction of the franchise, and make another step towards complete democracy. Is that, I would ask, an improbable picture? Look back to what has taken place since 1832. Apply the parallel; judge of the future by the light of the past, and you will, I think, recognize the justice of the prophecy that this cannot be a final settlement of the question. The same causes which induce a Minister to disturb the settlement of 1832 will induce a future Minister to disturb the settlement of 1866. You will have the same arguments repeated. The same process will take place, be it through a period of few years or many, as has taken place between 1832 and the present time; and, if you accept that instance as your guide, it is certain that at a complete democracy you must arrive at last, and that, perhaps, within no very distant period. I hope we shall not pay much attention to the threats which the hon. Member for Birmingham so freely displayed before us to-night. He has hinted very broadly that if we do not pass this Bill "an accident" will happen. I confess I, for one, am not afraid that such an accident can be produced by his agency. Most of us must have read of the acute suffering which was undergone before the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. Under that suffering it is conceivable that almost any political convulsion might take place. If such a convulsion should, unfortunately, ever again befal this country—which I can hardly believe, for such a combination of causes can scarcely again take place—then it may be well to imagine that the strength of mind of our public men will be once more tested, and that the institutions of the country will be subjected to a severe trial; and if, unfortunately, it should happen that that period should be coincident with the reign of a not very steadfast King and a revolutionary time, I can well believe that another Reform Bill, as violent, or more violent than that of 1832, might be demanded. I do not dispute the possibility, though I doubt the probability, of such an event. But I am certain of this, that nothing you can do now can diminish the danger or disaster which you will then have to face. Whether you lower the franchise to £8, to £7, or to £6 will be absolutely immaterial in the face of such a tempest as that. If you have to meet a storm of that magnitude, it will not avail you to have tampered with the bulwarks of the Constitution now. Rather, I should say, economize your strength, keep the Constitution in that condition that the decision of the more educated and the calmer classes can for the time, at any rate, make head against the violent impulses of the populace, and you will possibly be able to ride over even such a tempest as that. But if you yield now, far from conquering every such danger, far from diminishing the violence of such attack, the only result will be that you will be weaker to confront it, and the hurricane will be more terrible than if you had not yielded.

MR. JOHN HARDY (Dartmouth) said, it was easy to make quotations from previous speeches of the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), but the passages quoted only showed that the right hon. Gentleman had now grown older and wiser. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appeared also to have changed his views; for whatever might be his present opinion, he never remembered to have read a more constitutional speech than that which he uttered in favour of the small boroughs some years ago. He (Mr. J. Hardy) was not ashamed to say that he represented one of these small boroughs. On the contrary, from that very circumstance, he occupied a more independent position than those who entered the House returned by a large constituency and pledged to support a Reform Bill. When he came into the House that evening he heard the Ministerial Benches cheering the hon. Member for Birmingham, and he did not wonder at it. They appeared to him to have been in the position of a man who had sat all day with his feet in the water trying to get a "rise;" and he did not feel surprised that they should be glad at having at last found some one to give the Bill a good word. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had begun at the wrong end. Had he introduced a Bill for the re-distribution of seats, with one or two fancy franchises, as they were called, he should have supported the measure. But the proposal to lower the franchise to the people instead of raising the people to the franchise seemed to him extremely objectionable. The right hon. Gentleman said that a reduction to £6 would swamp the constituencies, and yet he felt himself justified in going to within a pound of the limit which he declared to be so dangerous. Had these statistics been in the hands of the Government at an earlier date, perhaps a different figure would have been mentioned. It really seemed as if some sporting Member of the Cabinet had called out "Seven is the main," had thrown the dice, and thereupon the matter had been settled.

Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House were always so ready to promise sacrifices which cost them nothing, so freely gave promissory notes upon the Constitution, that Conservatives who had principles could not keep pace with their opponents in elasticity of conscience. The species was nearly extinct, but he was one of the few remarkable beings who had never given a pledge, either upon the hustings or in the House. Whig candidates had two distinct sets of professions—one for use with Radical constituencies, and the other reserved for counties disposed towards Conservatism. In the celebrated case of Lord Amberley a Radical conversion had been effected in a single night. Nobody entertained a higher respect for the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer than he did, though he had consistently opposed him at Oxford, and, as the result proved, perhaps he was right in the end. The right hon. Gentleman was as conscientious a man as anybody in that House. But what was the good of conscience? It was a good thing, capital thing for home consumption, but a man in public life needed political principles; and he had never yet been able to find out what the political principles of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were? Now, he brought in a Bill for a £7 franchise, which he said ought to be a £6 one. Well, then, why was it not? Why did he not bring in a definite Bill, first of all dealing with the re-distribution of seats? There was an aristocracy of wealth and talent, why should there not be a £10 aristocracy of electors? When everything else was rising in value, why should they lower the franchise? There was no need for the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Baines) to run about Leeds looking for voters in the kennels. When the right hon. Member for Calne told them they would lower the House of Commons in the eyes of the world by lowering the franchise, he perfectly agreed with him. He was not afraid of the working-classes, but he should not like to see the House of Commons filled with Feargus O'Connors; yet that Gentleman was looked up to as a great oracle in Yorkshire. He did not want to detain the House, but it appeared to him that Gentlemen who, under false pretences, occupied seats below the gangway, and who were always at the beck and call of the Ministry, thought that they were the only Members who ought to be heard. They came up from such places as Leeds raging for Reform, took their seats on that Bench, and sunk down to the Bedford level of Reform, and were so kind to the House that they must give it their opinions upon every question in debate. What did the House care for their opinions? He had sat still and listened so long that really it was easier to speak than to listen, on the principle that being no smoker, if he went into the smoking-room he was obliged to take a cigar because the atmosphere was so intolerable to him; and he had been now listening for so many years to speeches from hon. Members that he was obliged to speak. The hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) was so extremely peaceable that the other night he objected to the word "defend" being incorporated into the Oaths Bill, and at the same time he sat for a borough which only lived by the manufacture of small arms. He wondered that such a borough kept him in the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had, as a preliminary step to this Bill, got together a great number of statistics. He (Mr. J. Hardy) hated statistics—but the right hon. Gentleman had thought proper to bring before them the statistics of all the constituencies. Many hon. Members who sat on the other side of the House were overridden by their constituents, and no doubt the Members for Westminster and Finsbury would support the Bill. The Tower Hamlets were represented by common sense in that House—but what would they all arrive at if their constituents were multiplied? He, for one, should give his hearty opposition to the Bill.

MR. HIBBERT (who was almost inaudible owing to continued cries for an Adjournment or Division) was understood to say that he wished to say a few words as to the extent to which the town he represented (Oldham) would be affected by the Bill. It would be open for some other Member to move the adjournment after he had done. He was not prepared to accept as accurate the Return of the number of working men with votes in the town he represented. The first Return to the Poor Law Board stated the number at 480, but in the number were included not only shopkeepers but beerhouse-keepers and small farmers. The population of Oldham was 107,000, and only 2,085 were at present on the register. Of that number 315 had been returned as working men, while the number ought not to have been more than 150. Instead of one in eight the proportion ought to be one in sixteen.

In Rochdale the proportion was one in twenty-nine. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne had stated that a natural extension of the franchise was taking place owing to increase of wealth. By a Return he held in his hand, it appeared that six large towns around Manchester had in 1851 a population of 172,000 and 10,000 electors. Since then the population had increased to 377,000, but the electors had not increased at that rate. The workmen in the town which he represented did not hire a £10 house, because they could get a good comfortable house for £7 or £6 rent. Though the Bill did not go so far as he wished, he would give it every support. There were some Members on the Ministerial side of the House who sought to do the work of the Opposition, but he hoped that they would unite to enable the Government to deal with this question and to carry the Bill by a large majority.

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLEY moved the adjournment of the debate. [*Cries of* "Divide!" *and* "Adjourn!"]

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER certainly did not wish to check the course of the debate if it was the desire of the House to continue it. But he confessed he was a little sceptical on that point, seeing that twice during the evening the debate was only very narrowly saved from extinction. ["No, no!"] He should, therefore, like to know whether there was really any general desire on the part of the House to continue the discussion; if so, he should not oppose the adjournment.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir Rainald Knightley*,)—put, and *negatived.*

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLEY said, he had no wish to trespass on the attention of the House if the desire was that the debate should not be adjourned. He wished, however, to confirm what had been stated by his noble Friend the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne) relative to the great inequality in the representation of towns and counties. According to the Census of 1861, it appeared that the county Members represented nearly three times the population of the boroughs. The inhabitants of the boroughs also, in addition to returning their own Members, exercised a very great influence in the returns for the counties. By this Bill it was proposed to give the additional privilege of double voting.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, there would be no double vote in county and borough in respect of the same qualification.

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLEY thought that was a mere quibble. A person having a property of £12 value virtually had two votes—one for a £10 house and the other for the county in respect of a small garden attached.

MR. W. E. DUNCOMBE wished to put a Question to the right hon. Gentleman with respect to the Electoral Returns. He wished to know why there had been no Return of the number of 40*s.* freeholders in the counties, and whether the right hon. Gentleman would direct Returns to be made, not only stating the number of the 40*s.* freeholders in each county, but also the number of such freeholders who belong to the working classes. He knew that there were a large number of 40*s.* freeholders belonging to the working classes who had not been included in these Returns.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER rather believed that the blue book did contain the number of 40*s.* freeholders. ["No!"] He was not quite certain, but such was his impression. If not, he would endeavour to ascertain whether there were the means of producing such a Return. He thought the Return was already contained in some Parliamentary paper.

MR. W. E. DUNCOMBE wished to know if there were the means of ascertaining the number of 40*s.* freeholders who belonged to the working classes?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, there were no such means. He did not think it would be possible to obtain such a Return. There was the machinery by which the numbers could be ascertained, with very considerable delay, as respected the boroughs, but not as regarded the counties. Nor was there any reason for seeking it, because there was no question of giving the working classes the franchise for the counties. Having stated that it appeared to him there was no desire the debate should be adjourned, he would not trouble the House with any reply. He would only say that the Government were quite content with the course of the dicussion, and perfectly satisfied that their measure would receive full, fair, and earnest consideration at the hands of the House of Commons.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, and Mr. Villiers.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 68.]

REAL ESTATE INTESTACY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Locke King, Bill for the better settling the Real Estates of Intestates, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Locke King, Mr. Bouverie, and Mr. Coleridge.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 69.]

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 14, 1866.

MINUTES.]—New Writ Issued—*For* Worcester County (Western Division).

Ways and Means— *considered in Committee.*

Public Bills—*Ordered*—Valuation of Lands and Heritages.*

Second Reading — County Infirmaries (Ireland) [14], *negatived*; Railway Travelling (Ireland) [2], *put off* for six months; Prosecution Expenses * [28].

Consideration of Lords Amendments — Cattle Plague [55], *put off* for six months.

Mr. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

COUNTY INFIRMARIES (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Pollard-Urquhart, Mr. O'Reilly.*)

[BILL 14.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. POLLARD-URQUHART, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said, that as the law stood at present an annual subscription of three guineas was required to constitute a governor, and one of twenty guineas to constitute a life governor of a county infirmary. The obvious effect of this provision was to limit the number of subscribers, and the Bill therefore proposed that a subscription of a guinea a year should constitute a governor, and one of ten guineas a life governor. He had, however, inserted a clause securing to those who gave the higher subscriptions a proportionate degree of influence in the elections of medical officers, &c.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Pollard-Urquhart.*)

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Lawson), remarked that the subscription by grand juries in Ireland to county infirmaries was at present optional; but it was proposed by the fourth clause of this Bill to make it incumbent on them in future to present the average annual sum which they had presented for the last ten years. This was a proposal of a most objectionable character, for circumstances might so alter as to render the continuance of the payment inexpedient, and, in fact, in the opinion of the Poor Law Commissioners, the workhouse hospitals had superseded the necessity for these infirmaries. If this clause were to be retained, he should oppose the second reading.

Mr. BAGWELL was of opinion that one or two infirmaries of a superior description in the different counties would serve a very useful end by treating serious disorders and accidents with more care than was possible in a local workhouse. Not that he wished to disparage the medical officers of workhouses, many of whom were men of considerable eminence in their profession; but it was well known that in certain cases it was desirable to call in more advice than could be obtained from any one physician in any one place. He did not ask for the revival of the Government grant to the officers of the infirmaries, which had gradually been allowed to drop, for he was always an advocate for the Irish people doing for themselves what the people of England did in like cases; but he hoped the Government would promise to deal with the subject, and that when the Chief Secretary for Ireland was in his place, which he trusted, after what occurred on Monday night, would be very shortly, a Bill in accordance with what he had shadowed out would be introduced. He would advise the hon. Member for Westmeath (Mr. Pollard-Urquhart) to withdraw his Bill on such an understanding, or else to ask the Chief Secretary in Committee to assist in modifying it in any way that seemed best.

SIR HERVEY BRUCE differed *in toto* from the opinion which had been expressed that these infirmaries had been superseded by workhouse hospitals. The fact was that they benefited a class of persons who were unable to pay for superior medical advice, but who yet, with a commendable pride, would never enter a workhouse hospital.

MR. SYNAN said, no doubt the absolute necessity for the county infirmaries had been superseded by the Poor Act; but, at the same time, they were highly useful institutions to a certain extent and for a certain class. But the grand juries were in his opinion the best judges as to whether they ought to make presentments for particular infirmaries, and he did not think the House should interfere with their power in that respect. He suggested either the withdrawal of the Bill or the postponement of the second reading, in order to ascertain the views of the Irish Government upon the subject.

Motion put, and *negatived.*

RAILWAY TRAVELLING (IRELAND) BILL—[BILL 2.]

(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Major Gavin, Captain Stacpoole.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR COLMAN O'LOGHLEN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that its objects were twofold. Its first object was to prevent railway companies from suspending railway communication in the districts in which they had their lines at their own discretion on Sundays; and the second was to provide for third-class accommodation between places lineally connected by railways, belonging to two different companies, and to give the public the same accommodation they would have if the whole length of line belonged to one company. On the former head he might state that he brought in a similar measure last Session; but the hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. Blake) opposed it then, as he intended doing now, and it was lost by a majority of only three in a House of eighty-five Members. The Irish Members present, however, with only four exceptions, supported the Bill—a rather rare case of general agreement among them—and its defeat was occasioned by no less than eighteen out of the fifty-three Scotch representatives combining to oppose it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that while Ireland ought to be governed in Imperial matters in an Imperial spirit, yet in local matters the feeling of the people ought to be consulted; and therefore he (Sir Colman O'Loghlen) thought he had a right to complain of Scotch Members thus forcing their peculiar views on the observance of the Sabbath into a question which solely affected Ireland, and where those views were not generally sympathized with. He trusted that on the present occasion this purely Irish Bill would not be defeated by a combination of the Scotch Members. Up to 1862 every railway in Ireland ran Sunday trains; but in that year the Waterford and Limerick company suddenly resolved to discontinue them. The consequence was that nobody could leave the county of Clare between four o'clock on Saturday afternoon and eight o'clock on Monday morning, nor Limerick between ten o'clock on Saturday night and ten o'clock on Monday morning; and the directors persisted in this course, notwithstanding the inconvenience it caused and the indignation which it evoked, the corporation of Limerick unanimously memorializing the directors against the measure, but without effect. Notwithstanding all remonstrances the company continued to close the line up to the present time, and unless Parliament interfered it would remain so. His Bill enacted that every railway company in Ireland that carried passengers during six days of the week should be obliged to run one train each way on Sundays, unless excused by the Board of Trade. By a Return dated June, 1864, it appeared that out of thirty-five railways in Ireland thirty-two ran Sunday trains, and only three did not. It was contended that the Legislature ought not to interfere with railway management; but it had been found necessary for Parliament to interfere in many ways, either for the safety or the convenience of the public. Then it was alleged that the companies had discontinued the Sunday traffic because they lost money by it. The House had been told on a former occasion that the average number of passengers on the Limerick and Waterford line on Sundays was only twenty-five, and that the directors, in stopping the Sunday trains had only interfered for the benefit of the shareholders. But, from a Return which had been made to the order of the House, it appeared that the total number of passengers conveyed on Sundays during the year 1860 was 11,953; in 1861, 11,471; in 1862, 10,613; while the average number of tickets on Sundays in those years was 230, 221, and 204 respectively. It was stated on good authority (Mr. Galt) that the cost of a railway train per mile was from 1*s.* 4½*d.* to 1*s.* 4¾*d.*, but to a company who worked a line six days in a week he was assured the cost of a Sunday train did not exceed 1*s.* per mile. Assuming, however, that the cost of a train was 1*s.* 6*d.* a mile, the cost of a single train each way from Limerick to Waterford would be £11 11*s.* 6*d.*, while the Returns showed that while Sunday trains did run on the Waterford and Limerick line the average receipts were £22 0*s.* 6*d.* every Sunday:—so that the receipts almost doubled the expense of the train. He denied, therefore, that the real ground for stopping the Sunday train was that it involved a pecuniary loss. But then, it was said, why impose such a law upon railway companies in Ireland and not in England and Scotland? His answer was that the House ought to legislate according to the wants and feelings of each country. There was no necessity for legislation of this character in England or Scotland; but in Ireland the necessity clearly existed. Moreover, the State could interfere with more propriety with Irish than with English or Scotch railways. The Irish railways had been made either by loans or the assistance of Government money. Many of the railways had received remission from the Government in the shape of the rate of interest, and the Government were, therefore, entitled on behalf of the public to make conditions with them. The National Gallery was open in Dublin on Sundays, and so were the Botanical Gardens, because they received Government support. Even in Scotland during the last few years the North British Railway had run Sunday trains, and during the last summer a Sunday train had run between Edinburgh and Glasgow. It was enacted in 1844 that if English railway companies ran trains on week-days they must run a Parliamentary train on Sunday. In 1844 the late Dr. Arnold was asked to sign a requisition against the running of a Sunday train on the Midland Railway. He refused, and pointed out that the Christian Lord's Day was a different thing from the Jewish Sabbath, and was to be observed in a different manner. Dr. Arnold, indeed, thought it right that fewer trains should be run on Sundays than on other days, and he said he would cheerfully support the requisitionists in representing that only one train should be run each way, but he could not consent to suspend the means of traffic for twenty-four hours. Short was the triumph of this Bill. It had been said that 880 officers of the Limerick and Waterford Railway were employed on these Sunday trains; but such a calculation on a line of 140 miles long was absurd. It was desirable that for cases of business, of mercy, or of Governmental action, one train at least should be run on Sundays; and, in the case of a county of 250,000 people, was he to be told that they were to be shut out from communication with the outer world from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning? The English Society for the Due Observance of the Sabbath expressed its acknowledgments to his hon. Friend (Mr. Blake) for the share he had taken in throwing out this Bill last Session. His hon. Friend, in acknowledging the compliment, attributed his success to the co-operation the Society had obtained for him from those hon. Members who had conscientious objections to the running of railway trains on Sundays. The Sabbath Alliance of Scotland had petitioned against this Bill on the ground that legislation on this subject was totally unnecessary. He might place reliance on what the Sabbath Alliance said if they told him what was necessary for Scotland, but he objected to receive them as authorities in regard to Ireland. Various petitions had been presented against the Bill from Ireland, but they proceeded in all cases from some Presbyterian congregation, and he had no doubt that every one of these petitions had been sent out by the Sabbath Alliance. With regard to the second object of the Bill, it was a great hardship that a poor man could not always get a through third-class ticket between places not very distant from each other if the continuous line belonged to different companies, so as to enable him to make his journey in one day as first and second-class passengers were allowed to do, but was, in many cases, obliged to break the journey and sleep midway, unless he chose to travel second class. The fact was, that third-class passengers were not treated well in Ireland. They were charged the maximum of fare and received the minimum of accommodation. This was a gross mistake on the part of the railway companies, for while the third-class passengers in England were only 30 per cent of the whole, the third-class passengers in Ireland were 40 per cent. In some cases railways in Ireland had made travelling more expensive than it used to be to the labouring classes. They used to be able, for example, to get from Ennis to Limerick for 1*s*. by one of Bianconi's cars. Now the cars were driven off the road, and third-class passengers between those two places were charged 2*s*. The Bill might, no doubt, be amended in some respects in Committee, but he trusted the House would accept the principle of the Bill by reading it a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Colman O'Loghl e*.)

Mr. BLAKE said, the hon. and learned Baronet had stated that when that Bill was last brought forward it was not resisted by more than four Irish Members, and that the bulk of the opposition offered to it came from the Scotch Members. On the present occasion, it was probable there would be an increase in the number of Irish Members who would vote for the Amendment which he was himself about to move. A considerable number of petitions—nearly 150 he believed — had been presented from Ireland against the Bill upon various grounds ; but even if the whole of the petitioners had been influenced by a desire for the observance of the Sabbath, that fact would not disentitle them to the attention of the House. The hon. Baronet had not been able to procure a single petition from his own county (Clare) in favour of his measure ; neither had the activity of the hon. and gallant Member for Ennis nor that of the hon. Member for Limerick been able to elicit one from their districts. The whole expression of opinion which they had from Ireland was, therefore, adverse to the Bill, than which a more unjust and unnecessary piece of *ex post facto* legislation was never submitted to that House. If there was any good argument in favour of compelling railway companies to run trains on Sundays, why did the hon. Baronet confine his measure to Ireland, and not make it extend to the entire United Kingdom ? There were 800 miles of railway in England, over which there was no travelling on Sunday ; while in Ireland there were 250 ; and in Scotland there were very few lines indeed which ran trains on that day. All the Irish railway companies had undertaken to spend the money of the shareholders upon certain conditions ; they had obtained their Acts of Parliament after keen contests before Select Committees, where every condition which the Legislature thought fit to impose was imposed upon them ; and it would, therefore, be exceedingly hard, after a large amount of their capital had been devoted to the construction of these lines, now to expose them to a species of legislation which would not be tolerated in England or Scotland. There were, moreover, many reasons for running Sunday trains in England and Scotland which did not apply to Ireland. There was hardly an English line that did not pay, while the Irish lines pointed at by the hon. Baronet were, with one exception, not paying their working expenses ; and the consequence of that Bill would be to place those unprofitable lines in a still more ruinous position. One Irish line that had been constructed at a cost of from £15,000 to £20,000 per mile had, owing to the want of traffic, to be shut up ; and therefore those who were so anxious that the people should have facilities for Sunday travelling ought to be careful that they did not deprive them of railway communication altogether. The Foynes and Ennis railways, which had been alluded to, were not paying their working expenses during the six days they now ran, and if a seventh losing day were added it would put the shareholders in a still worse position. So far from the Waterford and Limerick Company not having been willing to accommodate the public on Sundays, a resolution was passed by the Board in favour of running on Sundays, provided it entailed no loss. The experiment was accordingly tried, and the result was that the Sunday receipts in the winter months fell short of the working expenses. The earnings of the company were made up of the receipts from the summer excursions. The allusion which he had formerly made to only twenty-five passengers travelling by the line had reference not to the summer, but to the winter months, when the traffic had to be given up by reason of the loss it entailed. The minimum cost of running one train on Sundays as proposed would be 2*s*. 6*d*. per mile, not 1*s*. as stated by the hon. Baronet. Last year he had said that the number of *employés* who would be deprived of their weekly day of rest by that Bill would be 800 on the Waterford and Limerick Railway and the other lines ; and he now found by a statement forwarded to him from the companies that the number was 823. The hon. Baronet said it would not be necessary to employ the whole of them ; but the secretary stated that the bulk of them would be required ; and it was obvious that about as many guards, signalmen, &c., would be needed to secure the due and safe conveyance of the public on a day when only one train was run as when there were two or three trains. Why, then, should 800 hard-working persons lose their weekly holiday for the sake of some twenty-five individuals who could probably travel quite as well on Saturday or Monday? Having quoted from several speakers in the former debates on that subject in support of his arguments, the hon. Member referred to the Royal Commission which had been appointed to inquire into the railways of the United Kingdom, and appealed to the hon. Baronet whether, before attempting to legislate in a manner most injurious to the struggling railways of the sister country, they ought not to wait until they had seen the Report of the Commission, and had learnt what were the views of the Government in relation to it. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving that the Bill be read the second time that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Blake.*)

Mr. M'LAREN said, the hon. and learned Member who introduced the Bill seemed to think that there had been some combination among the Scotch Members to prevent the passing of the Bill. Now, he (Mr. M'Laren) was prepared to say that, as far as he knew, this had not been the case; and, certainly, not a single word had been exchanged between any Scotch Member with reference to this Bill. The hon. and learned Member appeared to think that the Scotch Members had no right to interfere in an Irish question. Now, it was the part of the Imperial Parliament to legislate for the whole United Kingdom, and it was the duty of every Member of it, no matter from what country he came, to give effect to the honest opinions which he entertained. No doubt the public affairs of Ireland were not to be regulated according to the public opinion of Scotland, any more than the public affairs of Scotland were to be regulated according to the public opinion of Ireland; but the law as it stood on this railway question was in the state in which it ought to be, and was quite perfect. Railway directors in all the three kingdoms had the right to run trains on the Sunday whenever they thought fit. Directors would naturally be guided in such a matter by these considerations—first, would public opinion sanction the running on Sunday? and secondly, would it pay them in a commercial point of view to do so? If both of those questions could be answered in the affirmative, the trains would be run. If either condition were wanting, there would be a contest, as in Scotland, whether the trains should be run or not. In the case referred to the directors thought it would pay to run trains on Sunday between Edinburgh and Glasgow; while the public opinion in Scotland took the opposite view, and denied that they ought to be run even if they would pay: whereupon the conflict arose. Therefore, if in Ireland public opinion sanctioned and required the running of Sunday trains, and if it was also the fact that they would pay, where was the necessity for coming to Parliament for an Act of coercion to compel the companies to run them? In a commercial point of view it would be very inexpedient to pass the Bill. It was stated that one of the Irish railways paid a dividend of only 1 per cent, and its shares were selling at a very large discount. That proved that its profits during the six working days of the week were insufficient to yield a reasonable dividend, including the traffic in passengers, goods, minerals and cattle; and this showed that a large loss must ensue from running on Sunday, when passengers only were conveyed. His own experience as a railway director proved that even in such a district as that between York and Berwick-on-Tweed a Sunday passenger did not pay, apart from other considerations. Mr. Galt's book, which the hon. and learned Member for Clare had referred to, showed that when the writer spoke of an average of seventy passengers being sufficient to pay, he meant that there must always be seventy passengers in the carriages during the journey—not that there should be a smaller number at certain stages, as was the case according to the Returns quoted. Even although some of the Irish railways had obtained advances from the Government, as had been stated, that fact did not render it the less but rather the more incumbent on hon. Members to take care that they did nothing in regard to those lines which would prevent the money so advanced from being paid back again.

Mr. S. B. MILLER thought that that House was not the proper arena for theological discussions; but after the pointed allusions that had been made by the hon.

and learned Member for Clare to the petitions which had been presented from Presbyterian congregations in Ireland on that subject, he must take leave to say that in respect to conduct, character, and piety, those petitioners might bear comparison with the inhabitants of any other part of the British dominions. Among them were many thousands who were conscientiously opposed to that proposal as involving a desecration of the Sabbath, and who were ornaments to the province in which they lived. The hon. and learned Baronet had blinked the real question raised by that Bill. It was a measure retrospective in principle, and, therefore, very objectionable. He had founded his argument on the case of the Waterford and Limerick Railway; but these companies had obtained their Acts from that and the other House of Parliament, and in those Acts there was nothing to compel them to run trains on Sunday. On the faith of those Acts they had spent millions of money; and was that House to turn round now and say to them, "We will violate the pledge we have given, we will impose wholly new and very onerous conditions upon you, and oblige you, *nolens volens*, to run Sunday trains not only at a loss, but to the ruin and destruction of your property?" Several of these unfortunate companies had paid no dividend for years. The hon. and learned Baronet had alluded to the Scotch Members having voted against his Bill last year. If he (Mr. M'Laren) knew anything of the consistency of Scotch Members he thought he would find a greater number opposed to the measure this year than there were last. Behind that Motion there was a large question vitally affecting England; and if they imposed upon Ireland what they durst not impose upon Scotland, and what it was to be hoped would not be imposed upon England, they would perpetrate as great a wrong as had ever been done to his country. Not only was that tyrannical Bill, for such it was, vicious in principle and in design, but, seeing that the Royal Commission on Railways had not yet presented its Report, it was also most inopportune and ill-timed; and hon. Members from all parts of the United Kingdom ought strenuously to resist a measure that was likely to prove so disastrous.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, the subject under discussion did not resolve itself into a Sabbath question; the point at issue partook more of a financial character. The policy of the directors of the Limerick and Waterford Railway Company was open to serious animadversion, and the charge of Pharisaism was justly brought against them. As to the Scotch Members, there was not one of those Gentlemen that did not travel by rail on the Sunday in the course of the year; and therefore it was not seemly in them to come to the House of Commons and endeavour to prevent the public of Ireland receiving the accommodation they required. He should be the last to endeavour to force the people of Scotland, who had strong opinions as to what was called the desecration of the Sabbath, to run trains in Scotland; but, on the other hand, he objected to their making an endeavour to coerce the people of the South of Ireland to be ruled by their religious opinions however conscientious they might be. He did not believe that one petition in favour of the Bill had emanated from any of the six counties of Munster; and, as he believed the measure was opposed to the interests of the people living in the district, he should oppose the Bill.

Mr. DAWSON rose to explain the reason he should not vote for the second reading of the Bill, having voted for it on a previous occasion. It was true that there was a railway traffic in the North, but it was not a commercial or pleasure traffic. He did not intend to vote at all, not because he had altered his opinion, but because he felt it was his duty in some measure to reflect the views of his constituents, a very large proportion of whom were Presbyterians, who were the most orderly portion of the population, and were deeply opposed to Sunday traffic.

Mr. BAGWELL said, that if the Irish railways were compelled to run trains on Sunday, the House would have to provide against any loss they might sustain by so doing. Although he never travelled by the railway on a Sunday, he would not restrain other people from doing so. The Bill now before the House would require certain alterations when under the consideration of the Committee, and one of them related to the provision to be made for empowering the Board of Trade to make inquiries as to the loss or profit arising from the running of trains on Sunday. Trains now ran between Dublin and Cork on that day; but towns lying on the right and left of the line connecting those places did not enjoy such an advantage. He therefore contended that the people of Limerick and

Waterford ought to be put upon an equal footing with those of Cork. The pecuniary part of the subject, of course, deserved the consideration of the House, but in the present stage he felt it his duty to support the Bill, reserving certain Amendments which he should advocate in Committee.

Lord CLAUD HAMILTON objected to the compulsory character of the Bill, thinking that the arrangements between the companies and the public they served should be left to themselves. But he rose to call the attention of the House to the curious change that had come over the aspect of the question during the discussion. At first it was described as a question of general interest, applicable to the whole of Ireland; but now it had dwindled into a local dispute with the Limerick and Waterford Railway. The hon. Baronet the Member for the King's County (Sir Patrick O'Brien), with more zeal than discretion, had branded the opposition to this Bill with the epithet of "Pharisaical;" but he (Lord Claud Hamilton) did not know whether it was applicable to a person in his position. In the district in which he lived trains did not run on Sunday; but, had they been required to do so, he had no doubt that arrangements would soon have been made to meet the wishes of the inhabitants; but he did not see how it was "Pharisaical" not to compel companies to run trains on Sundays, when they were not asked for. He quite agreed with the hon. and learned Baronet that in railway matters attention should be paid to the feelings of the inhabitants of the locality through which it was proposed to construct the line, and in the present case all the requests that had been made to him were that he would oppose the Bill. The compulsory powers sought in the Bill were contrary to the sound principles which guided Parliamentary action. Some of the railways in Ireland were established by means of public money, and to enforce such provisions as some of those contained in the Bill would amount to a breach of contract. The companies accepted loans on certain specific terms, and Parliament had no right now to impose regulations which would diminish the profits of the railways. No man could expect the same rate of interest for the money he had lent if he, by any subsequent conditions, diminished the productiveness of that money while in the hands of the borrower. He held that trains could not be run on Sunday without a loss to the company, and that for Parliament to order Sunday traffic would necessitate a breach of contract, and be a violation of the sound principles which should govern legislation.

Mr. PIM said, there were two questions involved in the present discussion — one concerning the travelling facilities to be provided for the public on Sundays, and the other affected the third-class accommodation required. In various parts of the country the railway companies possessed a monopoly of the traffic; and when they did not run the trains the people were worse off than they were before the introduction of the railway. Some inconsistency—he did not like to say "Phariseeism"—had been manifested by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford (Mr. Blake) in his opposition to the Bill; for while he based his argument on the assertion that Sunday trains would not pay, he took great pains to obtain support from people not only in Ireland, but in Scotland, on the ground of Sabbath desecration. The matter in which he had taken the most interest was included in the second part of the Bill—namely, the accommodation provided for third-class passengers. This was a subject which deserved the serious attention of the House. He, however, would not record his vote in favour of the Bill, because he took objection to the partial manner in which the Bill proposed to deal with the subject. Were the Bill to pass it would to a great degree be an *ex post facto* law, and he thought it would be too hard on the railway companies, doing very badly at the present time, to impose a burden upon them which would put them in a worse condition.

Sir HUGH CAIRNS said, that he did not desire to express any opinion on the merits or demerits of the Waterford and Limerick line, but he thought it right, as the Bill aimed at legislation of a general description, that the House should consider the character of that legislation and endeavour to ascertain whether it was based on sound principles. As he intended to vote against the Bill he would briefly state his objections to it. He regarded it as an interference of a very strong and violent kind with an established mercantile undertaking, or perhaps he should say a great number of established mercantile undertakings. He admitted what had been said by several hon. Members, that railway companies had a monopoly of the carriage of the districts through which their lines ran; but still in dealing with them the principles of justice must be consulted. Parliament did not establish a monopoly and then say from time to time that it was entitled to superadd such conditions to the monopoly as might be thought necessary for the benefit of the public. On the contrary, the habit of the Legislature had been this:—At the time of granting a monopoly it invited the public to advance money on shares, telling them as far as possible what the terms were upon which it was prepared to establish the monopoly, and leaving it to them to accept the terms or refuse them. This was the course generally adopted; but there were exceptions to the rule. One exception was deemed to be an extraordinary one at the time it was made; he referred to the demand upon railway companies previously established to run Parliamentary trains. He would not, however, have it understood that he denied the right of Parliament to legislate in reference to railways, whether established or yet to be established. The railway was subject to legislation like everything else. The hon. and learned Gentleman who had charge of the Bill considered there was not only a necessity for trains being run on the Sunday, but that their running would not be attended with any pecuniary loss. On the other side, the directors contended that the running of trains was attended with a positive loss. Now, how was the House able, between these conflicting opinions, to decide which was right? In the present case, until it was proved that there would be no pecuniary loss in running trains on Sunday, and that there was an absolute necessity for legislation like that proposed in the Bill before the House, he asked hon. Members to be exceedingly cautious in the course they adopted. The next objection he had to the Bill was that it was a sectional piece of legislation, affecting only a part of the country—for in some parts of the country the trains did run on Sunday and in others they did not. What were the reasons for simply legislating for one district? The hon. and learned Baronet had said that he did not legislate for Scotland, because the feelings of the people of that country would be against it, and that he did not legislate for England, because there was no necessity for so doing. Now, in England there were 800 miles of railway on which trains did not run on Sunday, while in Ireland there were but 200 miles of railway without Sunday traffic. Then the hon. and learned Baronet said the House had a right to legislate in regard to railways in Ireland, because there the railways had been constructed by public money. [An hon. MEMBER: There are several railways which have not had such advantages.] If they had all received loans from the Exchequer it would have made no difference. They had borrowed money at a certain rate of interest, and he asked if the hon. Baronet could, with justice, go to them afterwards and say he wanted to impose further obligations upon them in respect of the loan already bargained for? There was just the same reason for legislating for England in this way as for Ireland. The Scotch Members were quite right in taking an interest in this question, for were such legislation as that of the Bill before the House to be successful, it would not be confined to Ireland—it was impossible that it should not be extended to Scotland. The hon. and learned Baronet had asked him if it was against the law of the country to run trains upon the Sunday? His (Sir Hugh Cairns') reply was that he was satisfied it was not in the least degree contrary to law to do so. But, going beyond the mere question of law, he was ready to admit that so far as moral and religious considerations were concerned he should not at all regret that directors of railways should think it desirable to run a train each way on a Sunday on their lines, for the convenience of towns, thereby rendering unnecessary a large amount of traffic and movement of another kind. The question of whether they should do so would, however, in his opinion, be better left to the railway companies themselves, to be decided on the two grounds whether a Sunday train would be likely to be remunerative, and whether the public feeling of the neighbourhood would justify its running. In those cases in which a train did not run on Sundays he felt assured the circumstance arose out of one or the other of those considerations, and they were cases which, he contended, the House ought to respect. By forcing a legislative enactment, as was proposed, on the consciences of those who objected to Sunday trains the House would be doing away with that which was the first privilege of freemen in this country, the right to act in accordance within their own judgments. But he was also opposed to the Bill, because there was no demand for it. There were no petitions in its favour, while he had never presented so many petitions in reference to any other measure as he had against it; petitions got up among men of the greatest respectability, who he believed could not be driven to do anything which they did not like, and accompanied in many instances by written communications evincing the utmost opposition to the measure. He hoped the hon. and learned Baronet would, under all the circumstances of the case, withdraw his measure. The period of twenty-four years, during which it was provided that railways should be left without any formal revision of their arrangements by Parliament, was drawing to an end. A Royal Commission had been appointed to examine the question of proper railway conduct, and what legislative measures ought to be proposed by way of regulating their future traffic. He was quite willing to admit, so far as his observation went, that there were a great many things connected with railways which ought to be altered. He did not think that the Railway Directors in Ireland were always so experienced or so alive to their own interests, which were, after all, identical with the interests of the public, as in this country. He was glad, therefore, that the Commission to which he alluded had been appointed, and to that Commission he thought some of the questions raised by the Bill might very advantageously be referred. It would be most perilous, in his opinion, to legislate as was proposed without due consideration, and he hoped the hon. and learned Baronet would adopt his suggestion and withdraw his Motion.

Mr. GREGORY said, it was remarkable that it was precisely in that part of the world where strong religious opinions were supposed to exist that railways were running on Sundays, and it was precisely from that part of the world where religious convictions were not so strong that the petitions against the measure came. Those petitions were apparently of foreign extraction. They came from scattered Presbyterian populations throughout the whole of Ireland, and they were similar in substance to the petition of the Sabbath Alliance in Scotland. There was something significant in the fact. But when the hon. Members for Ireland complained of the interference of Scotch Members in a matter of purely Irish concern, he must say that when some years ago he brought forward a Motion for the benefit of the inhabitants of Edinburgh by throwing open the Botanic Gardens there, he was inundated with letters and papers complaining that he, an Irish Member, should interfere in a matter of purely Scotch concern. It appeared to him that the House was losing sight of the provisions of the Bill. The action of the measure depended upon two things—first, that it was in consonance with the wishes of the people through whose district it ran; and, secondly, whether it would pay. These points were to be decided by the Board of Trade instead of by the Directors. What his hon. Friend wanted was that when a railway fell into the hands of Directors who had particular feelings as to the Sunday question, there should be some other tribunal beyond that Board of Directors to decide whether the country through which the railway passed should be deprived of railway accommodation. The Bill provided such a tribunal in the Board of Trade. As to the effect of the measure on the commercial affairs of the railway, he must point out that if the Board of Directors could show the Board of Trade that they would suffer any pecuniary loss by running Sunday trains they would not, under the provisions of the Bill, be compelled to do so. The Commission now sitting on the subject of railways would have no authority to deal with such a matter, and the House would, under the circumstances, he hoped, not accept the suggestion of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, but would read the Bill a second time.

Major GAVIN said, that in discussing the religious and other objections to Sunday traffic, the interests of the 52,000 inhabitants of Limerick (which city he represented) were lost sight of. They were shut up for twenty-four hours as if they were a besieged city, as nothing could come in and nothing was let out; and all this to conciliate the feelings of a few religious people and some Railway Directors. The Bill was lost last year by a majority of three, in consequence of the thinness of the House occasioned by a levée; but he met with some of those who opposed it as invading the sanctity of the Sabbath enjoying themselves on the following Sunday at Hampton Court or Kew Gardens, and some he knew went down to Brighton to revel in the sea breezes and the other things that could be enjoyed there. The Mayor of Limerick, who was a Presbyterian and one of the largest employers of labour in Ireland, was in favour of the Bill. He trusted the House would pass this Bill, and allow his pent-up constituents the opportunity of once more enjoying the country air on the Sunday.

Mr. LEFROY said, he opposed the Bill

on the ground that it would interfere with the proprietary rights of the railway companies, and also because it was not desirable to impose the necessity of running Sunday trains against the religious convictions of the people. There were a number of petitions against the Bill from the Presbyterians of Ireland, and he trusted the House would adhere to its decision of last year.

MR. MILNER GIBSON said, that as his hon. and learned Friend (Sir Colman O'Loghlen) did not seem inclined to agree to the suggestions of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Sir Hugh Cairns) that this question should be referred to the Commission on Railways now sitting, the House would have to give a vote "Aye" or "No" on the Question of the Second Reading. He (Mr. Milner Gibson) would say a few words to explain the reasons upon which he had arrived at a conclusion on the subject. As regarded a reference to the Commission on Railways he did not think much would be gained by that. That Commission had pretty nearly concluded its inquiry into Irish railways, and the evidence on that branch of the investigation was completed—although they had power, no doubt, to re-open it. He did not think that this particular question had come under their consideration, but even if the Commissioners gave an opinion upon it, the question would necessarily come back to the House; and therefore to refer the Bill to that Commission would be only a postponement for further information. The hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) had stated with great force the rule—although there might be exceptions—of Parliament against *ex post facto* legislation, and there was also much force in his argument that when companies came to that House and asked for powers and undertook obligations, a contract was entered into between them and Parliament, and it was not desirable, even though a monopoly had been granted, that Parliament should, without very strong exceptional reasons, afterwards impose new obligations on the companies. The general Act of 1844, which compelled the running of Parliamentary trains, was expressly confined to railways thereafter to be constructed; and it provided that when those railways ran Sunday trains they should run cheap trains on that day; but railways already in existence were not subjected to those obligations unless they should come to Parliament for some new and special power, in which case they were placed under the same obligations as future railways. If, therefore, his hon. Friend would frame his present Motion in the spirit of the Act of 1844, he (Mr. Milner Gibson) should be prepared to support him. As to the obligation which it was sought by the fourth clause of the Bill to impose, he looked upon it as being most reasonable and salutary, amounting, as it did, simply to a condition that in those cases in which different railway companies carried first and second class passengers through by arrangement between them they should do the same for third class passengers, and not leave them behind at intermediate stations. He next came to the question of Sunday trains. He considered that the proposal of his hon. and learned Friend upon that subject was little more than a legislative exposition of the meaning and intent of the Act of 1854. By that Act it was provided that

> "Every railway company should afford all reasonable facilities, according to their respective powers, for receiving and forwarding passengers on its lines."

That provision did not make any exception with respect to Sunday trains; it did not say that that accommodation should only be afforded on week days; it declared generally that all "reasonable facilities" should be afforded for the conveyance of passengers. It might be said that it would not pay to run a train on the Sunday upon that line. But the Act of 1854 only provided that a railway company should give that amount of reasonable accommodation which they could afford, "according to their respective powers," and, therefore, as he understood these words, they ought not be compelled to do so unless they could do it without loss. The hon. and learned Member proposed to refer the question whether it could be done without loss to the Board of Trade. No doubt it was a question on which they were perfectly competent to pronounce an opinion, and to say to railway companies, "You shall not on the ground of your own peculiar religious views, or upon any other ground except that of commercial loss, deprive the public of those reasonable facilities which it was the intention of the Legislature they should possess." But he hoped that although his hon. and learned Friend might require them to decide upon any merely commercial point, he would not expect them to adjudicate upon questions of feeling or conscience. There was no doubt that with many persons it was regarded as a matter of conscience that a train should not run on the Sunday; but they should take care that the conscience of one man was not to be the only mode of measuring the convenience which should be afforded to another. He had been informed that the Directors of this particular railway — the Waterford and Limerick — were not acting in accordance with the wishes of the District which it traversed; and he referred especially to that line because it was, he believed, the only one of any great length and importance in Ireland which ran no train on the Sunday. His hon. and learned Friend did not propose the running of more than one train each way on that day; and he (Mr. Milner Gibson) should say that in his opinion the withholding of that accommodation was not in accordance with the spirit of the Act of 1854. Under these circumstances he thought he might fairly support the second reading, especially as his hon. and learned Friend left the question of loss to be decided by the Board of Trade, who would exempt railway companies from the obligation of running trains if by so doing they suffered pecuniary loss. He thought this Bill a fair legislative exposition of what Parliament meant by the Bill of 1854. He thought that in a measure of this sort regard should be had to the general wishes of the population.

Mr. WHITESIDE: You would explain a general Act by a local one.

Mr. MILNER GIBSON said, he had been informed that redress could be obtained from the Superior Courts by some decision compelling railway companies to give reasonable facilities on the Sunday, but he thought it was better that Parliament should itself give a legislative exposition of the true intent and meaning of the previous Act. He considered this a measure which the House might reasonably entertain, and, speaking for himself individually, he was prepared to support the second reading.

Mr. WHITESIDE understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the present measure, which was a partial and local Bill, was to be an exposition of a general statute, and that its principle was not to apply to Scotland or England, and he therefore asked whether the right hon. Gentleman really meant that a general Act of the realm was to be expounded by an enactment which was not to be applied to England and Scotland?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON explained that the House could deal with the cases of England and Scotland when they came under consideration.

Mr. HENLEY said, that he was struck with the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that he only gave his private opinion on a matter of such vast importance. Now, considering the importance of the office held by the right hon. Gentleman, and that he had formed no official opinion on a matter which was one of the most important charges of his Department, he (Mr. Henley) should like to know why they should hurry into legislation at all. What the right hon. Gentleman had sketched out went to change the entire nature of the Bill. As the right hon. Gentleman consented to do away with the universal character of the measure, what occasion existed for any hurry in passing it? And why should not the Government take up this subject and bring in a general measure, if one were necessary, declaratory of the meaning of the Act of 1854? There seemed to be no ground for legislation on the part of the hon. and learned Baronet, but if the principle of the present measure were good, it ought equally to apply to England and Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Board of Trade could not look at the religious part of the question, but must only regard the commercial. That course of proceeding savoured somewhat of Mammon—and something else. After what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman he would give his vote against the second reading of the Bill, because if it was to have no retrospective action it could not remedy the difficulty mentioned with regard to the traffic between Waterford and Limerick.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN expressed his readiness to accept the suggestion thrown out by the President of the Board of Trade, and to insert words to render the Bill prospective only.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 83; Noes 200: Majority 117.

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *put off* for six months.

CATTLE PLAGUE BILL—[Bill 55.]

LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

(*Mr. Hunt, Mr. Holland, Mr. Banks Stanhope, Sir James Fergusson.*)

Order for Consideration of Lords' Amendments read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Amendments be now taken into Consideration."—(*Mr. Hunt.*)

Mr. BARING hoped the hon. Member would explain how he proposed to deal with the Amendments.

Mr. HUNT said that, as the House knew, the Bill had come down from the other House very much altered from the shape in which it was introduced by him, or in which it had left that House. It was originally intended to be passed with the utmost dispatch, and to be a short Bill with stringent provisions with respect to the movement of cattle. The Bill was delayed in the House of Commons by the Fabian policy of the Government, and it was afterwards further delayed by the same policy in another place—only conducted in a more discreet manner. Consequently, so much time had elapsed that the provisions of the Bill respecting the movement of cattle had become inapplicable and inappropriate, and, therefore, he was not surprised that the Bill had been sent down with those clauses omitted. The prohibition was originally to extend to the 25th of March; and as it was now the 14th, to pass the Bill with such a prohibition for a few days only would have been perfectly ridiculous. The second reading of the Bill was moved in another place by a Cabinet Minister, who said that he would take charge of the Bill with a view of making very great alterations, and certainly he had fulfilled his intentions. Nevertheless, the Bill had come out of the Lords' Select Committee with some useful provisions in substitution of the clauses relating to the movement of cattle. He had no feeling against the Bill because it had undergone the alterations he had mentioned; but, on the contrary, he thought that, as it now stood, it was a useful and valuable measure, and he conceived that the House would do well to pass it in its amended shape, with some few slight alterations. He regarded the clauses enabling the Privy Council and local authorities to proclaim certain places as infected, and prohibiting, after such proclamation, all movement out of those places, and subjecting all movement within them to certain regulations, as most valuable provisions, and was glad to accept them. With regard to other clauses, some slight alteration had been made in them since they passed the House of Commons, and he was not disposed, after all the time and trouble which had been bestowed in the consideration of its provisions by Members of both Houses of Parliament, now that it had come to its final stage and might do some good, to throw it behind the fire. The clause with respect to the closing of markets and fairs was likely to give rise to some discussion, but from what he could gather from those hon. Members who opposed his proposal for closing the Metropolitan Market, he believed that any difficulty with regard to that clause might be got rid of. The Bill had been described as being unintelligible and confused; but he undertook to say that with some slight Amendments the measure might be made intelligible enough. If the Bill was not proceeded with, what was the alternative? The country would then be left to the Orders of the Privy Council and local authorities; but while Parliament was sitting he trusted that it would not hand over the country to be dealt with entirely by arbitrary Orders, which had already confused and paralyzed the cattle trade.

Colonel EDWARDS said, he was surprised on referring to the Notices this morning to find that the clause drawn up and promised by the Government and agreed to by the tanning trade had not been inserted as a substitute for the three clauses struck out of the Bill of the hon. Member for Northampton by the House of Lords. He expressed his deep regret that no such clause had been introduced, because it would have given immediate relief to a branch of industry in which a very considerable proportion of his constituents were engaged—he meant the tanning trade. At this moment the trade was completely paralyzed by recent legislation, it being impossible to remove hides and skins, even if protected by a covering, from Leeds or Hull into Beverley, although the law as it stood permitted their transit through the entire length and breadth of the country. He deprecated much discussion on the Bill, as the time was so pressing, and, if hon. Members wished the measure to pass the less they debated the clauses the better. The adoption of any other course would infallibly defeat the Bill.

SIR ANDREW AGNEW thought the Privy Council was a more fit body than Parliament to determine all the minute regulations required for meeting the calamity of the cattle plague, and as they would always be in possession of the best and latest information, they were the best able to deal with the matter. At the present moment there were eighteen counties in Scotland, ten counties in Wales, and some five or six counties in England free from the disease; and if in all those it should be attempted to carry out any uniform regulation great inconvenience and loss to the proprietors and farmers would result, attended with no countervailing advantage in respect to stopping the spread of the disease. He therefore thought that this Bill should merely operate to give stringent powers to the Privy Council.

MR. CUMMING-BRUCE wished to know, as all changes of occupation took place on the 15th of May in Scotland, whether there was any power to enable the movement of stock under those circumstances?

THE LORD ADVOCATE said, he was not certain what would be the effect of the Amendments which had been made to the Bill by the Lords; but he was under the impression that cattle could be removed with the consent of the local Boards otherwise than by railway.

SIR JOHN TROLLOPE said, he had conferred with his constituents, and found them decidedly unfavourable to the Bill of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire. They thought that if they had a responsible Government in the country, on an occasion of great emergency like this, they were the persons to bring forward a Bill of this kind, and they were only confused by having a Bill prepared by a private Member running side by side with the Government measure. Her Majesty's Government did not object to Amendments. The difficulty which the people experienced was in stocking farms and in moving stock. A great sheep fair was held in his neighbourhood the other day; but on account of the difficulty of moving the animals (in one adjoining county they could move them, in another they could not) the magistrates were obliged to attend in order that the animals might be allowed to get out of the fair. The time for holding the great fairs was approaching, and how was the business of the country to be carried on? He saw no reason whatever for going on with this Bill. If they did, their legislation on this subject would be so complicated that the business of the country could not be carried on. The whole question should be taken up by the Government, and they ought to begin *de novo*.

MR. ACLAND said he entirely differed from the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, who, he earnestly hoped, would take the advice of the hon. Baronet who had just spoken (Sir John Trollope) and drop the Bill altogether. What they wanted in addition to the action of the local authority was the supervision of one responsible Minister, who was liable to question at all times as to the operation of the Orders in Council.

MR. BEACH protested against the doctrine that Parliament should delegate its power to the Privy Council. It was quite right that power should be so exercised during the recess; but when Parliament was sitting they were bound to legislate on all subjects as the wants of the country might demand. There were certain portions of this Bill which were urgently required, but which the Bill of the Government did not deal with, such as the removal of hides and manure, both of which produced very dire cases of infection. This Bill had been deeply considered by a Select Committee in another place; Parliament would not therefore be legislating in a hurry; and if they could not have a complete measure dealing with the whole subject they should pass this Bill as soon as possible.

MR. W. E. DUNCOMBE observed, that the action of the Privy Council had produced no effect whatever in stopping the cattle plague, whereas the system of legislation which had been adopted had had a most beneficial effect, as was evinced in the recent Returns. There had been a great diminution in the number of cattle attacked by the plague during the last week, and this he attributed in a very great degree to the effect of their legislation. The Government appeared not to think this question of great importance; but it was vital to the interests of the country, and was much more urgent than their Reform Bill, which nobody wanted and every one would be glad to get rid of. He called on the Government to deal with this question in a fair and statesmanlike way, and not leave the country in such an emergency to the action of the local authority.

MR. AYRTON thought the House was placed in a position of considerable difficulty in relation to this Bill. It had been returned from the other House so mutilated that it was almost impossible to proceed with it without going into Committee on the Lords' Amendments; but there would be great difficulty in dealing with them consistently with the usages of the House. A proposition had been made that the Government should introduce a Bill to carry out its proposed enactments; and if the Government would act on that suggestion it might be the best mode of meeting the difficulty. He thought it would be a much better course than proceeding with the present Bill. He must press on the Government that the situation was becoming extremely embarrassing. The justices in Kent and Essex—no doubt wise and prudent people—differed entirely from the view taken of this question by both Houses of Parliament. They had undertaken to declare in the case of Kent that no manure should be taken from the metropolis into that county, and in the case of Essex that no manure should be taken there which might in any way propagate the plague or prove injurious. Thus they both shifted the responsibility from themselves; but persons engaged in removing manure from the metropolis might be subjected thereby to serious penalties. The metropolis was thus, as it were, in a state of blockade, and if some step were not taken in this matter, great expense must be incurred in sending that valuable commodity, which agriculturists so much required, to be sunk in the sea. The Government must either accept the responsibility of proceeding with this question, which was one of real emergency, or the House must be content to grope its way in dealing with the Bill now before them. If the Government would not lead the House, they must put themselves under the leadership of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Hunt), and be content to forego the aid of the immense staff of public servants who were paid for the assistance they could render in such a case.

Mr. PUGH said, it appeared to him that the non-infected districts were in a much worse condition as they now stood under the Bill, with all the Amendments it had received, than they were under the Bill as it left the House. Then there was a clause expressly exempting them from restrictions, and he had reason to believe that that clause was in perfect accord with the feelings of the inhabitants of the districts so situated. But it had been struck out and another inserted prohibiting all fairs and markets everywhere, without exception, for the next three months. Where was the necessity of putting a stop to fairs and markets—he might say, to the staple trade of the country in many cases—in these non-infected districts? He earnestly hoped the case of these districts would be borne in mind. Sooner than this Bill should pass with all these Amendments he would prefer that they should be in the hands of the local authorities, acting under the direction of the Privy Council; or, better still, that the Government should take up the matter, and pass a short and simple Act, which, with the experience now gained, they would be enabled to do, and which would probably give satisfaction in all quarters.

Mr. BARING said, he was exceedingly disappointed with the answer which the hon. Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. Hunt) had given to his request that he should inform the House what course he intended to take with the Amendments made in this Bill. The difficulty in which they were now placed arose thus. The hon. Gentleman, from the first taking what he properly called at the time an anomalous course, produced a Bill when the Government introduced their measure. That Bill, by consent of the Government, was read a second time, and committed without discussion; and when the Government, in a division upon an Amendment moved by the hon. Gentleman, were, as he described, without any party motive, placed in a large minority, the hon. Gentleman proposed that all those portions of the Government measure which related to the movement of cattle should be abandoned, and that the Government should allow his Bill, so far as related to that subject, to be proceeded with. To this course the Government assented in deference to the opinion of the House, as expressed in the division. The whole principle and main object of the Bill of the hon. Gentleman was to provide by legislative enactment the precise rules and regulations under which cattle should or should not be moved throughout Great Britain up to and after the 25th of March. The particular point to which the hon. Gentleman directed the attention of the House and desired the decision of Parliament was, under what regulations cattle should be moved after the 25th of March. That Bill had up to the present time undergone, probably, greater vicissitudes than any other measure ever introduced into that

House. As originally introduced it consisted of sixty-two clauses, of which only one was left untouched in the Bill as it now appeared before the House, and that was simply a penalty clause. Eight more clauses of the sixty-two of the original Bill, and eight alone, remained in the Bill at sent down from the other House, and those were very considerably amended, and none of them at all referred to any of the regulations as to the movement of cattle on account of which the hon. Member introduced his Bill, either up to or after the 25th of March. The remaining fifty-three clauses of the Bill as originally introduced had been omitted in its progress through Parliament. The hon. Gentleman complained of the Fabian policy of the Government; but he (Mr. Baring) ventured to assert distinctly that from the first introduction of the Bill it was the desire of the Government, as it was undoubtedly his own wish and intention, to facilitate the passing of many portions of that Bill and make it a useful measure. The slightest attention to dates might satisfy the hon. Gentleman that his charge of delay on the part of the Government had no foundation. The Bill, as he had said, was read a second time without discussion; it was committed without discussion; it was re-committed for Amendments without discussion. There was a second edition of the Bill before a word of discussion took place. The second edition of the Bill, as amended, was considered in Committee on the 19th and 20th of February, re-committed, and again considered in Committee on the 22nd, and passed on the 23rd. Now, considering the length of the Bill, of which there had been three separate prints, and the large paper of Amendments brought down night after night by the hon. Gentleman, the fact that it had gone through all its stages upon which any discussion took place in three days was surely a proof that the charge against the Government for attempting to obstruct the Bill was without foundation. With respect to the present position of the Bill it was not competent for them to discuss the proceedings of the other House; but with respect to the provisions of the Bill as sent up to their Lordships he might state, having gone into the investigation with the greatest care, that, whereas the Bill professed to lay down a uniform system, there were no fewer than fifteen exceptions to the rules laid down for the movement of cattle. Besides these, there were three most important reservations, one of them expressly giving that power in so many words to the local authorities in many parts of England, to which the hon. Gentleman in all discussions on the subject had strongly objected. The Bill, which professed to lay down general regulations as to the movement of cattle, was incumbered by so many exceptions that the exceptions became, in reality, the regulations. The Bill, as sent to the House of Lords, made no attempt to provide by general regulations for what should take place after the 25th of March.

MR. HUNT explained that he had withdrawn all the clauses relating to that point in order that the Government might deal with the question.

MR. BARING said, it was the first time he had heard that explanation.

MR. HUNT said, he had stated so in the House.

MR. BARING would now describe to the House the condition of the Bill as it came down from the House of Lords. As sent up to the other House it consisted of fifty-four clauses and one schedule; twenty-four clauses and the schedule were struck out, and eleven new clauses were introduced in the other House. All the clauses relating to the movement of cattle were left out. It had been his duty to examine the Bill carefully to see whether it would be possible by introducing Amendments to make it a useful measure. He did not dispute that there were some useful clauses in it, and he had gone the length of putting his Amendments in print. The hon. Gentleman was aware that it was not competent for them in dealing with a Bill they had received from the other House amended to make any alteration except by disagreeing with or amending the Lords' Amendments, or making consequential Amendments on those Amendments. Well, the result of his most careful consideration of the Bill as brought down to them was, that even supposing—what was exceedingly improbable—that every Amendment the Government proposed was accepted by the House without alteration—supposing what was still more unlikely, that the other House would be prepared to accept all those Amendments if the Bill passed in the shape in which he proposed to amend it, they would have a piece of legislation so complicated and so difficult to understand that it would not be right to recommend its adoption by the House. Legislation relative to the cattle plague must be understood by all classes of the community, and he thought it was perfectly impossible to amend this Bill so as to render it intelligible. It affected the farmers very materially, and might be turned into a gigantic engine of oppression so far as they were concerned. It also affected the tanning interest, which was much affected by the action of local authorities, and unless those provisions were clear and distinct, it would be almost impossible for the trade to continue for any length of time. The subject was also of interest to the public generally, as affecting the removal of refuse involving the health of the population in the great towns of the country. If the hon. Gentleman would take a wise course and give up the Bill, he (Mr. Baring) was instructed to state that the Government were prepared to take on themselves the responsibility of dealing with this question in such a manner as they should think right, and which he would proceed shortly to explain. In the first place, he had to state that the Government were prepared to strengthen the establishment of the Privy Council, as had been suggested. The House and the country would feel with him the obligations they were under to Mr. Helps and the gentlemen in his department for their ability, diligence, and devotion in carrying on the vast correspondence connected with this subject, in addition to performing their ordinary business. It must therefore be understood that any changes which it might be contemplated to make in that department were owing to the necessity of extending its operations, and did not involve the slightest disparagement to those gentlemen. On the subject of the cattle plague, if—as might be hoped under Providence would be the case—the adoption of the principle of slaughter for the period agreed upon by Parliament had the effect of limiting the area of the disorder within a much smaller space than that over which it was spread at present, the Government felt that it would be competent for the Privy Council, assisted by the local authorities, to isolate infected districts, and at the same time to guard uninfected districts from the disease. The next point on which the Government must take action was with regard to fairs and markets. The course which he would indicate, without pledging himself that the Government would adopt it, in reference to this subject, was almost identical with that proposed in the clauses of the Bill originally introduced by the Government—namely, that by an Order in Council all fairs for the sale of store cattle should be prohibited for a limited time, and that no markets should be held without the license of the Privy Council, and that, when held, no cattle should leave the place in which the market was held alive; and that they should only be permitted to take place in those places that should offer the guarantee mentioned by the hon. Member for West Norfolk (Mr. Read). The fourth and last point he had to mention was, that Government believed it to be absolutely essential that some general regulations with regard to the removal of hides, dung, and other refuse, should be made by an Order in Council applicable to the whole country, except those districts which the Privy Council might wish to place under protective regulations, for the purpose of preserving them from the cattle plague. The Orders in Council on this point would be in accordance with the amended clauses in the Bill of his hon. Friend the Member for Northamptonshire.

Mr. HUNT inquired how Government intended to deal with the movement of cattle in the event of a change of tenancy taking place?

Mr. BARING replied that the Orders in Council would provide for such cases.

Mr. HUNT was desirous of knowing how Government intended to deal with that subject. Did they intend to delegate their authority on this point to the local authorities?

Mr. BARING said, the proposal which he would indicate as the one likely to be carried out by Government was, that while the principle of isolation would be carried out as to infected districts, and every precaution would be taken to protect uninfected districts, such as Wales and Scotland, with regard to the rest of England some form of licence might be devised which would enable beasts to be moved from one part of the country to another. He might add that he hoped it would be possible to make the regulations he had described under the existing law by means of Orders of Council; but if, upon further consideration, Government found that such was not the case, it would be their duty to apply to the House for fuller powers. With regard to the very important subject of the cleansing of railway trucks, as the matter had up to the present time been under the consideration of Parliament, Government, out of respect to the House, had refrained from taking any action for the purpose of compelling the railway companies to perform that duty; but in the event of the Bill being abandoned, an Order of Council would immediately be issued requiring railway companies to cleanse all trucks which had been used for the conveyance of cattle. In the event of Government having to introduce a new Bill, they would adopt many of the clauses contained in the present Bill, such as the power given to magistrates to stop animals, and certain penalty clauses. On all other points Government could deal with the cattle plague more satisfactorily by Orders of Council than by an Act of Parliament. In the first place, because the latter could not be made sufficiently elastic to meet the varying requirements of the case; and secondly, because by means of an Order of Council the whole of the regulations might be drawn up in one code, instead of being scattered among the numerous clauses of two Acts of Parliament, coupled with a third, of a temporary nature, the expiration of which would disturb all the existing regulations. It was under these circumstances that he now asked the hon. Member for Northamptonshire to abandon the further prosecution of a Bill which, from the alterations made in it, he could no longer consistently countenance, and to leave the whole matter in the hands of Government. By the adoption of this course, the hon. Member would save the House considerable time, and would possible save the country some inconvenience. He greatly regretted the Government had been induced to abandon important clauses in their Bill for the purpose of allowing the hon. Member to introduce a Bill, the history of which had proved the futility of endeavouring to enforce by Act of Parliament a uniform code of regulations of the most minute detail with regard to the traffic of cattle, the conveyance of hides, skins, and other offal, from one part of the country to another.

Mr. HUNT said, he was rejoiced to hear from the Under Secretary for the Home Department that the Government intended to relieve both himself and the House from very great difficulty by accepting all responsibility in this matter, but he could not agree with the concluding observation of the hon. Gentleman, that his efforts had been unattended with success, because within the last few minutes they had heard the Government announce that they would do what every one had desired they should do —take upon themselves the responsibility they had hitherto declined. The hon. Gentleman had referred to those clauses in the Cattle Diseases Act which the Government were eventually compelled to withdraw, as though they had proposed to deal with the question in the principle on which the Government now intended to act; whereas, in truth, the effect of those clauses was merely to throw upon the local authorities the powers and responsibility which it was the duty of the Government to accept. He believed it was solely owing to his efforts, backed up as he was by those interested in the question, that they had heard the announcement to which they had just listened from the Under Secretary. They now heard for the first time that it was the intention of Government to issue uniform Orders in Council with reference to the movement of cattle and the stopping of fairs and markets; and he need scarcely say how much pleasure such an announcement had given him. The hon. Gentleman had scarcely treated his Bill with fairness in attempting to cast ridicule upon it. Of the fifteen clauses containing exceptions to the general principle alluded to by the hon. Gentleman, some referred to England and some to Scotland, some to one sex and some to the other, some to one seaport and some to other seaports, but the distinct principles of exception were but few. He thought a Minister of the Crown might have been better employed than in making pettifogging objections of this kind to a Bill which had been brought in with the intention of effecting a useful purpose. He had much pleasure in acceding to the proposition of the Government, that they should take the whole responsibility of the question upon themselves, and was content under such circumstances to abandon his Bill. He should have preferred the matter being dealt with by Act of Parliament, as the regulations would then have been approved by the representatives of the people; but if Government chose to adopt the other course, he trusted that they would deal with the question in a comprehensive way, and endeavour if they could to stop this great calamity, which had now spread all over the kingdom.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he was not surprised that the hon. Member had failed in his attempt to carry an Act of Parliament which would effect the desired object, as he believed the only safe principle for the Government to adopt in the matter was to issue Orders in Council on the subject. An Act had lately been passed for Ireland, by which large power was given to the Lord Lieutenent to take the steps he might deem most effectual for dealing with the cattle plague if it should reach that country. That Act had, he believed, met with the general approval of the Irish people; and he thought that the same principle might be adopted with advantage in this country. In order to bring the discussion to a formal termination, he would move that the Lords' Amendments in the Bill be considered on that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Sir George Grey.*)

Lord JOHN MANNERS said, he did not think it right that the Bill should be withdrawn without an expression on the part of those interested in that important question of their sense of the valuable labours of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire. He wished, for one, distinctly to state that he attributed to the perseverance and energy of his hon. Friend the welcome result which they had heard announced in the name of the Government that afternoon. All that he contended for was the establishment of a uniform system under the direction of the Government; and it was a matter of indifference to him whether that uniformity was attained by an Act of Parliament or by Orders in Council. He was glad to learn the course which the Government had resolved to adopt; and he trusted that, strengthened as they must feel by the opinion of the House, they would not shrink from enforcing a uniformity of practice under the Orders in Council.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he thought it right to repeat that any absolutely uniform system, which would entirely disregard all differences of circumstances, would be wholly unattainable either by an Act of Parliament or by Orders in Council.

Mr. READ said, that the course which the Government had just announced their intention of taking was precisely that which had been recommended in the Report of the Cattle Plague Commissioners last autumn; and he believed that if they had followed the recommendations contained in that Report last November, there would at present be no cattle plague. The present state of the law was manifestly most unsatisfactory. They had stopped all the traffic on railways, but cattle were still allowed to pass along the roads, and the cattle trucks on the railways were not disinfected. He hoped that the Government, acting under the Orders in Council, would give their immediate attention to those subjects. He could not help expressing his regret that the interests of the farming class were not represented by any Government Board in a manner corresponding to that in which the interests of the commercial classes were represented by the Board of Trade.

Mr. DENT said, he thought the Government were taking upon themselves a great responsibility, and he trusted that they would make the necessary provisions for regulating the movement of cattle which must take place in consequence of those changes of farms which would soon be commencing in the North of England. He was anxious, as one of the agricultural Members in that House, to state how much he felt indebted to the hon. Member for Northamptonshire for the zeal, intelligence, and courtesy with which he had brought that subject under their consideration.

Colonel EDWARDS said, he wished to know whether the Orders in Council were to be carried into effect independently of all interference on the part of the local authorities?

Mr. NEWDEGATE desired to impress upon Government the necessity for adopting some permanent measure for the prevention of the spread of the cattle disease. He asked whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce such a measure in the course of the present Session?

Sir MATTHEW RIDLEY said, it would be necessary for some regulations to be made with regard to the sales of cattle which were about to take place in different parts of the country.

Admiral DUNCOMBE inquired whether the Orders of the Privy Council could be carried out without reference to the local authorities?

Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived.*

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Consideration of Lords' Amendments, *put off* for six months.

VALUATION OF LANDS AND HERITAGES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Dunlop, Bill to improve the present system of the Valuation of Lands and Heritages in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Dunlop, Colonel Pennant, Sir James Fergusson, and Mr. Baxter.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, March 15, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Sat First in Parliament*—The Earl Beauchamp, after the Death of his Father.
Took the Oath—The Marquess of Tweeddale.
Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Mutiny.*
Committee—Jamaica Government * (29); Marine Mutiny *; National Debt Reduction * (32).
Report—Jamaica Government * (29); Marine Mutiny *; National Debt Reduction * (32).

THE CATTLE PLAGUE—THE ORDERS IN COUNCIL.—QUESTION.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH said, he wished to ask a Question of the noble Earl the President of the Council, of which he had given private notice, as to the mode in which the Orders in Council and the rules of the local authorities with reference to the suppression of the cattle plague were to be carried into effect. Since he had given notice to the noble Earl a great change in the position of the general question had taken place. A Bill upon the subject carefully elaborated in the House of Commons, and afterwards in that House, had been withdrawn, and the Government had taken upon themselves the whole responsibility of providing for the suppression of the cattle plague by Orders in Council. That did not diminish the importance of the Question which he wished to ask. Now, it was a matter of the greatest importance that magistrates should thoroughly understand that the rules established by the local authorities under Orders in Council had all the binding power of law, and that they were as much bound to carry them into execution as any Act of Parliament. He therefore desired to know, How the Government intended to proceed in the event of there being reason to suppose that the magistrates had acted in contravention of the rules framed under Orders in Council. For instance, the movement of cattle was only permitted under a certificate from a magistrate, to be granted under certain conditions. Now, what would be done if magistrates granted the certificate without the fulfilment of one or more of the conditions required?

Earl GRANVILLE begged, in the first place, to thank the noble Earl for the invariable courtesy with which he always gave notice of the Questions which he intended to ask, and also for the precise character of the explanations which he might think it necessary in each case to demand. In the event of the misconduct of the magistrate being brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor, it would be for him to consider whether that misconduct was of such a nature as would require that the name of such magistrate should be taken off the list of magistrates. In the instance which the noble Earl suggested the magistrate could be indicted for misdemeanor, and in such a case it was not usual for the Lord Chancellor to cause the magistrate's name to be removed from the commission of the peace until a prosecution had been instituted. If such a prosecution were instituted the Lord Chancellor would deem it his duty to take all the facts into consideration, and adopt such a course as he might feel it his duty to take. The noble Earl had stated quite correctly that the rules framed under Orders in Council were as binding as an Act of Parliament, for they were issued under the authority of Acts of Parliament.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH asked by whom the prosecution was to be instituted? It would be a strange proceeding for a Court of Quarter Sessions to institute a prosecution for misdemeanor against one of their own body. He apprehended that the proper course to be pursued would be this—If there were a *primâ facie* case which seemed to implicate a magistrate it would be the duty of the other magistrates to appoint a committee to inquire into the matter, and if the report of that committee were such as to substantiate the case the report should be transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who might recommend what course he thought fit. He would probably direct a prosecution against the magistrate; and in the event of such misconduct being proved, then the action of the Lord Chancellor would come in.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, his noble Friend had stated quite correctly the course which the holder of the Great Seal always thought it his duty to follow. If the complaint against a magistrate was one of misconduct not exposing him to criminal proceedings then it would be for the Lord Chancellor to consider whether the offence was such as to call upon him to remove the magistrate from the commission of the peace. But if the misconduct alleged was such as might be made the subject of a prosecution in a criminal court, it was usual for the Lord Chancellor to let the law take its course before taking any action; for to remove the magistrate pending the inquiry would be to prejudge the case. He could conceive a case in which the Lord Chancellor need not wait—where, for instance, the person admitted to the Lord Chancellor he was guilty. In that case there would be no need to wait the result of the trial, because the use of the trial was to obtain certainty of the fact. However, it was impossible to say beforehand what should be done. It would be necessary to weigh each particular case.

THE EARL OF ELLENBOROUGH said, as the quarter sessions would meet next week it would be convenient if the noble and learned Lord would state what course the magistrates ought to pursue in a case such as he had supposed.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, there were many different ways in which the matter might be brought under the notice of the Government, and then the Secretary of State and the Lord Chancellor would consider the case with a view to considering what was to be done.

MARRIAGE LAW (IRELAND)—MEETING AT COLLINSTOWN.

MOTION FOR PAPERS.

THE MARQUESS OF WESTMEATH, having repeated the statement made on 2nd March, in presenting the Petition of Richard Talbot, of Managham, concluded by moving for the Papers, of which he had given notice.

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for, Report of the Officer of the Constabulary to the Inspector General of the Language held by the Roman Catholic Priest addressed to the tumultuous Meeting assembled and following him at Collinstown on Tuesdays the 14th, 21st, and 28th January 1866, and of all the Circumstances coming under his Observation at that Time.—(*The Marquess of Westmeath.*)

LORD DUFFERIN said, he was sure the noble Marquess would understand that until he had had an opportunity of considering the petition which had been presented it was impossible for him to submit to the consideration of the Irish Government the grounds upon which the noble Marquess had asked Her Majesty's Government to adopt what, he was informed, was a most unusual course. He had communicated with the Lord Lieutenant, and had ascertained that the Irish Government had the strongest objection to produce the report of the officer of the constabulary, because reports of that kind had always been regarded as privileged and confidential communications, and the greatest possible inconvenience

would result to the public service if they were to lose that character. With regard to this particular case he had to state that it was perfectly true that a girl who professed the Roman Catholic religion was married to a Roman Catholic within six months after her profession of that faith. No doubt the act was illegal; but when the father went to take out a summons against the priest who celebrated the marriage he was advised, and on further consideration determined, not to take it out, and it was obvious that there might be many considerations which would induce the father of a girl placed in such circumstances to adopt that course. Well, that course having been adopted, it seemed to him that there was no ground whatever for any interference on the part of the executive Government; however, if the Government were to interfere in a matter already disposed of it would lay itself open to the charge of being prone to override the authority of the local magistracy.

THE MARQUESS OF WESTMEATH said, that as the Government had not denied the allegations which had been made, but still refused to produce the official account of the proceedings, the public might know what kind of *régime* was triumphant in some parts of Ireland. He should, however, withdraw his Motion.

Motion (by Leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half past Ten o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, March 15, 1866.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—On Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings, *nominated;* Trade in Animals, *appointed.*

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—NAVY ESTIMATES.

WAYS AND MEANS—*Resolution* [March 14] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolutions in Committee*—Customs Acts (Isle of Man); Hull South Bridge [Advance]; East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer.

Ordered—Consolidated Fund (£13,500,000)*; Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment*; Contagious Diseases Prevention*; Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland).

First Reading—Land Tax Commissioners' Names* [71]; Consolidated Fund (£19,000,000)*; Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland) [72].
Second Reading—Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland* [56]; Exchequer Bills and Bonds* [46].
Committee—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment* [13].
Report—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment [13.]

Mr. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

LEEDS BANKRUPTCY COURT.

QUESTION.

Mr. FERRAND said, he rose to ask Mr. Attorney General, Whether he has seen any grounds for changing his opinion, expressed in this House on the 27th of June last, that Mr. Patrick Robert Welch should be suspended from the discharge of his duties as Registrar in the Leeds Bankruptcy Court pending his criminal prosecution for corrupt practices in obtaining, or attempting to obtain, a judicial appointment; if so, to be so obliging as to state them to the House; and whether, after the evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Leeds Bankruptcy Court, he is of opinion that Mr. John Miller is a fit and proper person to discharge the very responsible duties of Chief Registrar of the Court of Bankruptcy?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, the opinion to which the hon. Member refers, as expressed by me on the 27th of June last, was given under the belief on my part that the Lord Chancellor had the power, if he thought fit, to suspend a Registrar of the Court of Bankruptcy; but on examining the Act of Parliament under which that office is held—the Act of 1861—it appears that the office is to be held during good behaviour—that is, subject to dismissal by the Lord Chancellor by order, for some sufficient reason, to be set forth in such order. So that it does not appear that the Lord Chancellor has the power of suspension at all with respect to the office. I need not point out to the hon. Member and the House that while Mr. Welch is subject to a prosecution which must be tried in one of Her Majesty's Courts, it would be impossible to institute another proceeding upon the same ground with a view to his dismissal from office. That is the reason why it has not been found possible to take any steps on the subject. With regard to Mr. Miller, he holds his office on the same terms, and, speaking for myself, I am of opinion, and I am authorized by the present Lord Chancellor to say that he also is of opinion, that no facts appear in the Report of the Select Committee on the Leeds Bankruptcy Court on which it would be possible to found proceedings for the purpose of removing Mr. Miller from the office he holds.

SHARE CAPITAL OF COMPANIES.

QUESTION.

Mr. HENRY SEYMOUR said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, If he intends to introduce a measure to alter the Companies Act, 1862, to enable Companies, by special resolution of their shareholders, to diminish the nominal value and increase the number of their shares, retaining intact the original amount of the capital of the Company?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON: Sir, the subject has been under consideration with the view of introducing a Bill, but all the provisions of the measure are not yet settled. I hope, however, to be able to lay a Bill on the table shortly after the Easter recess.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—THE WHITWORTH GUN.—QUESTION.

Mr. WHITE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is true that the 7-inch Whitworth Gun, tried at Shoeburyness, proved, as regards endurance, to be a failure; and whether any subsequent and special experiments have been made, so as to justify the War Office in feeling confidence in the safety and serviceable qualities of the Whitworth system when applied to guns of 8-inch and 9-inch calibre?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, in reply, that the Whitworth gun to which the hon. Member referred, although it was a rifled gun, was not constructed entirely on Mr. Whitworth's principle, but on a principle almost entirely similar to that of the Armstrong gun. That gun had been proved only experimentally, and, in general, with excessive charges, and no doubt it had suffered considerably by the firing. With regard to the experiments conducted by the Armstrong and Whitworth Committee, although they were not conducted with guns of the size referred to, yet they showed that guns constructed on the Whitworth principle, from 12-pounders to 70-pounders, possessed most extraordinary durability and endurance. There were no guns of 8 or 9-inch calibre in the service, and there were, therefore, no positive data as to their endurance. Some experimental trials had, however, been ordered to take place.

CATTLE DISEASE—COMPENSATION FOR SLAUGHTERED CATTLE.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. DENT said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Government have decided upon the compensation to be paid to persons whose cattle were slaughtered by Orders of the Privy Council or the local authorities, previous to the passing of the Cattle Diseases Act; and from what funds such compensation is to be paid?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, the Question, although of no great extent, is of very great difficulty, and Her Majesty's Government, occupied as they have been with other matters, have not been enabled to determine in what manner they ought to frame any such proposal they may find it their duty to submit to Parliament.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, he wished to ask a question in explanation of the answer just given by the right hon. Gentleman as regarded retrospective compensation; whether the House were to understand that it was the intention of the Government to give compensation in such cases?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I have nothing to add or to take away from what we declared in the discussion on the original Cattle Diseases Bill. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir George Grey) then declared that it was the intention of Government to look to the question with a view, if possible, of framing some proposal on the point.

CATTLE DISEASES—REMOVAL OF CATTLE.—QUESTION.

Admiral DUNCOMBE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he proposes to introduce a clause into the Cattle Plague Bill, enabling lean cattle to be sold and removed from farms on or about Lady Day, especially when there is a change of tenancy?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, it was quite necessary that the Privy Council in making new Orders should include in them provisions applicable to this subject. But when the hon. and gallant Member spoke of the next quarter day, he doubted whether it would be possible to issue Orders for the whole country in time for so early a day. Until the existing Orders were superseded by a general Order the Courts of Quarter Sessions might make provisions for changes of tenancy.

DOCKYARD FRANCHISE AND THE BALLOT.—QUESTION.

Mr. OTWAY said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he would object to substitute for the clause in the "Bill for the Representation of the People" which would deprive the artizans in Her Majesty's Dockyards of the franchise, one enabling those artizans to give their votes by ballot; he would further beg to ask, whether the disfranchisement proposed to be inflicted on the artizans would be extended to officers on full pay stationed in towns where there were dockyards?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, with respect to the latter part of the Question of the hon. Member, I apprehend that the clause in the Bill is perfectly clear as to the class of persons to whom it applies. With regard to the former part of the Question, as Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to admit the principle of secret voting, this is, I think, the last occasion in which it ought to be applied, inasmuch as the object is not so much to protect the artizans from undue influence as to protect the Members who represent them.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—ARMSTRONG GUNS.—QUESTION.

Mr. HANBURY-TRACY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is true that a change has taken place in the method of charging the indirect and other expenses in the Royal Gun Factories since the years 1861-2; and, if so, what difference would have been occasioned in the price of

Armstrong Guns, as stated in the Royal Gun Factory Balance Sheet of 1861-2, had the change been made previous to those years?

THE MARQUESS OF **HARTINGTON**, in reply, said, it was quite true that a change had been made in the system of charging the indirect and other expenses in the Royal Gun Factories since the years 1861-2. It would be impossible to say what difference would have been occasioned in the price of the Armstrong Guns as stated in the Royal Gun Factory Balance Sheet of 1861-2, had the change taken place previous to those years, without preparing a new balance-sheet, which would be a work of considerable time and labour; but the effect, no doubt, would have been to make the manufacture of those guns considerably more expensive.

WRECK REGISTER.—QUESTION.

MR. **LAIRD** said, he rose to ask the President of the Board of Trade, Whether, looking to the great importance of the annual "Wreck Register" being published early during the Session of Parliament, he can state how soon he will be prepared to lay the "Wreck Register for 1865" upon the table of the House?

MR. **MILNER GIBSON**: Sir, I hope the "Wreck Return for the British Isles for the year 1865" will be on the table of the House almost immediately after Easter, and that a similar Return of British ships lost abroad will be produced in a month afterwards.

CATTLE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES, QUESTION.

COLONEL **EDWARDS** said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce any permanent measure for the prevention of Contagious Diseases among Cattle; and whether the Orders in Council now contemplated are, under any legislative enactment, to be submitted within any given time for the consideration of Parliament?

SIR **GEORGE GREY** replied that it was important to have a permanent Act, similar in principle to that proposed by Her Majesty's Government two years ago, for the purpose of checking the spread of contagious diseases among the cattle, both as to those brought to this country from abroad, and to cattle removed from one place to another in this country. A Committee has been appointed to inquire into this subject, and probably the better plan would be to wait for its Report before any measure was brought into Parliament. The Orders in Council would be laid before Parliament—the Act rendering this imperative.

RETIRING PENSIONS TO POOR LAW OFFICERS.—QUESTION.

MR. **DE GREY** said, he wished to ask the President of the Poor Law Board, Whether he has had any Correspondence with the Board of Guardians of Downham Market, in the County of Norfolk, on the subject of a Retiring Pension to one John Chamberlain; and, if so, whether any steps have been taken to remedy the injustice complained of; and if he has any objection to produce the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on this subject, if any has been given?

MR. **C. P. VILLIERS**, in reply, said, there had been a correspondence between the Poor Law Board and the Guardians of the Downham Union on the subject of an officer named John Chamberlain. It had reference to a pension that he claimed under the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act. It was found that this claim did not come within the provision of that Act, which requires that a man shall have rendered his services exclusively to the union during the period prescribed. It was found that he had been a Registrar of Births and Deaths in that district, which is not, at present, a union office. As the officer, however, is appointed by the guardians, he (Mr. Villiers) had proposed last year that it should be considered an office within the meaning of the Act; and as the Bill which he had brought in was only withdrawn, he intended to renew that proposition this year. With reference to the production of the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, which had been taken in Chamberlain's case, he understood it was not usual to produce such opinions in this House, but if the hon. Member desired to see the opinion, it would be open to him to do so, whenever he would call at the Department for that purpose.

CATTLE DISEASE—REMOVAL OF HIDES AND SKINS.—QUESTION.

MR. **FREVILLE SURTEES** said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of

State for the Home Department, If he will state what Orders Her Majesty's Government intend to issue regarding the movement of Hides and Skins?

Mr. BARING said, in reply, that the contemplated Orders, as far as he was then enabled to state them, were that hides and skins imported from foreign parts, India, Australia, and South Africa, for manufacturing purposes, should be allowed to be moved without restriction; that no hide or skin of any animal that had died from, or been slaughtered on account of, the cattle plague should be moved at all; that no hide or skin of any animal that had been in the immediate neighbourhood of any animal affected with the cattle plague should be moved, unless it was first thoroughly disinfected, and a certificate had been obtained from the local authorities of the district; that no local authorities should be empowered to give any other orders with respect to the movement of hides and skins; but it would be in the power of the Privy Council to make further Orders on the subject if it thought them necessary.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—TWELVE-TON GUNS.—QUESTION.

Mr. H. BAILLIE said, with reference to a Question he had put to the noble Marquess the other evening, as to the endurance of the 12-ton gun, which had burst after firing 400 rounds, he wished to ask, Whether the Government are still satisfied with the endurance of that gun; and likewise, whether the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was receiving those guns on board the fleet, is also satisfied on that point?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, the gun which the other day burst after firing 400 rounds was one of a pattern not yet adopted by the Government, and was certainly not of the same pattern as the gun which was now being issued to the navy. It was one which was lately constructed in the gun manufactory of the Government. He had not yet received any detailed report in reference to the matter, and therefore could not say whether the accident was to be attributed to any defect in the quality of the iron; but if the hon. Member would wait a few days he (the Marquess of Hartington) should be able to afford him fuller information.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY (IRELAND).

EXPLANATION.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Lawson) said, with respect to a Question put to him by the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) on a previous occasion, he wished now to state that, while no summons was issued for the meeting of the Convocation, the Senate did issue a summons for a meeting of their own body, which was afterwards countermanded. He understood that the Senate thought it would be better not to hold that meeting pending the changes which might be proposed to be made in the constitution of the institution.

CHURCH RATES ABOLITION BILL.

QUESTION.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, in the absence of his noble Friend (Viscount Cranbourne), he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is his intention to propose any clauses in Committee on the Church Rates Abolition Bill embodying the suggestions made by him on the second reading of the Bill for the settlement of the question; and, if so, when he will lay those clauses upon the table of the House?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER replied, that owing to the pressure of his other duties, he could not say that since the discussion on the second reading of the measure in question he had been able to make great practical progress in that matter. It should, however, be his endeavour to frame clauses embodying the suggestions which he had then thrown out, and he would take care that ample notice should be given to the House before they were brought on for discussion.

SUNDAY LECTURES ON SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS.

QUESTION.

Mr. GREGORY said, he rose to ask Mr. Attorney General, Whether his attention has been directed to the Act 21 *Geo.* III. c. 49; and whether, in his opinion, that Act applies to Sunday lectures on scientific and religious subjects by persons learned and competent to explain the same; and, if so, whether the Act might not be amended with advantage?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, in reply, that the point of law involved in this question would be brought before the Court of Queen's Bench in the next term; and, therefore, the House would see that, under these circumstances, he could not undergo any cross-examination upon the matter.

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL—[BILL 13.]—COMMITTEE.

(*Sir George Grey, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Order for Committee read.

SIR GEORGE GREY: Sir, it will be for the convenience of the House if I now state the course which Her Majesty's Government, after due consideration, feel it their duty to pursue with reference to the Amendment of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) has given notice. The right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members sitting around him have frankly accepted the principle of a uniform oath; and the division which took place on the second reading of the Bill demonstrated the all but unanimous opinion of the House that a uniform oath should be substituted for the several oaths now taken by Members of both Houses of Parliament. We attach great value to the principle of a uniform oath, because it involves the exclusion of those parts of the oaths now taken which are peculiar to the Roman Catholic oath, needlessly offensive to Roman Catholic Members, and which, according to the construction placed upon them by some persons, subjects them to some restriction of the freedom which, as Members of the Legislature, they ought to exercise. A uniform oath places them upon an equality with other Members of this House; whilst it narrows the area of debate by removing many of those topics which have been the subject of our discussions to a large extent on former occasions. We have been anxious to give a fair and candid consideration to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman as the leader of a party in the House, and who, we believe, is sincerely desirous of facilitating the object we have in view, that of the establishment of one uniform oath. His Amendment consists of two parts, which have no connection one with the other. The first relates to the Act of Settlement, and the second to the Royal Supremacy. With regard to the first part of the Amendment, in preparing a Bill to be submitted to Parliament we did not think it necessary to retain the words relating to the Act of Settlement, believing that the succession to the Throne rests upon the firm and sure basis of the Act of Parliament, and that it would derive no additional security from the retention of the words suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. The authority of the Act of Settlement, however, is most distinctly recognized in the second section of the Bill, because by that section the oath of allegiance required to be taken can be taken only to the Sovereign who, by virtue of the Act of Settlement, is the Sovereign for the time being of this realm. There is, therefore, no substantial difference between the general purport of the Bill and the first part of the Amendment which relates to the Act of Settlement. But as some hon. Gentlemen attach importance to the retention of these words, from the honest conviction that it is desirable to retain them, the Government are not prepared to offer any opposition to the adoption of them, subject to only one exception, to which I think there will be no objection. It was stated the other night that the Society of Friends objected to the use of the word "defend," because it implied the obligation to defend the succession to the Crown by force of arms. I do not think that is the necessary construction of the word "defend," as there are other means of defending the succession to the Crown besides the taking up of arms. But as the scruple is entertained, and as those who entertain it are now exempt from that obligation, as the affirmation does not contain the word "defend," I do not think there will be any objection to omit that word, retaining the words "maintain and support." With reference to the second part of the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman, I am sorry to say that Her Majesty's Government feel that they cannot accede to it. I will not anticipate the discussion which may arise in Committee when it is proposed, but I thought it might be convenient to the House that I should make this statement, and I now move that Mr. Deputy Speaker leave the Chair.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Sir George Grey.*)

SIR HUGH CAIRNS: Sir, although I feel it desirable not to defer going into Committee, where alone the Amendment can be properly discussed, perhaps the House will allow me to make one or two observations. The right hon. Baronet holds that the Bill, as it stood in the second section, would have provided for all that is proposed to be done by the Amendment. Now, on reflection, the right hon. Baronet will see that all the second section does is this—it provides the means of substituting from time to time the name of the new Sovereign in the oath. There is no doubt the rule by which the name of the new Sovereign is to be substituted is to be found in the Act of Succession. So far I agree with him. It is desirable, however, that there should be a pledge on the part of those taking this oath that they will maintain the Succession as established by law, but there is no pledge of this kind in the second section of the Bill as it stands. With regard to the word "defend," perhaps the right hon. Baronet will allow me to point out that the difficulty experienced by hon. Members on a former occasion related to another part of the oath than that he has indicated. In the old oath the words were—

> "I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and will defend her to the utmost of my power."

Now, that was the part, I believe, to which members of the Society of Friends were averse. They believed that those words would put them under an obligation to defend the person of the Sovereign *vi et armis.* Allow me to point out that in the Amendment to be proposed the word "defend" occurs in a very different place, and for a very different purpose. In its present position, it implies that persons taking the oath shall defend not the person of the Sovereign but the Succession. I put it to the right hon. Baronet, whether it can possibly be supposed that by a pledge to maintain, support, and defend the Succession, you are pledged to defend it, if necessary, by force of arms? It is quite a different matter.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, as he divided the House on the second reading of the Bill, he might perhaps be permitted to state that he believed, and had reason to know, that the large majority did not represent the unanimity which the right hon. Gentleman had assumed. The oath now sought to be disturbed was the result of an arrangement made after a contest in Parliament which lasted for eleven years, and a conference between the two Houses of Parliament, and it was a settlement second only in importance to that of 1829, so far as principle was concerned. He knew well the current of public opinion in the country in reference to the subject, and of that current the eighty-nine petitions which he had that day presented afforded evidence. The last Report of the Committee on Petitions showed that 149 petitions had been presented against the Bill, signed by 22,000 persons, including eleven chairmen of public meetings. Considering how the matter had been postponed from week to week in the House, and how public meetings and petitions had been thereby interrupted, that was as extensive and rapid a manifestation of public feeling as could be presented to the House on any subject. He trusted, therefore, the House would give that attention to the subject which its importance demanded. It was due to the petitioners and to the intelligence which the substance of their petitions manifested, and due to the six Members who had concurred with him in expressing their strong convictions against the Bill, that he should then state the reasons which had decided him to divide the House on the second reading of the Bill. He believed that many hon. Gentlemen who voted in the majority did not agree in the substance of the Bill, and that they had voted more in deference to the opinion of their leaders in Parliament than from their own conscientious convictions.

Mr. DILLON said, he was very reluctant to urge any objection to the proposed compromise between the Government and the Opposition. There was not a Member in the House more sensible than himself of the little practical result which the Amendment proposed by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) could produce. If it had any practical result it could only be this—to make the Roman Catholics of England and Ireland feel that the disposition had not entirely disappeared of doing things towards them that were needlessly offensive. He was prepared to show that what was proposed to be done on the present occasion was entirely unnecessary, and moreover, that it was offensive to those who, like himself, professed the Roman Catholic creed. What they were called upon to do was not merely to submit, and to be loyal, to the Protestant Monarchy of this country, but to swear to maintain an Act of Parliament which was conceived in a spirit most injurious and offensive to the Roman Catholic religion, by the terms of which a Roman Catholic was bound, if at any time the Sovereign of the country were to become Roman Catholic, to take up arms and dethrone him. Now there was a wide difference between binding them to loyalty to the Sovereign, whatever his creed might be, and binding them by positive oath to take up arms and dethrone their Sovereign in case he adopted the Roman Catholic creed. No doubt it was a purely speculative and theoretical objection, but at the same time he thought it unworthy and unbecoming the dignity of the House to make a difference between a small minority of its Members and the great majority, and compel the minority to take an oath which they could not but regard as offensive and injurious; and he could not help regretting that when the Bill was introduced in a generous and liberal spirit, a movement should have been made on that (the Opposition) side of the House to take from it the merit which it possessed. But he had another objection to the Bill, and he trusted hon. Members would not suspect that it was made in a captious and offensive spirit. He, as a Roman Catholic, was to be bound by that oath to be loyal to the Sovereign of England so long as the Sovereign should remain Protestant. That imposed on him the obligation of knowing what was a Protestant. Considering the changes which were going on, it might hereafter become very difficult to say whether the personage occupying the Throne did or did not belong to that creed. He should like to ask the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) if he considered those clergymen to be ministers of the Protestant religion against whom he had been presenting multitudinous petitions during the last few weeks, complaining of their introducing obsolete vestments, and devoting themselves to what were called Romanistic practices; and whether he considered a Sovereign would be a Protestant if he happened to adopt those particular practices? He was at a loss to know whether a Unitarian could be considered a Protestant, and what were the limits beyond which a man could not go without ceasing to be fit to occupy the Throne of England. The Amendment would only introduce an element of ambiguity, the getting rid of which was the principal merit of the Government Bill. Considering it to be needlessly offensive to the Roman Catholics, he begged to record his vote against the Amendment. If adopted by the majority in that House of course he must submit, but he should do so with a very bad grace.

MR. THOMAS CHAMBERS observed, that the right hon. Baronet (Sir George Grey) had stated that by adopting the first part of the Amendment he would add nothing to the significance and force of the Bill; but the observations of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down must have convinced him how mistaken he was in supposing that the form of oath proposed in the Government Bill and the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) were one and the same thing. The hon. Member said that the two things were totally different, and that the oath proposed by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) imposed upon him and his friends a very different obligation from that to which under the new oath in its original shape they would have been subjected. What was the difference between the form of oath in the Government Bill and that proposed in the Amendment? The Government form of oath was merely an oath of personal fealty to the individual Sovereign. It spoke of nothing but the individual Sovereign for the time being. He did not consider it, strictly speaking, an oath of loyalty at all. At any rate, it was only an oath of loyalty to the Crown. It was no oath of allegiance to the Constitution. Personal admiration, personal devotion to the occupant of the Throne was not loyalty. Loyalty was a constitutional sentiment, not a personal one. To be loyal meant to uphold the Monarchy, not simply the individual who at the moment happened to be the occupant of the throne. The distinction drawn between the Amendment and the Bill was a vital one, and he thanked the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dillon) for his candour in pointing it out. The hon. Member objected to the Amendment because he objected to the Act of Settlement. The House considered the Act of Settlement one of the foundations of the Monarchy, but the hon. Gentleman regarded it as an Act of Parliament among other Acts of Parliament, to be repealed, or amended, or adridged, or altered, according as circumstances might render change desirable. [MR. DILLON: Hear, hear!] He (Mr. Chambers) did not complain of Roman Catholic Members taking that view, and he was thankful to them for expressing it. The question now was, what was the House prepared to do? He regretted that the Government had introduced the Bill, and that a proposal had been made to disturb the settlement not long since effected, but no doubt they had felt themselves pressed by what passed in the last Parliament to introduce the subject. When the Bill was brought in he felt thankful that it was proposed to establish a single oath for all

Members, for it was most desirable that all hon. Members who came there to discharge a common function should do so under a common sanction. He was thankful that they intended to adopt a single form of oath, and he thought the oath should be the shortest possible, that it should contain a minimum number of obligations and principles, and that it would be bad if it included anything except what was fundamental and of the highest importance. He thought they had gone far enough in the abolition of oaths, if not too far, and though he had earnestly supported proposals to abolish oaths that were multiplied without reason and without reverence, still on proper occasions he thought it was a suitable thing for Members to be bound by an oath as, for example, when they were about to discharge the most momentous of all functions. The oath, though short as possible, should be full enough to secure its object, but he thought the oath in the Government Bill was not full enough. No oath to be taken by all the Members of the House should contain any single assertion or obligation in which all could not join. They were not called upon to take the oath as Protestants, as Roman Catholics, or as Dissenters, but as citizens; and there ought to be nothing in it which every man ought not to feel himself bound to recognize in virtue of his citizenship alone. But the second portion of the oath given notice of by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire was, it seemed, objected to by Roman Catholic Members. Why should they so object? Let them take the term "loyalty" in its constitutional sense; it meant the recognition of the Monarchy as limited by the Act of Settlement. Every man was bound to be loyal, not by statute merely, but by the highest *à priori* obligations of his birth—his citizenship in the State of which he was a subject. Then how could the Roman Catholic subjects of the Crown object to make a declaration to that effect? Loyalty meant loyalty to the Monarch as Sovereign of England, and to a particular line of succession, being Protestant. The Roman Catholics were not asked to approve the line being Protestant, but were asked merely to recognize the fact. Again, what objection could properly be taken to the next declaration, with regard to the supremacy of the Sovereign in the Courts of Law? The prime function of Government was the administration of justice, and the Monarch was the fountain of justice, administering it through the Courts of Law. In every one of those courts the Queen was supreme, and how could it be offensive to Roman Catholics to say that in the Queen's courts the Queen was supreme? It was of no use objecting to it, because it was true, and would remain so, he hoped, so long as the country lasted. How could it wound the consciences of any one to be called upon to say that which they could not deny, and which they could not alter? There was nothing objectionable in the word jurisdiction. The word itself necessarily excluded all "foreign Princes, Prelates, States, or Potentates whatever." The words, perhaps, were more numerous than they might be, but the word "jurisdiction" was a legal term, and it was impossible for any man to contend that any foreign Prince had jurisdiction or authority in any of the courts within the realm. Jurisdiction meant coercive jurisdiction, backed by all the power of the State. On these grounds it appeared to him that Roman Catholics ought not to object to the Amendment suggested by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, because it was nothing but a statement of facts. However, if the bare and dry recognition of facts were objected to, it became less likely than ever that the Members of that House could be brought to unite under one common bond, when they presented themselves to discharge their duties. What was now proposed was more for the sake of the Roman Catholics than any one else, and he would regret if they did not lend their help in the settlement of the question.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he thought the discussion was ranging inconveniently wide. His right hon. Friend (Sir George Grey) had stated for the information of the House the intentions of the Government with respect to the Amendment suggested by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), and it was natural for him to have made some remarks on that part of the Amendment which it was proposed to concede. His right hon. Friend also explained what portion of the Amendment he objected to, but he did not state his reasons, because it would have been inconvenient to provoke a discussion, which could at the present stage lead to no result, on that part of the subject, antecedently to going into Committee. It would be much better to take that discussion in Committee.

MR. DISRAELI said, it might be inferred that he had suddenly changed his opinion on this subject, for the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had just now repeated words to that effect, similar to those he made use of on a previous evening. On that occasion the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) reminded the House of the facts of the case, and he had himself since then referred to the authentic record of what took place last year, and he found that he absolutely requested the Government—a favour which they accorded—to give a morning sitting for the discussion on the second reading of the Bill of the right hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Monsell), giving notice of his intention to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, with an instruction to frame a uniform oath for all Members. He was obliged to abandon that intention on account of a technical reason, for he was informed by the highest authority that such an instruction could not be referred to the Select Committee. He, therefore, was at a loss to understand how it was that he was charged by the right hon. Baronet with having opposed the enactment of a uniform oath. He was delighted when he heard the Government this year announce their intention to propose a uniform oath, but they had produced one in which he had no confidence. He had therefore suggested one in accordance with the principles he had laid down last year, in which he had confidence.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Form of Oath to be taken by Members of Parliament).

MR. DISRAELI said, that on the first clause, containing the following form of oath proposed in the Government Bill:—

> "I, A.B., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and will defend Her to the utmost of my Power against all Conspiracies and Attempts whatever which shall be made against Her Power, Crown, or Dignity. So help me GOD."

he begged to move that after "Victoria" the following words be inserted:—

> "And I do faithfully promise to maintain and support the Succession to the Crown, as the same stands limited and settled by an Act passed in the reign of King William III., intituled 'An Act for the further Limitation of the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject.'"

He had made three alterations affecting the original form of oath. He had left out the words "her heirs and successors" after "Her Majesty," because they were unnecessary; he had retained, in the third clause of the oath, the words "Her Majesty is, under God, the only Supreme Governor of this Realm," because he found them in the Act of Elizabeth, and did not presume to alter them; and thinking it more consonant with the feelings of the present day, he had introduced a limitation in the same clause which no one could object to in the words "That no Foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath any jurisdiction in any of the Courts within the same."

MR. NEWDEGATE hoped he might be permitted to make a few observations on the Amendment, as this was the first opportunity they had had of discussing it; and he would briefly state the objections he entertained to it. He would first call the attention of the Committee to the omissions from the original form of oath which were contemplated by the Amendment now before the House. The right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire proposed the omission of the following paragraph from the oath as settled for all the Protestant Members of the House, which included the vast majority. The paragraph to be omitted was—

> "And I will defend Her (Majesty) to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever which may be made against Her Person, Crown, and Dignity, and I will do my utmost to disclose and make known to Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies that may be formed against Her and them."

Under the oath of 1858 allegiance to the Crown was allegiance to the Throne not only as occupied by Her Majesty, but as it might be occupied by the person who, under the Act of Settlement and Limitation of the Crown, should succeed to it. He objected to the omission of these words. It was also proposed to omit all reference to the fact that the succession to the Crown was limited to the person of "The Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and the heirs of her body being Protestants," thereby utterly renouncing any fealty or allegiance to any other person whatever. The next omission was with reference to the words in the Oath of Supremacy—

> "That no Foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, authority, or pre-eminence within this realm."

The right hon. Gentleman proposed to omit from the oath at present taken the words, "or ought to have," and he wished to point out that fact as one of great importance; in fact, every passage in the existing oath having a prospective effect and containing a prospective obligation, was omitted by the Amendments to the oath which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks had proposed. The next words which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to omit were that the pre-eminence of the Crown should be asserted over all persons in this country. The old words were, "over all causes and all persons," and the alteration would make a very great difference, because it was stated by Lord John Russell, in 1851, that an attempt was then made by the Papacy to establish a separate jurisdiction in this country, and that the course pursued by Cardinal Wiseman and Legate Cullen was an attempt to set up the jurisdiction of a foreign Power by the side of that of the Crown. He prayed the House to deal carefully with these alterations, and not to omit any portions of the oath which might, under existing circumstances, favour the attempt which they knew was being made. Cardinal Wiseman stated publicly, in 1851, that his object was to constitute the Roman Catholics a separate community in this country, subject in all things to the "spiritual" authority of the Pope in a Papal sense. He hoped the Committee would consider that the words in the existing oath were not the product of uninformed intellects, or that they were carelessly produced. The terms of the oath had a historical meaning which was brought down to the altered circumstances of the present day, but were still applicable. The omissions proposed were, that all the words at the conclusion of the oath which described the universality of Her Majesty's supremacy should be omitted, and the words "in the courts" should alone be added. It, therefore, seemed that, as the claim of the Papacy was that the authority of the See and the Court of Rome extended over all baptized persons, that might be a matter of indifference to Protestants, but he believed that the prohibition of that doctrine by the laws of this country, and by the solemn declaration of the Members of the Legislature made in Parliament, was important in order to extinguish the vain hopes that might be raised hereafter, and had been used before, for the purpose of creating discord. He therefore objected to the Amendments proposed as invalidating the supremacy of the law, the law being the exponent of the justice of which the Crown was the source, and of the national independence which it had been the wisdom of this country ever to cherish.

Mr. THOMAS CHAMBERS said, he wished to know whether the Government agreed to abandon these words?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, that the Question now was as to words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) to be added after the word "Victoria."

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, he would ask the right hon. Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside) whether he considered it prudent to omit from the present oath the words "And I will defend Her Majesty against all conspiracies whatever?"

The CHAIRMAN said, no Question had been put as to the omission of these words; the Question now was the insertion after "Victoria," in line 12, of the words proposed to be added by the right hon. Member (Mr. Disraeli). The Question whether the words proposed to be omitted should or should not stand part of the clause would arise after the Committee had decided on the insertion of the words proposed to be added.

Mr. WALPOLE said, with reference to some observations of the hon. Member (Mr. Newdegate), that it was unnecessary for the oath to refer to the words "being Protestants" or to the succession to the Crown. The omission was of no importance whatever, as the Act of Settlement contained the words and the limitation.

Motion *agreed to*: Amendment made accordingly.

Sir GEORGE GREY: I propose to omit after the word "subject" the words—

> "And will defend Her to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatever which shall be made against Her Power, Crown, or dignity."

This will be, in effect, the adoption of the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli).

Motion *agreed to.*

Mr. DISRAELI: I now propose to add after the word "subject" the following words:—

> "And I do further solemnly declare that Her Majesty is, under God, the only Supreme Governor of this Realm, and that no Foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath any jurisdiction or authority in any of the Courts within the same."

Amendment proposed,

After the word "subject," to insert the words "And I do further solemnly declare that Her Majesty is, under God, the only Supreme Governor of this realm, and that no Foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath any jurisdiction or authority in any of the Courts within the same."—(*Mr. Disraeli.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, I think I can lay before the House several reasons for the non-acceptance of this Amendment. I fully recognize in the course which the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli) has taken a sincere desire to avoid difficulties and to agree upon such a form of oath as shall give general satisfaction to all parties. The objections I have to make to this part of the right hon. Gentleman's proposal are of a twofold character. In the first place, the words that he proposes to introduce are incongruous with and unnecessary to the object of the oath as we now propose to frame it; and secondly, the Amendment is not only unnecessary but is positively mischievous. With regard to my first objection, that the words proposed to be introduced are incongruous and useless, I say that the oath as we now propose to frame it is intended to embrace two things—namely, the great principle of personal loyalty to the Sovereign, and that of loyalty to the Monarchy as established by the fundamental laws of the Constitution. We have agreed as to that, but we are now asked to go further, and to introduce into the oath an abstract proposition, which has nothing whatever to do with these great principles—which is neither a pledge of personal loyalty to the Crown nor of loyalty to the Monarchy. What can be the use or advantage of introducing abstract declarations of this kind into the oath? I can only suggest one possible use of them—namely, to act as a test. There may be occasions on which it might be desirable or even necessary to introduce into an oath of this kind words which should operate as a test, but the object of such a test and the criterion of its necessity is the exclusion of persons whose opinions would render their admission dangerous. This object was the foundation of all declarations respecting the Royal Supremacy which were introduced into the oath formerly taken by Members of Parliament. It was thought that there were dangerous opinions, perilous to the Constitution, held by certain persons upon that subject, which rendered those who held them unfit to sit in Parliament. Accordingly, it was deemed necessary to insert such words in the oath as would be a bar to the entrance of such persons beyond the threshold of this House. That was a very effective test, as it practically excluded all who entertained opinions in favour of the Papal supremacy in this country. By degrees we began to place more confidence in our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and in the course of time we took the very singular course of framing an oath which, while it permitted Roman Catholics to enter Parliament without abjuring certain opinions, compelled those who were never suspected of entertaining such opinions to abjure them. I think the time has arrived when we all agree that we may depart from that course, and I therefore object to the introduction into the oath of abstract propositions which are useless as tests, and which can answer no useful purpose whatever. Is there a single human being in Her Majesty's dominions who doubts that, under God, she is the only supreme Governor of this realm? When any person has taken the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, and has faithfully promised to maintain and support the succession to the Crown, as fixed by the Act of Settlement, can it be necessary to ask that person to go on and to declare that "Her Majesty is, under God, the only supreme Governor of this realm?" That merely expresses a political truism which no person doubts. Unless it is intended to make the oath a sort of political creed, and to insert in it all other political truisms regarding our Constitution, such statements should be omitted altogether. Is not the next portion of the right hon. Gentleman's proposition open to equal if not to stronger objections? It is—

> "And that no foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath any jurisdiction or authority in any of the Courts within the same."

Most lame and impotent conclusion! Whoever said that any foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate has any jurisdiction or authority in any courts within this realm of England? In which court should they have any jurisdiction or authority—in the Court of Queen's Bench, in the Court of Common Pleas, in the Court of Exchequer, or in which of the other Courts? The proposition may be perfectly true, but why insert into the oath that which is the greatest truism and platitude that was ever put into words? All previous tests have been directed against real opinions, which were held to be dangerous, and which persons really believed and professed to hold, but never before have such words as these been introduced into an oath. But are the words simply idle and harmless?

They actually limit the jurisdiction of Her Majesty to the Courts, as though Her Majesty's Supremacy only extended to the judicial power of the Crown. Is there any principle of constitutional law which so limits the Royal Supremacy? If we go back to the old statutes we shall find that the Supremacy of the Crown is referred to as being much wider and more extended than would appear from the words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. In a statute passed even before the Reformation, in the reign of Richard II., the Supremacy of the Crown is referred to in these terms—

> "The Crown of England hath been so free at all times, that it hath been in no earthly subjection, but immediately subject to God in all things touching" [not all the Courts within the realm] but "the regality of the same Crown, and to none other."

Again, a statute of Henry VIII. says—

> "The realm of England, recognizing no superior under God, but only the King, hath been and is free from subjection to any man's laws, but only to such as have been devised, made, and obtained within this realm, for the wealth of the same, or to such others as by sufferance of the King, the people of this realm have taken at their free liberty by their own consent to be used among them."

And, lastly, the statute of Elizabeth, establishing the ecclesiastical Supremacy of the Crown, for I have been speaking hitherto of the general and of the legislative Supremacy of the Crown, says—

> "No foreign Prince, Peer, Prelate, State, or Potentate, spiritual or temporal, shall use, enjoy, or exercise any manner of jurisdiction, power, pre-eminence, authority, superiority, or privilege, spiritual or ecclesiastical, within this realm, or any other of Her Majesty's dominions or countries."

If you are to insert anything about one branch of Her Majesty's Supremacy, you should refer to the other branches of it in the terms of the statute-book; but by omitting to say anything concerning it we leave it in full force as it stands on the statute-book and it is binding on all men. If it be desired to undermine Her Majesty's general supremacy, then nothing can be better for the purpose than the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman. On these grounds I ask the House to decline to adopt the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman to insert these words.

SIR HUGH CAIRNS: And I, on the contrary, hope that the House will see the wisdom and the propriety of adopting the proposed Amendment. The first objection of the hon. and learned Gentleman to the words is that they are incongruous with the rest of the oath, because they point to Supremacy, while the rest of the oath points to allegiance. Has not every oath that has been taken by Members of Parliament dealt not only with allegiance, but with Supremacy? Incongruity in such a matter is not a fault, and, therefore, I put aside altogether the first objection raised. The next objection to the words is, that they only enunciate a truism. The argument of the hon. and learned Gentleman is, that as the form of oath proposed states nothing but what is most palpably true, it is only degrading the truth to make hon. Gentlemen subscribe to it. But the affirmative portion of the oath is in accordance with the form which has existed since the earliest period, and I maintain that in requiring a subscription to the declaration that no foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate has jurisdiction or authority in Her Majesty's Courts of Law, so far from lowering and lessening the value of the oath, we are simply repeating the practice which has heretofore been observed, with this exception, that by the addition we propose as to Her Majesty's Courts of Law, we are clearing away that possibility of doubt which on so many occasions has given cause of offence. What does this jurisdiction and authority of the Sovereign mean? It means jurisdiction and authority in Courts of Law of a coercive character, and there is no jurisdiction or authority of that description in this country except that to which effect is given in our Courts of Law. The hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to the oath of Queen Elizabeth's reign; but I cannot help thinking that the hon. and learned Gentleman has forgotten the history of that period. The Roman Catholics at that time said that they could not take the oath because it denied jurisdiction and authority in a quarter where they acknowledged their existence. What was done? If I remember rightly, one of the Ministers of the Queen prepared a memorandum, with her sanction, explaining that the view of the Crown and of those by whom the oath was framed was that the jurisdiction and authority mentioned in the oath referred only to those of a coercive character, and did not refer to jurisdiction and authority *in foro conscientiæ*, which could not be enforced in a Court of Law. The oath was accordingly taken freely by those who at first objected. All, then, that is now done is to declare in black and white what in the oath framed in the time of Queen Elizabeth was explained by a verbal comment. In the proposition we have made we are, therefore, adhering to, instead of departing from, constitutional principles. We are, in fact, simply doing what it is a pity was not done then—namely, adding to the oath the explanation given of it at the time it was first imposed. The hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to the statute passed in the reign of Richard II., and has taunted us with not having framed our oath according to that statute; but I am afraid that at the time that statute was passed our constitutional form of government was scarcely as well defined as it has since been. All I can say is, that if we had framed an oath in a form similar to that adopted by the statute of Richard II. we should have heard this evening observations, if not from the hon. and learned Gentleman, at all events from some other Member of the House, not favourable to our proposition. The statute of Henry VIII., to which the hon. and learned Gentleman also referred, declared that the King's supremacy was limited by the laws of the realm, thus referring to the laws as showing its extent. We, however, refer to the Courts which administer the laws, and the standard is therefore in reality the same. Then the Attorney General says it is an abstract proposition. I do not think it an abstract proposition, any more than the oath of allegiance. It is a most practical proposition in reference to the subject with which it deals, and I need not therefore follow the arguments of the Attorney General on that point. His last objection is, that as the Supremacy is a matter of fact, and the law of the land, this oath is unnecessary. But that argument is one which applies with equal force to the oath of allegiance. I will read the answer given by Lord Coke to the statement that the oath of allegiance was unnecessary —

> "All our subjects are equally bounden to their allegiance as if they had taken the oath, because it is written by the finger of the law in their hearts, and the taking of the corporal oath is but an outward declaration of the same."

An argument of this kind may be applied with equal force to the form of oath proposed by the Government. The present proposition of the Government is based upon the necessity of the oath of allegiance; and, therefore, this argument of the Attorney General has as much force against the Government proposition as against the Amendment. I trust, therefore, the Committee will adopt the Amendment.

Lord EDWARD HOWARD said, that he should be sorry to appear ungrateful to hon. Gentlemen opposite. One of the earliest measures of practical kindness to the Roman Catholics came from Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, who were the first to give them Roman Catholic chaplains for the army, but their views respecting these oaths contrasted unfavourably with those of the Government. He looked with suspicion upon words borrowed from old Acts of Parliament, for they reminded him of intolerance in times gone by, which he would fain hope would soon be forgotten. Roman Catholics had always been loyal to the Queen and to the country; and why were they to be subjected to tests which implied doubt and distrust? He therefore entered a protest against all the Amendments of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli), and left the matter, without the slightest fear of the result, in the hands of the House.

Mr. WHITESIDE: I would correct a slight error into which the noble Lord appears to have fallen. He has spoken of this oath as if it were to be administered to the Roman Catholics alone; but such is not the case. We propose that it should be taken by all the Members of this House. If it were levelled at any particular sect, I am prepared to admit it would be objectionable; but the principle asserted in it has never been disputed. I beg permission to remind the Attorney General that Lord Hale says that the Oath of Supremacy is but an expansion of the oath of allegiance, and that Chatham said on one occasion that Parliament had no more right to interfere with the principle of the Supremacy of the Crown than it had to set aside the Bill of Rights or Magna Charta. That is a principle of our Constitution which is not to be got rid of by any ingenious observations as to the absence of any necessity for making such a declaration. The term "spiritual jurisdiction" was explained in this House by Lord Westbury when Attorney General. He observed that—

> "Much misunderstanding had arisen respecting the matter, mainly in consequence of a misconception as to the meaning of the words of the original statute. The House would there find the words 'spiritual' and 'ecclesiastical' used to express different things. The word 'spiritual' referred simply to jurisdiction."

That is the argument of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Disraeli), and that is also the argument of my hon. and learned Friend beside me (Sir Hugh Cairns.) The word "spiritual" here employed refers entirely to the authority to be exercised in courts of justice. Sir Richard Bethell read the old oath altered at the time of the Reformation, which declared that all jurisdiction in the realm should be derived from the old foundation of jurisdiction — namely, the Sovereign, and said that—

> "All that was meant by supremacy of the Crown was that no power or jurisdiction should be exercised by any tribunal or court of justice which was not derived from the Sovereign."

This contains the very words of the Amendment we are discussing, and is the great principle on which the Constitution of the country in my judgment mainly depends. When King Charles II. was restored—and he was himself a Roman Catholic if he was anything, and I hope he was—that oath was taken by the most distinguished Roman Catholic noblemen in the land, who actually went so far as to disclaim any spiritual jurisdiction in any foreign Prince or Prelate which could affect their allegiance to the Sovereign. Dr. O'Connor, the learned Roman Catholic divine, regarded that as a fair and a legitimate view of the question. Lord Plunkett endeavoured to settle that point in 1821, and a Committee which had then inquired into it declared that the disclaimer of any foreign jurisdiction meant only the denial of any jurisdiction which would be incompatible with the allegiance which was due to the Sovereign of these realms. This is all it is proposed to do in this oath; and I would remind hon. Gentlemen that it is to the advantage of all of us, irrespective altogether of our several creeds, that the jurisdiction should lie in the quarter where it can give protection to all.

Mr. SYNAN said, he thought that the word "supremacy" included spiritual supremacy. It was an ambiguous expression, and he, as a Roman Catholic, objected to an oath which would call upon him to declare that no such authority was vested in the head of his Church. It was very hard that Roman Catholic Members should be exposed to observations and charges to which the term might subject them.

Mr. DISRAELI said, that the hon. Gentleman who had just addressed the Committee told them that the word "supremacy" was open to more than one interpretation. But he should remind the hon. Gentleman that that word was not at all contained in the oath which was then under their consideration. He had to observe, in reply to the noble Lord opposite (Lord Edward Howard), to whom he always listened with the respect which was due not only to his talents, but to his character, that in dealing with that subject he had taken as his guide the course pursued by Queen Elizabeth, which was regarded at the time by her Roman Catholic subjects as the happiest solution of that question, and which met with their general approval.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, he did not approve the Amendment as it stood, but thought it could be rendered satisfactory by making a slight addition to it. He felt the force of the Attorney General's objection to the clause; but as the alternative would be no declaration of the Queen's supremacy at all, he would vote for the words with a view to propose such an addition to them as would render them satisfactory to his views.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 222; Noes 237: Majority 15.

AYES.

Adderley, rt. hn. C. B.
Annesley, hon. Col. H.
Archdall, Captain M.
Arkwright, R.
Aytoun, R. S.
Bagge, W.
Bagnall, C.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baillie, H. J.
Baring, hon. A. H.
Barnett, H.
Barrow, W. H.
Barttelot, Colonel
Bateson, Sir T.
Bathurst, A. A.
Beach, Sir M. H.
Beach, W. W. B.
Beecroft, G. S.
Benyon, R.
Bernard, hon. Col. H. B.
Biddulph, Colonel R. M.
Bourne, Colonel
Bridges, Sir B. W.
Bromley, W. D.
Brooks, R.
Bruce, Major C.
Bruce, Sir H. H.
Buckley, E.
Bulkeley, Sir R.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir P.
Cairns, Sir H. M'C.
Campbell, A. H.
Cartwright, Colonel
Cave, S.
Cecil, Lord E. H. B. G.
Chambers, T.
Clive, Capt. hon. G. W.
Cobbold, J. C.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Cole, hon. H.
Cole, hon. J. L.
Colvile, C. R.
Conolly, T.
Courtenay, Lord
Cooper, E. H.
Cox, W. T.
Cranbourne, Viscount
Craufurd, E. H. J.
Curzon, Viscount
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dawson, R. P.
De Grey, hon. T.
Dick, F.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Disraeli, rt. hon. B.
Du Cane, C.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. W. E.
Du Pre, C. G.
Dutton, hon. R. H.
Dyke, W. H.
Dyott, Colonel R.
Eaton, H. W.
Edwards, Colonel
Egerton, Sir P. G.
Egerton, hon. A. F.
Egerton, E. C.
Egerton, hon. W.
Fane, Colonel J. W.
Farquhar, Sir M.
Feilden, J.
Fellowes, E.
Fergusson, Sir J.

Ferrand, W.
Fleming, J.
Floyer, J.
Forester, rt. hon. Gen.
Freshfield, C. K.
Galway, Viscount
Getty, S. G.
Gilpin, Colonel
Goldney, G.
Goodson, J.
Gore, J. R. O.
Graves, S. R.
Greenall, G.
Greene, E.
Gray, Lieut.-Colonel
Guinness, B. L.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, I. T.
Hamilton, Viscount
Hardy, G.
Hardy, J.
Hartopp, E. B.
Harvey, R. B.
Hervey, Lord A. H. C.
Heathcote, hon. G. H.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, rt. hon. J. W.
Henniker, Lord
Herbert, hon. P. E.
Hesketh, Sir T. G.
Heygate, Sir F. W.
Hogg, Lt.-Col. J. M.
Holford, R. S.
Holmesdale, Viscount
Hood, Sir A. A.
Horsfall, T. B.
Hotham, Lord
Howes, E.
Humphery, W. H.
Hunt, G. W.
Jolliffe, rt. hn. Sir W. G. H.
Jolliffe, H. H.
Kelk, J.
Kelly, Sir F.
Kendall, N.
Kennard, R. W.
Ker, D. S.
King, J. K.
Kinnaird, hon. A. F.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knox, Colonel
Knox, hon. Major S.
Lacon, Sir E.
Laird, J.
Lamont, J.
Langton, W. G.
Lefroy, A.
Lennox, Lord G. G.
Lindsay, hon. Colonel C.
Lindsay, Colonel R. L.
Lopes, Sir M.
Lowther, J.
Lytton, rt. hn. Sir E. L. B.
Mackie, J.
M'Lagan, P.
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, rt. hn. Lord J.
Meller, W.
Miller, S. B.
Miller, T. J.
Mills, C. H.
Mitford, W. T.
Montagu, Lord R.
Montgomery, Sir G.
Mordaunt, Sir C.
Morgan, O.
Mowbray, rt. hon. J. R.
Naas, Lord
Neville-Grenville, R.
Newdegate, C. N.
North, Colonel
Northcote, Sir S. H.
Norwood, C. M.
O'Neill, E.
Paget, R. H.
Pakington, rt. hon. Sir J.
Parker, Major W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, rt. hon. General
Pennant, hon. Colonel
Percy, Maj.-Gl. Lord H.
Powell, F. S.
Read, C. S.
Repton, G. W. J.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Robertson, P. F.
Rolt, J.
Royston, Viscount
Russell, Sir C.
Sandford, G. M. W.
Schreiber, C.
Sclater-Booth, G.
Scott, Lord H.
Selwin, H. J.
Selwyn, C. J.
Severne, J. E.
Seymour, G. H.
Simonds, W. B.
Smith, S. G.
Smollett, P. B.
Stanhope, J. B.
Stanley, hon. F.
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir W.
Stronge, Sir J. M.
Stuart, Lt.-Colonel W.
Stucley, Sir G. S.
Sturt, H. G.
Sturt, Lt.-Colonel N.
Surtees, F.
Surtees, H. E.
Sykes, C.
Sykes, Colonel W. H.
Thorold, J. H.
Thynne, Lord H. F.
Torrens, R.
Treeby, J. W.
Trefusis, hon. C. H. R.
Trevor, Lord A. E. H.
Trollope, rt. hon. Sir J.
Turner, C.
Tyrone, Earl of
Walcott, Admiral
Waldegrave-Leslie, hon. G.
Walker, Major G. G.
Walpole, rt. hon. S. H.
Walsh, A.
Walsh, Sir J.
Waterhouse, S.
Welby, W. E.
Westropp, H.
Whalley, G. H.
Whiteside, rt. hon. J.
Williams, Colonel
Williams, F. M.
Wise, H. C.
Wynne, W. R. M.
Yorke, J. R.

TELLERS.
Taylor, Colonel
Noel, hon. G. J.

NOES.

Acland, T. D.
Adair, H. E.
Agnew, Sir A.
Akroyd, E.
Anson, hon. Major
Anstruther, Sir R.
Armstrong, R.
Ayrton, A. S.
Bagwell, J.
Baines, E.
Baring, hon. T. G.
Barnes, T.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Barry, G. R.
Baxter, W. E.
Bazley, T.
Beaumont, W. B.
Biddulph, M.
Blake, J. A.
Bouverie, rt. hon. E. P.
Brecknock, Earl of
Bright, Sir C. T.
Bright, J.
Bruce, rt. hon. H. A.
Buller, Sir A. W.
Buller, Sir E. M.
Butler, C. S.
Buxton, C.
Buxton, Sir T. F.
Calcraft, J. H. M.
Calthorpe, hn. F. H. W. G.
Candlish, J.
Cardwell, rt. hon. E.
Carnegie, hon. C.
Castlerosse, Viscount
Cave, T.
Cavendish, Lord E.
Cavendish, Lord F. C.
Cavendish, Lord G.
Cheetham, J.
Childers, H. C. E.
Cholmeley, Sir M. J.
Clay, J.
Clinton, Lord A. P.
Clinton, Lord E. P.
Cogan, W. H. F.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collier, Sir R. P.
Cowper, hon. H. F.
Crawford, R. W.
Crosland, Colonel T. P.
Dalglish, R.
Davey, R.
Dawson, hon. Capt. V.
Denman, hon. G.
Dent, J. D.
Devereux, R. J.
Dilke, Sir W.
Dillon, J. B.
Duff, M. E. G.
Dundas, F.
Dunlop, A. M.
Enfield, Viscount
Erskine, Vice-Adm. J. E.
Esmonde, J.
Evans, T. W.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, H. E. C.
Fawcett, H.
Fenwick, E. M.
Fildes, J.
Fitzpatrick, rt. hn. J. W.
Fitzwilliam, hn. C. W. W.
Forster, C.
Forster, W. E.
Fort, R.
Fortescue, hon. D. F.
French, Colonel
Gaselee, Serjeant S.
Gavin, Major
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W. E.
Gladstone, W. H.
Glyn, G. G.
Goldsmid, Sir F. H.
Goschen, G. J.
Graham, W.
Gregory, W. H.
Greville, Colonel F.
Gray, Sir J.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Gridley, Captain H. G.
Grosvenor, Earl
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Grosvenor, Capt. R. W.
Grove, T. F.
Gurney, S.
Hadfield, G.
Hamilton, E. W. T.
Hanbury, R. C.
Hankey, T.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, J. D.
Hartington, Marquess of
Hartley, J.
Hay, Lord J.
Hay, Lord W. M.
Hayter, Captain A. D.
Headlam, rt. hon. T. E.
Henderson, J.
Henley, Lord
Hibbert, J. T.
Hodgkinson, G.
Holden, I.
Horsman, rt. hon. E.
Howard, Lord E.
Hughes, T.
Hurst, R. H.
Hutt, rt. hon. Sir W.
Ingham, R.
Jardine, R.
Kearsley, Captain R.
Kennedy, T.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Kinglake, A. W.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, E
Labouchere, H.
Layard, A. H.
Lawrence, W.
Lawson, J. A.
Leader, N. P.
Leatham, W. H.
Lee, W.
Lefevre, G. J. S.
Lewis, H.
Locke, J.

Lowe, rt. hon. R.
Lusk, A.
MacEvoy, E.
M'Kenna, J. N.
M'Laren, D.
Maguire, J. F.
Marjoribanks, D. C.
Marsh, M. H.
Martin, C. W.
Milbank, F. A.
Mill, J. S.
Miller, W.
Mills, J. R.
Mitchell, A.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moncrieff, rt. hon. J.
Monk, C. J.
Monsell, rt. hon. W.
Moore, C.
More, R. J.
Morley, S.
Morris, W.
Morrison, W.
Murphy, N. D.
Neate, C.
Nicol, J. D.
O'Beirne, J. L.
O'Brien, Sir P.
Ogilvy, Sir J.
O'Loghlen, Sir C. M.
O'Reilly, M. W.
Otway, A. J.
Padmore, R.
Paget, Lord C
Palmer, Sir R.
Peel, A. W.
Peel, J.
Pelham, Lord
Pender, J.
Philips, R. N.
Pim, J.
Platt, J.
Pollard-Urquhart, W.
Potter, E.
Potter, T. B.
Power, Sir J.
Price, W. P.
Pryse, E. L.
Pritchard, J.
Rawlinson, Sir H.
Rearden, D. J.
Rebow, J. G.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Robertson, D.
Roebuck, J. A.
Rothschild, N. M. de
Russell, A.
Russell, H.
Russell, F. W.
Russell, Sir W.
St. Aubyn, J.
Salomons, Mr. Ald.
Samuda, J. D'A.
Samuelson, B.
Saunderson, E.
Schneider, H. W.
Scholefield, W.
Seymour, A.
Seymour, H. D.
Shafto, R. D.
Sheridan, R. B.
Sherriff, A. C.
Simeon, Sir J.
Smith, J. A.
Speirs, A. A.
Stacpoole, W.
Stansfeld, J.
Steel, J.
Stock, O.
Stone, W. H.
Stuart, Colonel C.
Sullivan, E.
Synan, E. J.
Taylor, P. A.
Tottenham, Lt.-Col. C. G.
Tracy, hon. C. R. D. H.
Trevelyan, G. O.
Villiers, rt. hon. C. P.
Vivian, Capt. hn. J. C. W.
Warner, E.
Weguelin, T. M.
Western, Sir T. B.
Whatman, J.
White, J.
Whitworth, B.
Williamson, Sir H.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Woods, H.
Wyvill, M.
Young, A. W.
Young, R.

TELLERS.

Brand, hon. H. B. W.
Adam, W. P.

Clause 2 (The Name of the Sovereign for the Time being to be used in the Oath) *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Time and Manner of taking the oath).

Sir GEORGE GREY moved to omit the words "from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon." When those hours were fixed it was the practice of the House to meet at nine and rise at four, but, as a general rule, the House did not now meet till four. It had been found difficult occasionally to make a House so as to allow a sufficient interval between the time of the Speaker taking the chair and four o'clock for Members to come to the table to be sworn. The time for administering the oaths in the House of Lords was from ten till five; and he proposed that it should be left to the House to regulate, by Standing Orders of its own, the hours at which the oaths should be taken.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause *ordered* to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 4 to 6 *agreed to.*

Clause 7 (Short title of the Bill).

Mr. WHALLEY said, he would move that the Chairman should report Progress, in order that the Bill might be reprinted, with a view to its re-consideration in Committee. In the opinion of many the alterations proposed came within the category of those changes of the Constitution which Lord Chatham held to be beyond the jurisdiction of the House of Commons. The only argument brought forward in favour of the Bill was that it would give satisfaction to the Roman Catholics. But the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. Dillon) had declared that, even as regarded the first part of the oath, he and his co-religionists would not accept it as anything satisfactory. At a great meeting in Ireland of a body called the National Association, at which the two archbishops of Ireland, thirteen bishops, eighty associates, and 500 members handed in their names or their subscriptions, the hon. Member for Tipperary, supported by the Dean of Cork, stated that however inexpedient the Fenian movement might be, it represented a Catholic spirit as widespread throughout Ireland as the Catholics themselves; that they must look for the redress of their grievances not to what Parliament could do for them, but to the sympathy that Ireland, the Poland of England, could command from America and France.

Mr. DILLON said, he did not recognize any speech of his in the description given by the hon. Member. He certainly never said what the hon. Member ascribed to him, nor anything like it.

Mr. WHALLEY said, the hon. Member was reported to that effect in the ordinary journals, but it was almost impossible to fix the Protean character of Roman Catholic sentiment. On the occasion to which he referred the Dean of Cork stated that it did not follow because Members of the Government did not think fit to embark in the particular vessel proposed by the Fenian movement that therefore they would give up their purpose, which was to obtain for the people of Ireland rights at present withheld from them. They regarded the Fenian movement as mistaken but heroic. This Amendment of the oath, then, not being one of the grievances alleged by Fenian heroes, or any of the Members of that House who had spoken upon the wrongs of Ireland this Session, the Government were preparing the alteration on grounds of sentiment alone. It appeared that they were to run the risk of upsetting the allegiance not only of Roman Catholics, but of Protestant Members, and then, according to the hon. Member for Tipperary, the Roman Catholics wou lderive no satisfaction from the Act. What was to be the limit of the concessions they were prepared to make to Roman Catholic sentiment? How much longer were Roman Catholics to be humoured by breaking up the Protestant Constitution of the country? The Government, he contended, by introducing this question into the Royal Speech, had placed Her Majesty in a false position, for she was bound by her coronation oath to maintain the Constitution, and, as the hon. Member for Dublin University (Mr. Whiteside) had shown, this oath was really part of the Constitution. He thought, therefore, that the Queen ought not to be placed in the position in which she would be placed if called upon to assent to this measure. The Queen had made herself personally responsible to protect the Protestant Constitution. The Roman Catholics were sincere men, but they recognized as part of their religion that liberty of conscience was not the right of any man, and that it was monstrous heresy to suppose the civil power supreme over the spiritual power of the Pope. In what position would Her Majesty be placed by her advisers when any of the dogmas enunciated in the Encyclical Letter—such as that liberty of conscience was a pernicious doctrine—should be brought before her, and she should be called upon to recognize those sentiments? How could she say in that case that she was bound by the Constitution and by her oath to protect the Constitution? Considering that this oath formed part of the settlement of 1688, that it was approved by the leading Members of the Roman Catholic faith when it was enacted, he thought they were bound, in dealing with the Roman Catholics as a body of honourable and sincere men, to recognize their loyalty and embody it in the oath. The discussion that night had confirmed the expediency of his suggestion that this measure should be dealt with by a Select Committee, because the question involved legal words and other minute considerations. Whether his view was right or wrong—and he sincerely hoped it was wrong—the House was very unfit to consider the exact force of words, the intention of the oath, and the objects for which its alteration was promoted, and to have referred it to a Select Committee would have been more consonant with the importance of the subject and with the dignity of the House. Without at all wishing to interfere with the progress of the measure, he ventured to move that the Chairman should report Progress, with a view to the Bill being reprinted and recommitted.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he had not the slightest objection to reprint the Bill, but the hon. Gentleman must know that no order for reprinting could be made till the Bill had been reported, and that by reporting Progress the reprinting would be prevented. After it had passed through Committee he should move that it be reprinted with a view to its consideration on the Report.

Mr. WHALLEY said, he understood that another opportunity was not to be given for the consideration of the Bill in Committee, which was the object he had in view, and that the Government merely negatived his Motion.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he could not consent to a Motion for reporting Progress, as there was virtually only the short title of the Bill remaining for consideration, but there was no objection to reprinting the Bill as soon as it was reported.

Mr. WHALLEY said, his object was to give the House another opportunity of considering the Bill.

Clause *agreed to.*

Schedule *agreed to.*

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, he wished to ask when it was intended to consider the Report? The important question with respect to the Supremacy of the Crown had been discussed under disadvantageous circumstances.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he proposed that the Bill should be reprinted at once. There were no important alterations. He proposed to take the Report to-morrow, and the third reading the first thing on Monday, when the hon. Member would have an opportunity of recurring to the subject.

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE NAVY.

OBSERVATIONS.

SIR JOHN WALSH said, he rose to call the attention of the House to the importance of continuing the construction of the Iron-clad Men-of-War, and to move for Returns of the total cost of the building and equipment of the *Warrior* and the *Agincourt* respectively. In bringing under the consideration of the House this very important subject, they must bear in mind that the iron-clad vessels hitherto completed were for the purpose of supplying the place of the great wooden three-decker fleet which formerly existed, and that vessels of a new class were needed of smaller tonnage and less draught of water than had hitherto been launched. He had observed with great satisfaction that the Admiralty had turned their attention to this subject. Every one knew that frigates, corvettes, brigs, and sloops of war, were a most important part of our navy, and it would be a great blow to our naval efficiency unless means of supplying the wants of that important branch of the service could be contrived by the ingenuity of modern naval constructors. In the late Parliament he drew attention to the subject of the naval power of England. Some remarks he had then made attracted a degree of attention which he had scarcely anticipated, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in an important speech he delivered to his constituents at Liverpool, made reference to those remarks. He begged to thank his right hon. Friend for the courteous and friendly terms in which he had made reference to him, but he thought his right hon. Friend's observations were calculated to give an erroneous or exaggerated impression of what was said. His right hon. Friend had characterized him as the friend of profuse general expenditure, and had intimated that his suggestions, if adopted, would place an obstacle in the way of economical reform. But it would be impossible to replace our wooden fleet by an iron-clad fleet without considerable outlay, and his remarks were directed to that point. He did not arraign the general peace establishment as it existed in 1864. At that time Parliament voted 70,000 men for the navy, just one-half of the total number they had during the last great war, when they met all the navies of the world, and were supreme upon the seas. He did not question that that was a sufficient peace establishment; at the same time, he had always been the strongest advocate of an efficient Channel fleet. He considered that this country should never be left at the mercy of an unforeseen contingency which might plunge us into war, and even prevent us from defending our own shores. In 1864 and 1865 there existed, and he trusted there would continue to exist, a very efficient Channel fleet, and he dare say that many Members of that House had witnessed with gratification the friendly meeting of the French and English fleets in the course of the last year. It was not the question of the peace establishment to which he wished to draw the attention of the House, but he did not think that either the House or the country had ever realized to themselves sufficiently the immense consequences to England which had resulted from the great revolution in the mode of naval construction and naval warfare. At the close of the last war England was undisputed mistress of the seas; not all the nations in the world combined could for one moment stand against the number, the power, and the efficiency of the English fleet. But what was the position of England up to the time that iron-clads had practically superseded wooden ships? During a large portion of the time her peace establishment was inadequate, much more so than under the present Admiralty. But in those days they did not depend upon the peace establishment as constituting the naval supremacy of England. Behind the peace establishment existed two great arms of strength which England alone possessed, and that was the point to which he wished to direct the attention of the House. The immense number of ships in ordinary constituted the great naval strength of England during forty years. At any time if she had been called upon to put forth her strength and energies upon a sudden demand, these ships in ordinary at Portsmouth, in the Hamoaze, at Sheerness, in the Medway, and at Pembroke, might have been equipped, manned, and put to sea. But no other Power had anything like that naval force laid up in ordinary. There was another immense reserve which they possessed in a peculiar degree, and which happily still remained. It was a most difficult thing to convert a landsman suddenly into a sailor. The sailors of England's merchant marine approached nearly the number of 300,000, and nothing was easier than to convert a merchant seaman into a very good man-of-war's-man. Taking the average, the merchant seaman was a better practical seaman than the man-of-war's-man; he worked on smaller craft, and had to turn his attention to everything, whereas the man-of-war's-man probably confined his attention to one or two things. The main thing was to teach the merchant seaman the use of the guns, and this was not very difficult, as he would be under the direction of a practised artilleryman to each gun. England, therefore, still possessed the means of rapidly equipping a fleet such as no other nation possessed. Therefore, during the whole of those forty years this country had a means of equipping a fleet, and again of manning it, which no other nation in the world possessed, and which would have placed us in a short time in the position in which we stood in 1815, at the close of a gigantic struggle. But he wished to call attention specially to this fact—that the whole of that wooden fleet which had been our strength had become as useless, as incomplete, and as valueless for all purposes of war as if their timbers had become rotten, or as if they had been sunk to the bottom of the sea. Our wooden ships were now as practically obsolete as the old Roman triremes, the appliances of modern warfare completely superseding them. Iron-clad vessels were comparatively speaking invulnerable, but if he might coin a word to express his meaning, he would say that the incombustibility of the iron-clad was more important even than its invulnerability. By the recent improvements in naval gunnery the shell was projected with the greatest ease and precision at point-blank range into the vessel's hull; whereas, under the old system, it required great knowledge of conic sections, and deep acquaintance with mathematics, to cast effectually a shell upon a wooden ship, especially in a state of motion. Such were some of the altered conditions of modern warfare. Mr. Cobden, whose accuracy in details was so remarkable that one might almost venture blindly to follow him, in a speech which he made three years ago on going into Supply on the Navy Estimates, stated that we had at that time 66 ships of the line, 40 large frigates (of a more powerful class, he believed, than the old 74), making together 106 of what might be called first-class ships, besides upwards of 150 vessels of smaller construction, which were of immense use in representing our flag in all parts of the globe. Now the unfortunate result of the particular direction that progress had taken had been entirely to confiscate the whole of this great naval force. This involved not only an immense loss of capital, but, what was more important, of power. England had lost immensely in power from that great change, and stood no longer the first great naval Power. He feared that the public mind had not been properly awakened to this fact, though it was still the constant habit to speak of England as the mistress of the seas, and as holding the trident of the ocean. That was all very fine, but, unfortunately, it was not true. The trident of the ocean had slipped from her grasp, and if war were now suddenly to break out it would be found that there did not exist the means of defending our own shores from insult and from plunder, our commerce from interruption and from privateers, and of ensuring those supplies of food which were now necessary to the existence of the nation. Perhaps we should scarcely be safe from invasion itself. England, though she had to some extent replaced her power, had not one-tenth of the force in iron-clads that she formerly possessed in wooden ships. The Secretary to the Admiralty told them that at the end of the year the country would have 30 iron-clads afloat, but what was that compared with 106 sail of the line, and large frigates almost equal to ships of the line, besides 150 ships of smaller calibre, which carried the power of England all over the world, and made her flag known in every sea? How could a fleet of iron-clads, drawing 28 and 36 feet of water and even more, compare in utility with that wooden fleet, for entering rivers and harbours in every part of the world? These were facts, mortifying and distressing facts; but it was not well wilfully to shut their eyes to them. It would be far wiser to look them steadfastly in the face, and prepare in time for any emergencies that might arise. It was the part of true wisdom and national foresight to examine calmly into what steps could be taken for placing the country in the proud position of naval superiority which it occupied before these vast changes. Sound economy and judicious retrenchment ought by all means to be strictly observed; but in doing that they must not forget to measure what they were likely to save immediately in money and what they sacrificed in permanent safety and power. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would allow that, in case of necessity and with an adequate motive for putting forth her strength, England was not too poor to provide the means of vindicating her position among the nations. He did not come forward with any specific proposal that we should build so many iron-clads in a certain time, or that we should replace our old wooden force at once by a corresponding number of iron ships. That must be a matter of time. But what he would impress on the House was this, that there was a work before us which we must not lose sight of; that we must not suppose, because the noble Lord with his happy power of exposition gave us a flattering account of our naval strength, we had therefore got all we required. There was a vacuum to be filled before England could become what England had been, and she had not only all the pecuniary means, but all the constructive resources that were needed to fill it. England, with her inexhaustible stores of coal and iron, with her great mechanical and manufacturing skill, was the very centre of construction of those ships for the whole world. If the Emperor of Russia wanted an iron-clad, he would send to Limehouse; if the Sultan wanted one, he would go to Liverpool; if the Brazilians or the Peruvians wanted iron ships, they would come to us. There were few nations which could construct those vessels at all, and none which could do so in so quick and effective a manner. The Government had, therefore, only to take time by the forelock and to keep in view the position in which we stood, and the urgent need of supplying the want, in order to become a greater naval Power than we were even under the old heart-of-oak system.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that the House as well as himself always listened with the greatest respect to whatever fell from the hon. Baronet on this subject, because they were sensible that he could have no other object in view than the safety and honour of the country. Our annual Estimates, however, were very large, and he had failed to discover any reason from the hon. Baronet's speech for proposing to make them larger. The hon. Baronet had on this, as on former occasions, compared the number of iron-clads which we now possessed with the line-of-battle ships of former days. It was quite true that if we took numbers alone into account our fleet might be said to be inferior to what it was at the close of the great European war. In those days we had more than 100 line-of-battle ships; but the number of the large and costly ships required for the present day was much less than it was then, and the real question was, what was our naval strength as compared with that of other nations. He would not go into comparisons or refer to what was done in other countries, for that it would be well, if possible, to avoid; but he could say that he confidently believed that the armour-plated ships which we had constructed during the last few years had placed this country in a very safe position. He would not say that we were now in the same relative position as we were at the close of the great war. In these days it was not to be expected that we should at once be able to sweep the seas, as in those. What we did expect, however, was this, that if we were obliged to go to war, we should be able to maintain our rights, and that our fleet would be found to be worthy of the dignity of the country and quite sufficient for her safety. It would, undoubtedly, be necessary that the Government should come annually to that House for a large sum for the construction of more of those armour-plated ships. But even now he would like to ask the hon. Baronet whether he would not rather go to sea with our thirty armour-plated ships than with the 100 line-of-battle ships, of which he talked with so much pride. It was certainly desirable that we should go on constructing those iron-clads, and constructing them regularly, and the Government were responsible for this—not to allow other nations to build more powerful armour-plated ships, or ships of any other description to an extent which, compared with our own force, might endanger the liberty, the honour, or the dignity of this country. He was surprised to hear the hon. Baronet say that England was in an unprepared state as regarded her seamen. He understood the hon. Baronet to say that in former days we could call forth any number of seamen we pleased, and that thus we were in a state of full preparation for war. Now, there precisely lay the distinction between these days and those, but the distinction was quite in the opposite sense from that intended by the hon. Baronet. It was quite true that there was at the close of the war a vast number of seamen available for any purpose that might be required;

but we entirely neglected that which of late years was considered so important—namely, the question of naval reserves. It was also true that the number of men we voted for the navy was not so very large, but he would say, without the least fear of contradiction, that of late years we were in such a position that we could increase our naval force, if required, to such an extent as to be quite able to meet any fleet that might suddenly be brought against us.

SIR JOHN WALSH said, the noble Lord had misunderstood him. He had stated that we still retained the men, but had lost the ships.

LORD CLARENCE PAGET said, he was glad the hon. Baronet appreciated the efforts which the Government had made to maintain the reserves. He did not wish to be always parading our force, but if he were to enumerate all the available reserves over and above the actual number of men at sea, the hon. Baronet would be far from dissatisfied on that head. With regard to ships, their numbers, though very much less than in former times, were, in comparison with those of other nations, very considerable. With regard to both ships and men, he believed that this country had not, since the great war, been in so satisfactory a state as it was at the present time.

MR. H. BAILLIE said, that the noble Lord was correct when he stated that the question of naval armaments had resolved itself into a question of comparison. All nations were re-constructing their navies, and each was trying to build the most powerful armour-clad ships. He, however, doubted the correctness of the noble Lord's assertion, that the position of England in this respect was satisfactory, and asked whether our navy was predominant or even adequate for the defence of our interests in any part of the world. He pointed to the Mediterranean, and asked if there was a sufficient naval force there to protect British possessions in that sea, even against any aggression on the part of Italy. He believed there was not, for the Italian Government had more iron-clad vessels in that sea than England had. Were there any iron-clads belonging to England in the Pacific? America had some there. [LORD CLARENCE PAGET: We are going to send two to the Pacific Ocean.] The naval expenditure was very large, and he doubted whether the money was wisely disposed of. He thought that it would be much better to construct smaller vessels instead of those huge iron-clads which it was impossible to use at distant foreign stations, because there was no port where they could be repaired except in Great Britain. If the Government desired to defend the interests of England in every part of the world, and to meet, when necessary, the iron-clads of other countries, it was imperative that smaller iron-clad vessels should be constructed.

MR. WHALLEY said, he wished to suggest the inauguration of a volunteer naval force. Such a force might be of great service to the country, and it would be nothing more extraordinary than the Volunteer corps established during the last few years, which had given so much satisfaction. He thought that the money, and the energy, and intelligence now devoted to yachting might be made available for the defence of the country. He believed that Lords Yarborough and Alfred Paget favoured the project.

ELECTORAL STATISTICS—CITIES AND BOROUGHS.—OBSERVATIONS.

MR. SCHREIBER: Sir, since I placed upon the Paper the notice of Motion which stands opposite my name, I have enjoyed an opportunity of calling the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the House to the nature of the information which I venture to think is necessary before this House should be invited to legislate upon the question of "Reform." And I can assure hon. Members that I have no intention of inflicting on them a repetition of the arguments which I employed on that occasion. But, while I gladly acknowledge that I received from the right hon. Gentleman a most patient and attentive hearing, I would remind him that I did not receive what, perhaps, I should have valued even more—an answer. Availing myself, therefore, of the forms of this House, I now repeat the Question which I put upon a previous day. Can the right hon. Gentleman, and, if so, will he, lay upon the table of this House a Return of the number of electors on the existing registers, who are assessed to the Property and Income Tax? Because, Sir, we know that the new voters will not pay it; and when we know how many of the present voters do not pay it, we shall see to what extent the taxing power is to be placed in the hands of those who do not pay direct taxation. In the next place, Sir, I ask the right hon. Gentleman when I may look for the production of the Returns, for which I moved five weeks ago, following the rentals in cities and boroughs upwards from £10 to £20, both figures inclusive? Because, Sir, I am confident that when this House and the country see how heavily the present constituencies are grouped at and just above £10, they will —if that be possible—be less than ever inclined to the Reform Bill of the right hon. Gentleman.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am very sorry that through inadvertence I omitted to reply to the Question put to me by the hon. Gentleman. In his speech on a former evening, which I heard with great satisfaction, I did not catch his Question. With regard to the first of the Questions which he has just put —namely, that with respect to a Return of the electors assessed to Income and Property Tax—I am afraid that it would be extremely inconvenient to furnish that Return. It would take a considerable time, and, I am afraid, would involve great expense. I doubt very much whether its value would be at all commensurate with the time and expense which the collection of the facts would require. As regards local taxation, an important distinction may be drawn between those who pay and those who do not pay; but as regards Imperial taxation, I am not disposed to think that a very important distinction can be drawn between those who pay and those who do not. I think the hon. Gentleman's Question seems to proceed from the supposition that those classes who pay direct taxation are more heavily taxed in proportion to their income than those who do not pay direct taxation. Now, I believe that is an entirely erroneous supposition. I think that persons in humble circumstances must pay in indirect taxation—most of all in the taxation on spirits and tobacco—quite as large an amount of taxation in proportion to their income as those classes who pay direct taxation — probably, a larger proportion. I may be right, or I may be wrong. I know that an opposite opinion is held. Four years ago an article appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* from an able writer, to whose views I attach considerable weight. He did not carry his conclusions to the point that there was any material difference. I think he contended that the wealthy classes were more heavily taxed. My impression, however, is that he argued there was only a very small difference. But I never assented to that argument. On the contrary, I think, if anything, the difference lies the other way. The hon. Gentleman has also asked when certain Returns relating to the grouping of rentals will be laid on the table. I cannot give him an answer. Such Returns are not prepared under me, and I was not aware that they had been asked for. No doubt, the hon. Gentleman communicated with my right hon. Friend the head of the Poor Law Department (Mr. C. P. Villiers). They will be prepared under his superintendence. But I suggest that for all practical purposes the Returns on the table, showing as they do that a large proportion of the property of the country rests with the wealthier classes as compared with the masses, will enable hon. Gentlemen to found any argument that may be derived from that fact. It would be a matter of extreme complexity to bring out the holding of each person. I think we may push a great deal too far these inquiries into persons' means; for, after all, though the consideration of money and property is an important consideration, it is a secondary consideration. I think it a great error to assume—as is commonly assumed—that though a working man may have a wife and children, yet, because he is not blessed with any property beyond such things as his furniture and the tools he uses in his trade, he can have no interest in the welfare of the country. [MR. SCHREIBER: The proposal is that taxing powers should be put in his hands.] I think there is great inconsistency in respect of this matter—*primâ facie*, it is not to be supposed that such a man is a revolutionary character. Though I look to property as a consideration, I do not think it is correct to consider the matter as merely one of pounds, shillings, and pence. I do not think the flesh and blood, and mind and soul of a man are to be regarded only according to the exact number of sovereigns, shillings, and pence which he may possess. It is pushing the matter rather far. I do not wish to withhold whatever we can put the House in possession of; but the hon. Gentleman will feel that there are limits to the machinery for the collection of Returns, and that too much in the shape of details may be put in papers to be laid before Parliament. With respect to the courteous remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Radnorshire (Sir John Walsh), I am glad that an opportunity now offers of making an explanation. I find that the words used by him on the occasion to which

I referred were—"I say if these Estimates were doubled we should not do more than meet the exigencies of the present year." The Estimates referred to by my hon. Friend were partly for ships and partly for forces. I think a little limitation was required in such a statement; and I am glad my hon. Friend is of that opinion. All of us in speaking omit sometimes to limit our observations within the bounds to which we intend them to apply. But *Veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*

Motion *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES.

Supply *considered* in Committee—Navy Estimates.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) £1,003,501, Naval Stores.

Mr. LAIRD said, that the amount asked for by the Government for the purposes of the navy this year was a very large one, and that it was the duty of the Committee to inquire whether any, and, if so, what improvements had been made in the construction of our iron-clad ships. The building of that class of vessels was commenced five or six years ago by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Droitwich (Sir John Pakington), and they were originally intended to have a certain rate of speed. The Admiralty, however, afterwards came to the conclusion that they were too long for the purpose, and set about constructing shorter ships, by which it was contended the same results might be attained. A number of these vessels, however, including the *Warrior* and others, were first constructed. Mr. Watts was then displaced, and the new system of building shorter and wider ships was adopted. It was stated that we had twelve ships entirely plated and twenty partially plated. In the case of iron ships of the *Royal Oak* class partially plated, it was possible to make them comparatively safe, and so far as small vessels were concerned, it might be necessary to adopt that principle. He, at the same time, concurred with the hon. Member for Tavistock (Mr. Samuda) in thinking that to ensure a first-rate ship entire plating was requisite. When the *Royal Oak* was laid down the plan was to plate from end to end, but that system had since been altered, and although there was some security in partially plating iron vessels, it was useless to do so in the case of wooden vessels. In illustration of his argument he would mention the case of the *Alabama*, whose sides were so severely injured by the second shell which struck her that she immediately sunk. We were now engaged in building some eleven ships with a tonnage of 33,000, at an estimated cost of £2,262,000. Those ships were being built on Mr. Reed's plan, in accordance with the views of the Admiralty, who must be held to be responsible for the acts of those whom they employed. He could not, he thought, demonstrate in a better way the results of the new system and the old than by citing the cases of the *Agincourt* and the *Bellerophon.* According to a Return which he had in his hand, the displacement of the *Agincourt* was, he found, on the 11th of December, 1865, 9,000 tons, the indicated horse-power 6,867; the speed 15·433. He took his statement with regard to the *Bellerophon* from *The Times,* which, in giving an account of her trial on the 23rd of September last, set down her displacement at 5,630; indicated horse-power about 5,000; speed, 13·645. Now, from the displacement and the indicated horse-power it was possible to form a judgment as to the nature of the models on which both vessels were constructed. He found, then, that while an indicated horse-power of 4,426 drove 9,000 tons displacement in the case of the *Agincourt* 13,548 knots, 5,000 indicated horse-power drove 5,630 in the case of the *Bellerophon* only 13·645—thus showing—the power exerted and the weight to be driven being taken into account—that the lines of the former vessel were much superior to those of the latter.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET: The trials not being complete, the horse-power of the *Bellerophon* is not given in the Parliamentary Return.

Mr. LAIRD said, he had quoted the figures which he mentioned from the account of her trial given in *The Times,* and that if they were incorrect he hoped the noble Lord would set the mistake right. We had so many of these new ships built on a new principle, involving the large outlay of over £2,000,000, that he thought it was the duty of the Government to send some of them out to sea, across the Bay of Biscay for instance, and to allow them to pass a whole winter in the Atlantic, with some of those built on the old principle, in order to enable the country to form an opinion as to whether the public money was being well expended or not in their construction. A question arose, also, with regard to the wooden ships of the *Amazon* class which we were now building. Those vessels had been represented by the noble Lord as intended to be the fastest ever built, surpassing in that respect even the *Alabama.* Now, the speed of the *Amazon* was, he believed, after several trials, found to be 12¼ knots—a small speed for the size of the ship and great engine power. It was said to arise from some defect in her machinery, but her capabilities ought, he thought, to have been better tested before proceeding with other vessels on the same model. He would now, with the permission of the Committee, quote an extract from a statement made by *The Times*' Portsmouth correspondent, who, writing on the 8th of this month, said—

> "The *Danäe*, 4, screw sloop, 1,081 tons, 300 horse-power, the further construction of which, at Portsmouth yard, was temporarily suspended some little time since, has been again taken in hand and will now be completed with her new form of fore-body—an entire alteration of her lines from the 'dead flat' forwards, and the substitution of an upright for an infalling stem from above the water-line. By this alteration it would appear that the Admiralty have at length discarded the fanciful theory of the modern school of French naval architecture—the submerged bluff ploughcoulter shaped bow—and have allowed their Chief Constructor, Mr. E. J. Reed, to give the *Danäe* a fore-body more in accordance with his own ideas."

He would like to know whether that statement was correct? What we required for the protection of our commerce was not vessels with great speed, at the measured mile with engines indicating a very large horse-power, but vessels that could cruise for months together under canvas, and be a match for any cruisers in the world without using a single pound of coal, and yet when occasion required make use of steam. He believed the *Amazon* could not carry more than six days' coal. While finding fault with the class of vessels which were being built, it was only fair that he should state his own views on the subject. The noble Lord said that until we could reduce the number of men it was impossible materially to reduce the Navy Estimates. Under those circumstances, and considering the difficulty we had in getting men, it was expedient that we should turn our attention to the adoption of such a plan in the construction of ships as would enable us to secure equal efficiency with greater economy, by diminishing the number of men required, and, as a consequence, our expenditure. That end might in his opinion be attained by adopting the system of building small iron-clad vessels — a view which the noble Lord would seem to favour in a speech which he made on the 6th of March in last year. He would refer to the comparative numbers of men on board broadside and turret-ships, and he believed the figures he was about to quote were accurate. The broadside of the *Minotaur* was 1,324, tonnage 6,621, number of men 705; the broadside of the *Prince Consort* 1,256, tonnage 4,065, number of men 505; the broadside of the *Research* 200, tonnage 1,253, number of men 135; the broadside of the *Enterprise* 220, tonnage 993, number of men 130; the broadside of the *Scorpion* 1,200, tonnage 1,833, number of men 170; the broadside of the *Huascar* 680 lb., tonnage 1,100, number of men 100. There was required for foreign service, especially for the coast of Africa and South America, a class of iron vessels of about 1,400 tons burden, which could go fully 12 knots an hour, fit to cope with wooden vessels, and which could be docked in the foreign stations. The country, rich as it was, could not afford to have vessels like the *Agincourt* and *Bellerophon* at those stations, which must be sent home for repairs in consequence of there being no dock large enough to receive them or repair them in. The class of vessel which he wished to see built would have sufficient accommodation for officers and crew, and would be of a sufficient height out of the water for any weather. Then the cost of constructing and working such vessels as the *Agincourt* was far too great. Indeed, unless we built smaller vessels which could cope with any wooden vessels in the world, there would never be a reduction in the Navy Estimates. With regard to the comparative power of iron-clads of small size over large wooden frigates, he would read an extract from a letter referring to the case of the *Stonewall* and the *Niagara* and the court martial held upon Commodore Craven—

> "The question of saving of men must not be merely considered as in proportion to tonnage, but in proportion to the weight of broadside thrown and the work that can be done in actual warfare by such engines of war as well as the moral effects. To illustrate this I must call your attention to the late court martial on Commodore Craven, of the United States Navy, for not having attacked the Confederate iron-clad *Stonewall* with the two ships under his command, the *Niagara* and the *Sacramento*, the united tonnage of these vessels being 4,000 to 5,000 tons, with not less than 1,000 men, while the *Stonewall* had only one 300-pounder in a fixed turret, and a crew of 86 men. Commodore

Craven refused to accept the challenge of the turret-ship, as it would have been certain destruction. The Court acquitted him. This proves what one small iron-clad can do against the large class of wooden ships with a number of men."

A good deal had been said in that House about a vessel called the *Huascar*, which, however, he should not have alluded to at the present time if the noble Lord had not the other night depreciated her capability of carrying her crew. He wished to state to the Committee some particulars relating to that vessel. She was of 1,100 tons, and 300 horse-power; a full rigged brig, armour-plated all round, 4½ inches thick, tapering at the ends. Her speed at the measured mile was 12¼ knots, and her armament consisted of two 300 lb. Armstrong guns in one turret and two broadside 40-pounders. The weight of her broadside was 680 lb., and she carried 100 men, the area per man for crew being 19·41. Now, he thought that was a fair amount of space for the accommodation of the crew, and the noble Lord would find it was greater than that afforded by many vessels in Her Majesty's service. In order to show the erroneousness of the idea of the noble Lord that the accommodation on board the *Huascar* was insufficient he might, perhaps, be allowed to read an extract from a letter received from the captain of that vessel after a severe storm in January last—

"*Huascar*, Brest, Jan. 23.

"Captain Salcedo wishes me to inform you that we arrived here all safe at noon to-day. We left Holyhead about 4 p.m. on the 20th; weather moderate, until midnight; made the run to Bardsey (32 miles) in 2½ hours. After that it blew harder and harder, with a heavy sea right ahead; shipping heavy spray, but nothing you could call a sea. When nearing Scilly it moderated; after passing the sea and wind were much less; made Ushant lights at 10 p.m. on the 22nd. The ship behaves remarkably well at sea. Captain Salcedo thinks that when we have a little more weight out of her forward to lighten her she will be everything he could wish. The engines behaved remarkably well, with very little trouble."

He might add that the *Huascar* had now arrived at Madeira, and that the letters received continued to give a most satisfactory account of her. [Lord CLARENCE PAGET: What is her height out of the water?] It was about five feet. There had been a good deal of discussion about a new ship which was going to be built, called the *Monarch*, and which was to be a very large turret-ship carrying four 600-pounders. A statement had been made the other day that vessels of 3,500 or 3,600 tons could be so constructed as to make fourteen knots an hour. Now, some friends of his had been called upon some months ago to investigate this matter, and he would state to the Committee the result of their inquiries. They had no doubt whatever that a vessel of 3,500 or 3,600 tons could be built so as to be capable of attaining that speed, and of carrying four 600-pounders, but then she could not be plated with 8-inch plates. She might, however, be plated with 6-inch plates, and yet be ten feet out of the water, which would be sufficient for all sea-going purposes. The noble Lord had made a great point of the importance of an additional four feet out of the water, but that would only present an additional target to the enemy without any corresponding advantages. He had procured some practical information on that subject from Mr. Inman, the manager and principal proprietor of the line of New York and Liverpool steamers. He had received from Mr. Inman the following memorandum of the height of side out of the water of several Liverpool and New York screw steamers sailing for New York during the severe weather in December and January, about the time the *London* and *Amalia* were lost:—

"*City of Baltimore*, 9 feet; *Kangaroo*, 10 feet 3 inches; *City of New York*, 8 feet 10 inches; *City of Boston*, 9 feet; *Etna*, 10 feet 8 inches; *City of Cork*, 10 feet 3 inches."

Now, none of these vessels put back or met with any accident on the voyage to New York, though they were driven against westerly gales in such a manner as no man-of-war ever was. He thought, therefore, that a cupola ship ten feet out of the water would be quite adapted for all sea-going purposes. He would now say a few words about Captain Cowper Coles. The firm with which he (Mr. Laird) was formerly connected had built or were building six vessels from his plans. They had received much advice and assistance from that able officer, and he must state that they never had any trouble whatever in working with him. It was true that Captain Coles was not a shipbuilder—indeed, he never professed to be one—but his invention was nevertheless a wonderful one; and if the country took it up fully and fairly a great saving might probably be effected, both in the cost of constructing vessels and the number of officers and men required in the service. In his opinion Captain Coles ought to be allowed full scope, and it would have been better if he had had the designing of the ship to be built by the Admiralty, instead of its being placed in the hands of a gentleman who was wedded to a rival system. He believed that Captain Coles was sincerely desirous, without being actuated by a wish to acquire money, to make his invention useful to the country. Some disparaging allusions had been made to the *Scorpion* and *Wyvern.* They had been called unfortunate ships, but they were not originally intended to be seagoing vessels. When they were constructed the effect of firing over the deck was not known, and therefore the deck was plated with iron; but it had since been proved that such a measure was not necessary. In another place they had been called the greatest of failures, but they were not failures. They were perfectly seaworthy, and the success of the cupola system had been more advanced by those vessels than by anything else.

Mr. SEELY said, that according to a late Return the stock of stores in the Government yards amounted in value in April 1865 to £4,884,573. If he compared the amount of stores, the work done in a year in Government yards with the amount of stores and work done in private yards, he found that while in the latter the value of the stores was one-fourth of the value of the work done, in the former, the value of the stores was about three times the value of the work. He asked the noble Lord to point out a single instance of such extravagance in any private establishment. He thought, therefore, that instead of being called on to vote the large sum which was now proposed a smaller amount would be quite sufficient. As the Government had £5,000,000 stores in the yards it was unnecessary now to vote another million. The stores were now at too high a figure by £2,000,000. He believed that if an independent Committee, not composed of officials, were called upon they would unquestionably say that this £5,000,000 of stores was unnecessary for the amount of work done in the Government yards in a year.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, the Estimate included coals.

Mr. SEELY: Coals! I refer to a Return of naval stores presented to the House, including wood, iron, and so forth, but not coals.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, he rose to order. The hon. Gentleman was not speaking of the Estimates, but of a Return.

Mr. Laird

The CHAIRMAN said, the Vote under consideration was a Vote for stores for the naval dockyard.

Mr. SEELY said, he thought therefore that he was quite in order. If there was kept up from year to year a larger stock of stores than was necessary by an amount of £2,000,000, and if the interest on that value was taken at 3 per cent, it appeared that the Admiralty were wasting some £60,000 a year. He would now compare the expense of building ships in private yards with the cost of ships constructed in the Government yards. It appeared from a Return before the House that the *Warrior*, of 40 guns, 6,109 tons, and 1,250-horse power, which was built by the Thames Shipbuilding Company, cost £286,285, and £74,710 for engines, total £360,995, and that the *Black Prince,* with the same amount of guns, tonnage, and horse-power, built by Napier and Sons, cost £288,911, and £74,902 for engines, total £363,813. On the other hand, the *Achilles*, of 20 guns, 6,121 tons, about the same amount of tonnage therefore as the other two, and 1,250-horse-power, built by the Admiralty at Chatham, cost for hull and fittings £388,219, and for engines and fittings, £69,571=£452,790. No doubt, the *Achilles* had extra work in the shape of a belt, which neither the *Black Prince* or the *Warrior* had. He had inquired of a naval architect of some position and of an hon. Member of the House who had a large shipbuilding-yard, and they both stated, independently of each other, that the cost of that belt would not exceed £25,000. He, therefore, deducted that amount from the cost of the *Achilles*, which left £427,790. But there was no charge made in this for salaries of clerks and foremen, pensions, interest on plant, stores, &c., which would add, as he had on a previous occasion shown to the House, about 40 per cent to all the ships built by the Admiralty. Therefore, we must add 40 per cent to the cost of the *Achilles.* So that if he instituted a fair comparison between the cost of an Admiralty-built ship and one built in a private yard, he should have to add £171,116 to the £427,790, the cost of the *Achilles*, making in all £598,906 against £360,995 for the *Warrior*, and £363,813 for the *Black Prince;* so that the *Warrior* cost less than the *Achilles* by £237,911, and than the *Black Prince* less by £235,093. There was another point—the cost of repairing certain old vessels. He alluded on a former occasion to the Return for

1863-4; he would now allude to that of 1864-5, and he found that the Admiralty had not improved. They had, in fact, gone from bad to worse. He would show that by reference to three vessels. The *Niger*, designed and built by Lang in 1846 at Woolwich, was lengthened there in 1848. She had 13 guns, was 1,072 tons, and 350 horse-power. She might have been built at £33 per ton, and £55 per horse=£54,656. The repairs of this old wooden vessel in 1864-5 cost the Admiralty £62,437, and adding interest on plant, stores, and superintendence, items omitted by the Admiralty—20 per cent only in this instance, because the Admiralty have now adopted my suggestions and added the cost of clerks and foremen to ships—the repairs cost £75,000, being upwards of £20,000 more than they could have built a new vessel for. The *Highflyer*, designed by Watts and built by Mare, in 1851, of 21 guns, 1,161 tons, and 250-horse power, would cost new, at £55 per horse-power and £33 per ton, £52,063. In 1864-5 the repairs made by the Admiralty on her cost £30,850, according to Admiralty figures, but adding 20 per cent for interest on capital and plant, her cost would be £37,000. In 1863-4 her repairs cost £26,255, to which 40 per cent must be added, because in this year, the wages of clerks and foremen were not added to the cost of ships, making in 1863-4, £50,000. These repairs, then, cost the Admiralty in two years, according to their own figures, £67,102, but really adding interest, and wages of clerks and foremen, £87,000. The *Sparrowhawk*, designed by Watts, and built by Young, of Limehouse, of 4 guns, 676 tons, and 200 horse-power, cost new £33,308. The repairs to this ship in 1864-5 cost the Admiralty, according to their figures, £32,653, but really £40,000. The value of old materials when ships were broken up, clear of all expense, was £2 per ton; so that if sold for old materials the *Niger* should have fetched £2,144, the *Highflyer* £2,322, and the *Sparrowhawk* £1,352=£5,818. The repairs of these three vessels cost £202,000; new vessels would have cost only £134,209, so that there was a loss occasioned by not selling the old materials and buying new vessels of £67,791. He confidently appealed to the hon. Members for Tavistock and Birkenhead, whether the rule was not that no ship should be repaired if the repairs would cost half as much as a new ship. If so, deducting the half cost of three similar new ships from the cost of the repairs would show that under this head the Admiralty had fooled away no less a sum than £132,000; and the loss through the excess cost of the *Achilles*, excess of stock, of stores, and repairs of these three ships, was £430,000. He put it to the Committee whether the Admiralty should be permitted, in defiance of the opinion of the country, to repair year after year old ships at such enormous cost.

MR. SAMUDA said, the Estimate involved three distinct matters. It involved an entire substitution of Royal yards for private yards for building. It involved partial armour-plating. It involved also, what he considered to be the unnecessary size of the vessels. The entire substitution of the Royal yards for private yards was a grave question. It was proper that the Government should to some extent be able to manufacture their own vessels, but it would be most disadvantageous to do this as a general system. The Return which the Government had put forth clearly showed that (without increasing the cost by the large percentage stated by the hon. Member who had just spoken) the cost was greater in the Government than in the private yards. The vessels built in private yards were from 20 to 25 per cent cheaper than those built in the Government dockyards. Thus the *Agincourt* and the *Minotaur*, built in private yards, cost 20 per cent less than the *Achilles*, built by Government. Then if the vessels were to be built in private yards the Government might save the £60,000 or £70,000 which it was proposed to spend on new machinery for constructing vessels in Government yards. But by building vessels of war in the dockyards exclusively, Government lost the advantage of the advice and co-operation of the private shipbuilders. So long as Government vessels were built entirely in the public yards the Admiralty shut themselves out from the advantages of the competition of the private builders. Personally, he was not concerned in the matter. He did not tender for the building of Government vessels. But where the whole affair was novel the interchange of the ideas entertained inside and outside the public dockyards was of great importance. When Government vessels were constructed of wood there was considerable advantage in building in the Royal dockyards on account of the large stock of seasoned timber contained in those yards, and which no private yard could command. Another reason, then, was that the Government yards had the advantage of large experience, the experience of centuries, of what had been done with wooden vessels, and as the commerce of the country had not been developed, the Government had accumulated in their dockyards the principal experience that existed with regard to large ships, and especially large war ships. This was now entirely altered, and the amount of knowledge possessed by the principal private builders in the country was very considerably in advance of that which the Government could command, whose officers were, as to construction in iron, possessed of a very limited experience. The next thing was the mode of construction contemplated in the intended ships. As to the *Hercules*, she was to be a port-hole ship, built on the system to which the Government had adhered, and that was the partial instead of the entire armour-coating, the armour being increased in thickness. The midship section and waterbelt were to be covered with a coating of 8 inches of iron; but from one-half to two-thirds of the vessel would be left wholly unprotected. But weight of armour and speed depended on each other inversely—that is to say, armour and speed were exchangeable terms, and the amount of exchangeability could almost be defined. It was impossible to have a vessel covered with heavy armour and at the same time possessing great speed, and a fast lightly plated vessel would easily destroy a slow though partially heavily plated ship. He thought a fast cupola ship plated from stem to stern with 4½ inches of iron would easily destroy a vessel like the *Hercules*, with its thickly-plated central battery and its unprotected ends. Armour of 6 inches thickness might exist with 14 knots of speed, while 8 inches would give only 12 knots; and in this case the advantage would be with the ships of the thinner plating and the greater speed. In the case of the fast vessel, her cupola or turret guns might have the range of nearly the semi-circle, at least 150 degrees out of the 180; while the vessel with the thicker plating and slower speed would be confined to a range of 50 degrees. It followed that the faster vessel had only to choose its position, fire, move out of the range of the slower vessel, and then pass round and again fire into the unprotected sides of its opponent. If a vessel could command speed, so as to play on its adversary, and the adversary could not return the fire, the destruction of the slower vessel was only a question of time. If the slow vessel ran away, the fast vessel would fire into its stern as it had before done into its bows. Speed, then, was the great matter to be sought, but this was impossible with an extra weight of armour. And what was the necessity for such thick armour? He believed that no instance was known of shells having been carried through armour, even of 4½ inches thickness. Unquestionably portions of shell had penetrated, but after they were broken up by the force of the impact, and he believed no instance existed of a shell having passed through such armour whole, and having been subsequently exploded by its contents when clear of the vessel's side which had been penetrated by it. In fact, the stern-pieces of the shell remained on the outside of the target, showing that they never could have acted as shells at all. When the Admiralty called on Captain Coles to give them his ideas of what he would require to have built for a sea-going cupola ship they received from him a letter which they submitted to a Committee. He thought the Admiralty had got into the right road when they submitted the matter to a Committee, but he could not conceive why they had branched off in other directions. He thought the Admiralty were making a great mistake in building a cupola-ship with 14 feet of freeboard, as they could easily obtain a good sea-going ship that was not so high out of the water. He had suggested a cupola-ship 9 feet out of the water, but that was too little to please the noble Lord. The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Laird), however, had instanced vessels very little more than 9feet out of the water which had crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic. He (Mr. Samuda) would mention three vessels which he had built, the progress of which he had watched for three years with great satisfaction in their voyages to and from Odessa. The vessels were 3,000 tons each, 265 feet long, with a freeboard of 7 feet. They had performed their voyages with great regularity, and had brought home cargoes of from 1,800 to 2,000 tons of dead weight. They had neither poops nor forecastles, and their cargoes had never been damaged. In building a vessel for commercial purposes, the question of a foot of freeboard was a matter of no importance; but in the case of a cupola vessel, if they were lavish of the freeboard when it was not required it was bad engineering. He did not propose to cut down the size of the vessel in the way suggested by many hon. Gentlemen, but was prepared to accept the position which the Admiralty laid down, that they wanted a good seagoing vessel with the qualities of a cruiser. With reference to the *Prince Albert*, he was not prepared to say that she would not make a good cruiser, but he believed she would not be so good as some other ships might be made. She, however, had been tried, and the trial was satisfactory, and he was glad to find that she had been commissioned, and that an opportunity would be given of testing her qualities. While on this subject, he was anxious to remove an impression which had been caused by some remarks which he had made on a previous evening. He had expressed his regret that the *Prince Albert* had been twelve months out of the builder's hands without having been tried. He did not intend to convey the impression that nothing had to be done by the Government to the *Prince Albert*, after she had left the hands of the builders. The fact was, that a good deal of work had to be done, for they had to put in the turrets, which consisted of large and heavy ironwork, and as this work was of an entirely new character, and one which the Government officials were unused to, he would go further, and say that he did not wish his remarks to convey censure on the Admiralty in regard to the *Prince Albert*, but that his criticisms should be considered to be restricted to the general policy of the Government in the re-construction of the iron-clad fleet. He did not wish to interfere with the progress of the Estimates, but thought that as the great object was to get the right description of vessel, the best course would be to appoint a Committee to inquire into the whole matter, with the view of suggesting a general and comprehensive system, which should enter into the construction of all future vessels.

SIR JOHN PAKINGTON: Sir, I am anxious to remove from the mind of the hon. Member for Lincoln (Mr. Seely) any impression that I intended the slightest discourtesy to him when I stated that in my opinion he had exceeded the fair limits of discussion. I may add that we are all very much indebted to the hon. Gentleman for the labour with which he devotes himself to the examination of the Estimates. It appears, indeed, to me that the hon. Member for Lincoln is pursuing, with regard to the present Board of Admiralty, the same line of policy as that adopted by my noble Friend opposite (Lord Clarence Paget) with regard to the Admiralty which preceded him. That policy of my noble Friend was very successful, because it secured to him the office which he has held for seven years with such distinction, and I hope that the course which the hon. Member for Lincoln has now adopted may be similarly successful, and meet with its appropriate reward. [Mr. SEELY: I do not want it.] I should like to say a few words with reference to what fell from my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Laird), and here I may remark that I am glad to perceive that he is so far recovered as to be able to resume his seat in the House and take part in our debates. My hon. Friends the Members for Birkenhead and Tavistock, and other competent judges, have agreed in their opinions on the policy of the Admiralty in building for Captain Coles so large a ship as one of 5,000 tons, and having listened to these discussions it appears to me that the question really is whether it is necessary or not that this ship should be of so large a size, or that it should be fourteen feet out of the water. I therefore desire to ask my noble Friend whether or not he intends, notwithstanding all that has been said in this House, to persevere in his intention to build ships of 5,000 tons, and of such a height out of the water? If it be his intention I desire further to ask him whether the Admiralty is going to build those ships with the full approbation of Captain Cowper Coles. I trust that as the Admiralty have at length consented to build a sea-going ship upon the turret principle, their Lordships will fairly test the invention of Captain Coles, and allow no consideration to interfere with that trial, and I would state how heartily I agree with the hon. Member for Birkenhead in expressing his very great satisfaction at hearing that Captain Coles has been reinstated by the Admiralty in the place he formerly held. I think the Admiralty have acted kindly and generously in so doing; and I hope they will not expend money on sea-going ships, professedly built upon his plan, without his full approbation and sanction as to the mode in which it should be done. As I have thus adverted to Captain Coles, Sir, I trust I may be permitted to trouble the House with a matter which is somewhat of a personal nature. I have been extremely surprised in consequence of having had reason to believe that the noble Duke at the head of the Admiralty (the Duke of Somerset) has stated that when he came into office Captain Coles had already applied to the previous Board, of which Sir John Pakington was at the head, requesting that his plan might be tried. That Board intimated to him that his application had been laid before the then constructors, that they had disapproved the system, and that consequently the Admiralty declined to adopt it. Sir, when these words came under my notice, I confess I felt great surprise, because I had no recollection of anything of the kind. But several years have passed away since this is alleged to have occurred, and the method of building armour-plated ships has undergone changes. At that time, in 1859, I was engaged in commencing the *Warrior* and *Black Prince*, the first armour-ships we had; and I certainly think that if the Admiralty of that day had declined to consider the proposals made by Captain Coles they would not have been open to the least blame. My complaint of the Admiralty with regard to Captain Coles is not that they have not made experiments to try Captain Coles' system, but that having approved the principle he offered for their acceptance and declared that it was worth a trial, they have never fairly tried it. My right hon. Friend the Member for Tyrone (Mr. Corry) who I am sorry to say is prevented by illness from being here to-night, has supplied me with two letters written by him to Captain Coles, which the Committee will doubtless permit me to read. The first is as follows:—

"Admiralty, March 21, 1859.

"Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 17th inst. I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that your plan of a shot-proof screen has been received and is under consideration.—I am, Sir, your very humble servant, H. CORRY."

The Committee will perceive that this is no summary rejection of Captain Coles' plan. The other letter runs—

"Admiralty, 18th May, 1859.

"Sir,—I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that in compliance with the request of the Secretary of State for War, Major General Peel, they are pleased to permit your employment on a Committee in the War Office.—I am, Sir, your very humble servant, W. G. ROMAINE."

I am in a position to state, therefore, that to the best of my belief we never disapproved of Captain Coles' system, and that the Admiralty never declined to adopt it. On the contrary, my hon. and gallant Friend Sir William Martin, the first sea Lord at that time, received Captain Coles' suggestion with the greatest courtesy and kindness, and paid great attention to the exhibition of models, and the substance of Sir William Martin's communication to Captain Coles was, that as the War Office had undertaken to construct an experimental cupola the Admiralty would await the result It is of very little importance whether the Admiralty did at that time decline to adopt Captain Coles' invention or not, but it is only just and right that the truth should be known. I think I have stated enough to show that the noble Duke at the head of the Admiralty has unintentionally, and through mistake, been led into an error of the facts.

LORD CLARENCE PAGET: Sir, with regard to the observations which have fallen from my right hon. Friend opposite respecting certain statements made by the noble Duke in another place, I think it would, perhaps, be better to leave that matter to be dealt with by the noble Duke himself. But, Sir, I wish to lay before the Committee my opinions respecting the armour-ships. But previous to doing so let me assure the hon. Member for Lincoln that he does the Admiralty considerable injustice. No one approves more than I of his undertaking the task which he has assumed. I am very proud to hear it said that I also in former days undertook the same task; for I think an invaluable service is rendered the country by hon. Gentlemen who keep a sharp watch upon the naval expenditure. At the same time, it is well that they should be accurate in their remarks. I think he said that our stores were something like five times the amount of our annual consumption. [Mr. SEELY: Or thereabouts.] This of course comprises the consumption represented by Section 1 of Vote 10, which amounts to £1,000,000 in round numbers. My hon. Friend really ought to state fairly what the expenditure is when he makes such a charge; for whereas the expenditure in private yards is entirely on account of shipbuilding and repairing, our Vote includes an item of £380,000 for coals consumed by the fleet and in the dockyard. He will also find that the Vote includes an item on account of materials for making dockyard machinery. This, it will be observed, materially qualifies the statement he made. I am sure he did not do it intentionally, but the statement conveys an erroneous impression to the Committee. Now, Sir, with regard to the very important question of armour-ships—and I will first deal with the defensive part of the question—do you want a ship to resist heavy guns, or do you simply want a ship to keep out shells? Now, let us consider the question in the light of results. We have a 6½-ton rifled gun, the same that most of our ships carry in their broadsides, and the *Warrior* target has been pierced by it. Now, let me give you an idea of the defensive power of the *Warrior*. Her maximum weight per square foot, and that really represents the defensive power of the ship, is 427 lb.; and the *Scorpion's* maximum weight is 340 lb. per square inch. With these facts before us, I ask my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Laird) who built her, whether he would be satisfied if the Admiralty proposed to build a really powerful turret-ship for cruising purposes and to take a place in the line-of-battle if it could be pierced by a 6½-ton gun. Now, I will show you what a 12-ton gun, which we can also and do carry, will do, and scientific men will tell you that a 20-ton gun could be carried. The 12-ton gun has pierced the *Lord Warden* target. The *Lord Warden* has 4½-inch iron plates, 8½-inch teak backing, 1½-inch iron skin on 12½-inch timbers, and 8-inch inside planking. Her maximum weight per square foot is 428 lb., but I should have said that she differs from the *Warrior* in this respect, that she has thicker plates but thinner backing. The 12-ton gun pierced the *Lord Warden* target, but it failed to penetrate the *Hercules* target. The *Hercules* has 8-inch plates, 12-inch teak, 1½-inch inner skin, over 26-inch of teak, and ¾-inch skin; her maximum weight being 737 lb. to the square foot, against 427 lb. in the *Warrior* and 428 lb. in the *Lord Warden*. Have you any desire that vessels should now be commenced to be pierced through and through by a 12-ton gun, bearing in mind that we expect to arm them with a 20-ton gun, and that we have no right to suppose that the enemy opposed to them will carry less than a 20-ton gun? If my hon. Friend (Mr. Samuda) went to sea with me, would he like to be in a ship which would be to a dead certainty pierced through by a 12-ton gun, and when in all probability he might be opposed by a ship carrying a 20-ton gun? Of course, if hon. Members are of opinion that the Admiralty should build ships that would not offer a resistance to these heavy guns, we need not build ships of 5,000 tons. [Mr. Laird: Would the turret-ship be wholly or partially plated?] She will be partially plated—plated down to the water-line—and her central battery, her turrets, all her machinery, and, indeed, all her vitals will be protected. I may also add that there will be a shield for her bow gun. The greatest thickness of the plating of the *Monarch* will be 7 inches, tapering at the ends. Besides that she will have an inner skin and a backing. The question is whether we are to have a vessel that will resist these heavy guns. As yet the target of the *Hercules* has not been penetrated. She has been fired at by the 12-ton gun with a steel shot of 221 lb. and a charge of from 44 lb. to 50 lb. of powder. She has resisted that shot, and we believe that she is not as strong as the *Bellerophon*. Hon. Members must not suppose that we have not had all the difficulties of the case under our consideration, and all I ask is if it is meant that we should send a ship into action built as a first-class ship which is liable to be pierced through and through by the guns which may be brought against her? I now come to the question of speed. We can have this thickness of plating in much smaller vessels, but we must sacrifice speed. If you mean to get, with a given weight, fine lines, you must give tonnage in order to get speed. My hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead will, I believe, fully corroborate that assertion. The next question is the question of free-board or the height of the deck out of water. It will, no doubt, be said that vessels go to sea with a less proportion of free-board than we propose. Now free-board is a matter of comparison, and depends upon the length of the vessel. A boat 100 feet long does not require to be so high out of the water as a boat 200 feet long. It is not the opinion of Mr. Reed alone that we have studied, it is a question of practical seamanship: we take upon ourselves our full share of the responsibility, and we have no wish to send out a vessel to cruise which has not a decent free-board. The hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol (Sir Morton Peto) mentioned the American *Monadnock*, a vessel which has been sent round the Horn. She is going out in defence of the port of San Francisco, and she is one of the most formidable engines of war in existence. She carries heavy guns, but they carry comparatively a smaller charge; and she has only 2 feet of free-board. I have received a letter in reference to her from Rio Janeiro, which describes her as being in that harbour with a slight sea breeze coming in and the water washing over her decks. Yet the Americans say that vessel is perfectly fit to go round the Horn. But is that vessel fit to blockade a port and remain out at sea ; and would the House submit to our building vessels which when they went to sea would be like a half tide rock ; half under water if a breeze came on ? We want ships not only made to fight, but ships upon which we must be able to live as well as fight. It is said that in going into action a vessel with much free-board will expose too much side to the fire of the enemy. No doubt that is an inconvenience, but you must have a compromise of some sort. One of the principles which is supposed to constitute the value of a ship in the present day is its power as a ram. There are many people who tell us that the next great naval action will be decided by vessels running into one another. But what chance would a vessel of 2 feet, 5 feet, 8 feet, or 10 feet free-board have against a vessel with 14 feet free-board ? The latter would cut her right down, being so much above her. These, however, are all questions of detail, which are perhaps almost tedious in their relation ; but they are practical questions for sailors. It is not a shipbuilders' question only, for nobody knows better than a practical sailor the inconvenience of a large vessel. Take the case of the *Agincourt.* Magnificent as she and ships of that class are, I would infinitely prefer the command of a smaller vessel, even at some sacrifice, because large ships are so unhandy. We know that the smaller you can build a vessel to do a certain work the better, and in coming to the decision we have arrived at it is not a question of Mr. Reed's opinion, or, indeed, of the opinion of Captain Coles, but we have acted upon the advice of practical naval officers, who are decidedly of opinion that if we mean to combine great speed, great defensive powers, and great sea-going qualities along with great offensive powers—that is to say, carrying these enormous heavy guns — we should not be justified in constructing vessels of a smaller tonnage than the turret-ships we are about to build. In making these remarks, I have no intention of casting any reflection upon the vessels built by the family of my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead or any other shipbuilding firm. Let it be remembered that we have small turret-ships and ships that do not possess this power, and I have no doubt that they will do good service ; but the question is whether the country will take our opinion, as practical naval men, that if you want to build a real first-rate ship for line-of-battle and to carry two turrets you must have nothing less than a ship of 5,000 tons. In regard to the question of cost, I am bound in justice to tell you that there is no comparison to be drawn from the cost of a ship built in our dockyards and the cost of one built in a private yard. I believe that the firms which have built ships for warlike purposes in private yards will tell you that the ships they have built have not been a source of profit to them, and that they would require a higher price if they built again. My hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln (Mr. Seely) referred to the *Hercules,* the last ship we built. Now, that ship is built upon an improved principle. She has a double bottom up to a certain height, which would give her very great advantages in case she got aground. Her tonnage was quoted by my hon. Friend as the same as that of the *Warrior* and *Black Prince.* But what was the amount of material we put into that ship ? The weight of material was 6,740 tons in the *Hercules,* 6,300 tons in the *Black Prince,* and 6,020 tons in the *Warrior.* The *Hercules* cost £60,000 more than she would have done, but for the peculiar circumstances under which she was finished at Gillingham, whence the artificers had to be taken from the dockyard at Chatham, at some miles distance, involving an expense which was properly charged against the ship. At that time they had no means to finish her in the dockyard. That could never occur again, as they were improving the dockyard there, and for the future they would be able to build ships there at a much cheaper rate. There were also peculiarities about her construction which caused a complication that has been avoided by improvements introduced in the construction of her successors; and the attainment of simplicity is one of the things in which Mr. Reed has saved vast sums of money. I shall feel obliged if the hon. Member for Birkenhead will state what the speed of the *Alabama* was ?

MR. LAIRD : With 400 tons of dead weight, 12 knots an hour.

LORD CLARENCE PAGET : We intended and expected that the speed of the *Amazon* would have been 13 knots an hour; she went 12½ knots. She is 53 feet shorter than the *Alabama.*

MR. LAIRD : The *Amazon* has not

been tried at her deep-lead line. The engines of the *Alabama* indicated 1,100 horse-power; those of the *Amazon* 1,800 horse-power.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET: If our ship does not turn out to be so fast as the *Alabama*, I shall be glad if the hon. Member will bring the subject before the House. I think she beats the magnificent ship of the hon. Member. There is always some difference between the estimated and real speed which cannot be guarded against. Nothing is more uncertain than what the speed of ships will be; and a most extraordinary illustration is furnished by the *Warrior* and the *Black Prince*. They were built, so to speak, in the same mould. Every line was the same; the engines were similar, and built by the same makers, and yet the difference in their speed was one knot an hour. My honest belief is that the speed of the *Amazon* will turn out to be within half a knot of the speed anticipated. I will say nothing of the *Huascar* as I know nothing of her, but neither the *Scorpion* nor the *Wyvern* are vessels fit to put British sailors into. Their accommodation is faulty, and the captain of one reported that the men could not be kept tidy and clean, in fact, that discipline could not be maintained. I hope the Committee will not press us in respect to the size of our first sea-going turret-ship, but will put confidence in the Admiralty, and hereafter we shall only be too glad to be guided by what experience may determine.

Mr. FLEMING said, he happened to have the advantage of knowing neither Mr. Reed nor Captain Coles, but he thought that the conflict of opinion upon this subject was remarkable in such a great ship-building country. A vessel of 5,000 tons he thought too large, and it would imply a cost of nearly half a million. He would have appointed a scientific committee to take the opinions of practical men; and, while accepting the results of its labours as a guide, he would not have relieved the Admiralty of responsibility. A ship of 3,500 tons was sufficiently large for all purposes. As the *Royal Sovereign* had been converted from a three-decker into a cupola-ship, would it not be economical to use her as a target, to have her fired at in earnest with a large gun at close quarters, to strike her cupola, and see what the effect would be? If it were damaged so that it could not turn round, a defect would be suggested. It was well worth consideration whether that vessel ought not to be used in some such fashion; and even if she were destroyed, the loss might prove a gain. It was expedient that our dockyards should be maintained in perfect order and thorough efficiency, though in a skeleton shape without too many men or too many works in hand, healthy competition being produced by the giving of a few orders to private yards. In case of war on an emergency it would not do to have to trust to private yards to produce the vessels necessary for the defence of the country. It was no satisfaction to the country to fine a contractor by insisting upon the forfeiture of his deposit for non-fulfilment of contract. The accounts now submitted were in a form much clearer and more complete than he had ever before seen them, and whoever had re-arranged them deserved the thanks of the country; but he missed the "plant" account which the Government had promised to supply, and which would show at once the loss sustained by having large public yards. The noble Lord had stated that there was a saving of £4,000 this year, but the Estimates last year were £10,234,000 while this year they were £10,238,000, showing an increase of £4,000. He wished to call the attention of the noble Lord to one particular point in connection with this Vote, and he hoped that the noble Lord would give the Committee some explanation of the extra receipts and repayments in respect to the Vote of last year; because it appeared to him (Mr. Fleming) that instead of the Estimate being £4,000 less this year than the last, it was really £4,000 more, arising from this important item of extra receipts and repayments. He wished to know whether there was any proper check with regard to these estimated receipts and repayments, from what source they came, and whether there was any limit to the amount. He observed, too, in the dockyard valuation account that the year began with materials valued at £5,000,000, while at the close of the year the value had declined to £4,884,000. He should like an explanation of the way in which that valuation was made, because if it did not consist of materials which might at any moment be made available in building or repairs, the figures were misleading. He would urge the propriety of getting rid of odd materials such as he had seen in the dockyards, for by keeping them in stock they lost the interest of the money, and their value became depreciated. He knew that there was a great number of parcels or pieces of timber always lying about which in private yards were used up for some purpose or another; whereas in the public yards he believed they were allowed to accumulate. Another item to which he desired to call attention was that of £88,000 as the increased value of timber and stores in the re-valuation. He wished to know if this was included in the before-mentioned sum of £4,884,000 ? Passing on to the dockyard expenditure account, he observed that an item of £19,573, received for chips and odds and ends, had not been paid into the Exchequer, as was the usual practice. There might have been a good reason for this, but an explanation should be given. The next point he would notice was as to breaking up old ships and of half finished new vessels. There are, by the blue book, page 2, about 100 vessels building, converting and fitting for the year 1864-5, and of these, about one-third were ordered to be taken down and materials returned into store. There was about 44,000 tons of shipping and about 9,000 horse-power. What was the cost of this large number of useless vessels ? It was obvious that by breaking up a large number of vessels the Estimates might be reduced by £100,000 without the cause of the reduction being known. The noble Lord had stated the number broken up since 1859 as 350 or 360, but he should much like a Return showing all the vessels which the country possessed, whether in commission or in reserve, the date when each was laid down and finished, or when purchased, and, what was still more important, the total sum that each ship had cost. It appeared from the blue book that there were about 800,000 tons of shipping, the property of the country, the value of which might be taken at from £35,000,000 to £40,000,000. The interest of that at 3 per cent, with the requisite amount for depreciation, would amount to a very large sum. It seemed that the sum produced by the sale of a large number of old vessels was only £58,339, to which might be added a small sum for the metal returned into store. He objected to the system of breaking up ships without sufficient consideration; they ought rather to be sold without breaking up. [Lord CLARENCE PAGET: We do sell a great many.] Yes, but considering the great amount of metal in them it was the small results that came from the sales that he complained of. And not only should vessels be more frequently sold without breaking up, but every portion of material which could not be used ought to be sold at once, instead of being allowed to accumulate in the dockyards, and while uselessly occupying space gradually deteriorating in value. The Government paid a large sum for transport service, especially when there was any pressure upon them for the conveyance of troops, and it was worthy of the consideration of the Admiralty whether it was not possible to make a large number of their vessels available for the transport service. Private persons often made the value of the ship in a couple of these trips. The Returns in the blue book showed that some of the vessels repaired cost an excessive sum of money. The net charge in one year 1864-5 for repairs to the *Basilisk*, for example, was £33,000, or nearly £30 per ton. The *Cadmus* cost about the same per ton, the *Clio* £14 a ton, and so on. He should like to know whether there was any proper and systematic arrangements at the Admiralty by which these and other similar matters were discussed year by year, and carried out under one responsibility. The fluctuating character of the Admiralty was a serious evil, and he doubted whether they would be able to carry out the economies promised in these accounts unless the affairs of the navy were managed under one settled and continuous responsibility. There ought to be a more continuous chain of responsibility as to the purchase of materials, the employment of men, and all other branches of expenditure, than there now appeared to be. He attributed much of this to the shifting composition of the Board of Admiralty, which often gave the finishing of work to different persons in the place of those who commenced it.

MR. O'BEIRNE said, that if he hesitated to give his approval to the intention of the Government to build new vessels it was because he believed that naval construction was still in a state of experiment, and that little was as yet known either of the best shape of vessels or the best description of ordnance. The noble Lord had given the Committee two or three instances of the resisting power of the vessels now afloat. The *Hercules*, it appeared, possessed a resisting power given by plates of 8 inches of iron in addition to a 12-inch backing of teak, and the *Monarch* was to have armour-plates 7 inches thick. He failed to gather from the noble Lord the thickness of the backing, but he supposed there was to be an equal backing of teak. These facts to a large extent showed that the Admiralty —and he was not disposed to blame them for it—had not yet made up their minds. He was entitled to assume that the *Monarch* would not be a more heavily armed ship than the *Hercules.* The ships which we had afloat had iron plates of from 8 to 4½ inches thick, with from 19 to 8 inches of teak backing, and were from over 6,000 to 2,000 tons, and differed materially in almost all their classes; neither with regard to them nor with regard to the cupola vessels had they reached anything which the noble Lord the Secretary to the Admiralty would take upon himself the responsibility of saying was a perfect ship of war. Without expressing an opinion for or against the cupola system, he might observe that we had never built a ship carrying the cupola which had yet been tried under fire. The cupola vessels that had been used during the coast warfare in America were of a totally different construction from those which were built here, the latter were of heavy tonnage, with a large sea-board. The Government should pause before it expended a considerable sum of money in building vessels of a class which certainly up to the present time had not proved quite satisfactory. Admiral Halstead had made a very striking remark respecting the united fleets of England and France, which assembled on our shores last summer. He stated that the French ships as they went away looked like a squadron that could sail well and fight well together, whereas the English fleet sailed irregularly and everywhere. It would be, in his opinion, advisable to vote liberal sums for further experiments before they incurred a heavy outlay in building upon models which had not as yet been found suitable to the purpose intended. He would go much further and say that the *Royal Sovereign,* costly as she may have been, if fired at as an experimental ship, would, although destroyed by the trial, save thousands if not millions to the country, if the result of the experiments gave solid proof of what such a ship ought to be.

MR. GRAVES said, he thought it would be well for the Committee to consider whether the assurances held out that night by the Secretary to the Admiralty were likely to be realized. Having carefully watched the statements made year after year when these Votes were taken, he had arrived at the conviction, which was confirmed by the testimony of high practical authority, that the results had not been equal to the promises and expectations under which the public money had been voted. Such assurances as had been offered to them that night were to be regarded in the light of contracts, on the faith of which large sums of money were granted for the purposes of the navy; and, wholly irrespective of party consideration, he should feel it his duty to point out the discrepancies which might arise between those contracts and the results obtained. When, a few years ago, the progress of science rendered necessary the re-construction of the navy, the public generally felt that the substitution of iron for wood would place this country in a position in which it never stood before. Iron was a specialty of England, and the facility with which our shipbuilding artizans—both in our public and our private yards—had changed from the one material to the other showed that the handicraft of iron was a specialty of Englishmen. With these advantages they ought not now to be still in the experimental stage alluded to by the last speaker, but they ought to have results to which they could point with pride. They possessed great advantages in these combinations; but one important element was wanting to insure success, and that was simply design: and yet it was in this most essential necessity that naval construction had most signally failed. The discrepancies which he had previously pointed out between the promises held out to them and the performance was not confined to the case of the *Amazon,* one of a class of seven or eight vessels laid down and built avowedly for the protection of our commerce and as the police of the seas. The sister ship of the *Amazon,* the *Danae,* had been in perfect frame; she had been taken down from the midship section, but thirty-one frames were now standing; she was to be lengthened, and a completely new bow was to be put into her, irrespective of the waste of public money which such a system involved. He would ask, what was to become of the five or six other vessels of that class —whether they were to be subjected to this new style of naval construction, or are they to remain failures, was a question into which he was unable to enter. We had not of recent years constructed a single man-of-war to which considerable objection might not fairly be taken. Take the most perfect vessel stated to be yet produced—the *Bellerophon.* He had visited her with great interest, and while he saw in her much to admire, he also saw much that excited disappointment. If the original design of that vessel were placed in the Library side by side with her design at the present moment, no Member of the House could possibly recognize her as the *Bellerophon* that was described in the House some years ago. It was stated in the papers that she had her preliminary trial yesterday, that the trial was to be repeated that day, and that the final trial at the measured mile was to take place to-morrow. But the papers did not state that for the purpose of that trial at the measured mile sixteen feet more funnel had been added with the intention of its being removed again as soon as the trial at the measured mile had been completed. What dependence was to be placed on results so produced? With regard to motive power, the class of engines employed, they were unexceptionable as regards make, but judged by the fuel consumed, he did not think that that economy which had been effected in the mercantile service, had been carried out by the Admiralty, as the Returns he had moved for would show. Captain Coles had been reinstated, and he hoped the promise made by the noble Lord last year would be carried out. The noble Lord stated then that Captain Coles had been directed by the Admiralty to prepare drawings, that he had the assistance of draughtsmen, that every other aid would be rendered him, and when he had sent in his designs, if they were approved contracts would be invited from the shipbuilding firms of the country to carry them into effect. He would only ask that that promise should be fulfilled in a *bonâ fide* way, and that Captain Coles should be allowed to decide whether he could not do all he undertook to do, with a vessel of less tonnage than the ship now proposed to be built.

Mr. CHILDERS said, in reply to the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Fleming) that his hon. Friend, if he referred to the accounts, would find that they had been prepared in proper form. The last item of £21,937 was the actual difference between two valuations at the commencement and at the end of the year, and it was such an item as must have appeared in any account to make it balance correctly. The Estimates under Vote 10 provided for that amount of the stock only which was required to keep up or increase the quantity necessary in the view of the Government. His hon. Friend would find that in this respect the account for the year was precisely such as a shipbuilder would furnish. It was impossible to include in the money Estimates a statement of the value of every material which would be employed in the building or repairing of ships in the course of a year.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, he was very much struck by the remarks of the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Graves) that sixteen feet of temporary funnel had been added to the *Bellerophon,* in order that she might gain additional speed. Any speed so obtained was delusive, and he wished to ask whether it was true or not that any such discreditable trick had been resorted to? If it were true he hoped the noble Lord would say that it should never occur again.

Major WALKER said, he had gathered from the sketch which the noble Lord had given of the *Achilles,* that the cost of the vessel had been increased by about £50,000, owing to the fact that it had been found necessary to take down the vessel from Chatham to Gillingham in order to complete the fittings. He wished to know whether, when the ship was laid down, the Admiralty were not aware that there were not facilities at Chatham for completing her there?

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that the establishment of an iron shipbuilding yard at Chatham was decided on from grounds of public policy. It was a snug place far away inland, and the Admiralty knew very well that the approaches were difficult, and that no vessel drawing above a certain depth of water could lie alongside. The river now was in process of being deepened, and he trusted that such an occurrence would not take place again, but that where a vessel was laid down there she would be finished. He was sorry the hon. Member for Liverpool should have imputed to him that he had made statements to the House which were not correct. What he stated with respect to the *Amazon* was exactly what any one who knew her draught of water could confirm. The hon. Gentleman seemed to have minute, if not correct, information, with respect to what they were doing with the *Bellerophon.* He could not say whether they had or had not lengthened her funnel. But would the hon. Gentleman tell him that private yards did not do the same thing. Lengthening the funnel had nothing to do with the build of a ship, it was a question of fires and of the engine-room. Was it pretended that if a private shipbuilding firm found that there was not a sufficient draught from the engine-room they would not lengthen the funnels of a vessel? Mr. Reed had been anxious to build the *Amazon* rather larger, but the Admiralty thought it better to construct the vessel of the proposed dimensions. In the case of the vessel which had had a shield fixed round her bow, this course had been adopted in order to put her in a better position for fighting, there being no necessity for placing the guns so as to fire over the decks in a diagonal line as in the *Research* and *Enterprise.* He had been taunted for using the term "police of the seas," but as a fact the vessel which had been so much disparaged was fit for such service as was implied in those words. It was true that at first the requisite speed was not attained, but two feet had been added to its length to produce this result. In future he trusted that people who had propagated incorrect statements in reference to proceedings in the dockyards, would make due inquiry before talking as they had done.

Mr. GRAVES said, he hoped nothing that had fallen from his lips had led to the inference the noble Lord had drawn. He had not supposed that the noble Lord would come to the House and make statements which were incorrect; he believed every one of his statements. All he had said was that the results were not in accordance with those statements. With regard to the *Bellerophon* he merely stated facts, and left it to the Committee to draw their own conclusions. In the merchant service, he had never heard of an instance in which for the purpose of a trial trip a funnel was placed upon the ship, and removed immediately after that trial. On the other hand, he believed it was usual to try ships at the measured mile as nearly as possible in the trim in which they would ordinarily go to sea.

Mr. DALGLISH said, that, however brave their naval officers might be, they were not competent to design the vessels they had to command. If the turret-vessel were to be submitted to those officers the country would be put to an immense expense, and in all likelihood the experiment would turn out a failure. Instead of themselves designing a form of ship to give a fair trial to Captain Coles' principle, the Admiralty should appoint a body consisting of three or four shipwrights not connected with the Admiralty, and add one or two skilful artizans, and allow the committee so composed to decide upon the form of vessel employed to test Captain Coles' principle. If they declined to do that they would not do justice to Captain Coles, and they would do a gross injustice to the country.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, he was sorry that his noble Friend had dealt so lightly with the way in which, as had been alleged, the funnels had been placed on a vessel in order to give her artificially increased speed on a trial trip, and then removed. He was perfectly ashamed of the trick. If it were true, as had been stated, that means were resorted to to give a vessel artificially a speed she could not otherwise have, and if those means were withdrawn afterwards, he (Sir John Pakington) must say that the speed so obtained was a deception, and that any statement to be afterwards made to the House respecting that speed would be a false statement. His noble Friend said he had never heard of it, and he (Sir John Pakington) would put a question to him on a future day to ascertain if such a trick had been resorted to, and he begged his noble Friend would ascertain what was the fact.

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) £318,000, Steam Machinery.
(3.) £689,052, Half-pay, &c.
(4.) £125,367, Greenwich Hospital.

House *resumed.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

CUSTOMS (ISLE OF MAN).

RESOLUTIONS.

Customs Acts *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. CHILDERS said, the Resolution he had to propose referred to the Customs tariff in the Isle of Man. The House was aware that the Customs Consolidation Act of 1853 contained provisions by which articles could be introduced into that island at duties considerably less than those required in the United Kingdom. The proceeds of those duties were applied in the first instance to the civil government of the island, then £2,300 were applicable to certain public works, and after a payment of one-ninth of the gross amount for a similar purpose, the balance went to the public revenue of this country. The Customs' revenue was something under £30,000 a year. The Government of the Isle of Man now proposed to Her Majesty's Government that the duty on certain articles imported into the island should be increased in order that a further expenditure might be made upon public works. It was therefore intended to raise the duty on foreign spirits to 8*s.* per gallon, on rum of the British possessions to 6*s.* per gallon, and on British or Irish spirits exported from a duty-free warehouse under bond in the United Kingdom to 6*s.* There would also be an increase in the duty on sugar and tobacco. These alterations in the tariff, it was estimated, would make an addition to the revenue of about £20,000 a year. The new arrangement would be that, after defraying the expenses of the civil government of the island and paying £10,000 per annum into the Exchequer, the balance would be applicable for public works. The proposition was subject to the approval of the Tynwald, of the Isle of Man. If so approved a Bill founded on it would be introduced. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the following Resolution:—

That, in lieu of the Customs Duties now chargeable on the articles hereinafter mentioned, upon their importation into the Isle of man, the following Duties shall be charged from and after the 15th day of March 1866 (that is to say):

Spirits, viz.:—		£ s. d.
Brandy, Geneva, and all Foreign Spirits, not being Liqueurs, Cordials, or Perfumed Spirits	the gallon	0 8 0
Rum of the British Possessions	,,	0 6 0
British or Irish Spirits exported from a Duty-free Warehouse, under Bond in the United Kingdom	the gallon	0 6 0

Such Spirits not exceeding the strength of proof by Sykes' Hydrometer, and so in proportion for any greater or less strength than the strength of proof, and for any greater or less quantity than a gallon.

Sugar, viz.:—		£ s. d.
Muscovado	the cwt.	0 3 0
Sugar Candy, white or brown, refined Sugar, or Sugar rendered by any process equal to refined, Foreign or British	the cwt.	0 6 0
Tobacco, viz.:—		
Unmanufactured	the lb.	0 2 6
Manufactured	the lb.	0 4 9
Cigars	the lb.	0 4 9
Wine	per gallon	0 1 8

Resolution *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

Mr. Childers

CATTLE SHEDS IN BURGHS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

MR. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE said, that he and some hon. Friends of his had proposed clauses, the provisions of which had been introduced into one of the Cattle Bills, and had passed unscathed through the House of Lords. With the view of extending the principle of those provisions to Scotland, he begged to move for leave to bring in a Bill to regulate the inspection of cattle-sheds, cowhouses, and byres within burghs and populous places in Scotland.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to regulate the inspection of Cattle Sheds, Cowhouses, and Byres within burghs and populous places in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE, Mr. M'LAREN, Sir GRAHAM MONTGOMERY, and Mr. M'LAGAN.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 72.]

TRADE IN ANIMALS.

Select Committee *appointed* "to inquire into the manner in which the Home and Foreign Trade in Animals by Sea and Railroad is conducted, and to report what regulations, if any, should be enforced with a view of improving the treatment of Animals in transit, and to prevent any introduction and spreading of infectious or contagious diseases amongst them."—(*Mr. Milner Gibson.*)

Select Committee *nominated* April 11; Order *discharged* April 20, and New Committee *nominated*:—Committee to consist of nineteen Members:—Mr. MILNER GIBSON, Lord NAAS, Viscount CRANBOURNE, Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, Mr. EDWARD EGERTON, Mr. GOSCHEN, Sir MORTON PETO, Mr. GRAHAM, The O'CONOR DON, Sir MATTHEW RIDLEY, Mr. COGAN, Mr. CARNEGIE, Mr. DENT, Mr. HOLLAND, Mr. HUNT, Mr. LEADER, Mr. BANKS STANHOPE, Mr. GRAVES, and Mr. NORWOOD:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

ARTIZANS AND LABOURERS' DWELLINGS BILL.

Select Committee on Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings Bill *nominated:*— Mr. M'CULLAGH TORRENS, Mr. GOSCHEN, Mr. KINNAIRD, Mr. LOCKE, Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN, Mr. M'LAREN, Mr. AKROYD, Mr. JOHN ABEL SMITH, Mr. HENLEY, Lord ROBERT MONTAGU, Mr. ADDERLEY, Sir MINTO FARQUHAR, Mr. GRAVES, and Mr. GREENE:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES PREVENTION BILL.

On Motion of Lord CLARENCE PAGET, Bill for the better prevention of Contagious Diseases at certain Naval and Military Stations, *ordered* to be brought in by Lord CLARENCE PAGET and Mr. CHILDERS.

LAND TAX COMMISSIONERS' NAMES BILL.

Bill "to appoint additional Commissioners for executing the Acts for granting a Land Tax and other Rates and Taxes," *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 71.]

CONSOLIDATED FUND (£19,000,000) BILL.

Bill "to apply a sum, out of the Consolidated Fund, to the service of the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six," *presented*, and read the first time.

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, March 16, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Took the Oath*—The Lord Boston.

SELECT COMMITTEE — Office of the Clerk of the Parliaments and Office of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, *appointed*, and *nominated*.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Third Reading*—Jamaica Government* (29); Marine Mutiny*; National Debt Reduction* (32).

THE CATTLE PLAGUE—THE ORDERS IN COUNCIL.—OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF LICHFIELD said, that it was of considerable importance that the Orders in Council relative to the movement of cattle should be issued without delay, because on the 25th of March a great number of tenancies would expire throughout the country, and it was absolutely necessary that the farmers should be able to move their stock from one county to another. The Quarter Sessions, as their Lordships were aware, would meet almost immediately, and it would be necessary for them to make some alterations in their existing arrangements. It was absolutely indispensable, if such alterations were made, that they should be made with a knowledge of the Orders in Council, otherwise they might issue regulations which they might have to change immediately afterwards, in consequence of the Orders in Council. It was also important before their Lordships separated for the Easter holydays that the nature of the Orders in Council should be communicated to Parliament.

EARL GRANVILLE said, he could not, of course, state what the Orders in Council would be, but as soon as they were framed they would be communicated to Parliament. He could assure their Lordships that the Government were not losing a moment, nor would they lose a moment, in endeavouring to frame the necessary Orders.

STATE OF IRELAND.

MOTION FOR A COMMITTEE.

EARL GREY, who had given Notice to move that on Tuesday next the House do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the state of Ireland, said: My Lords, I fear that in the judgment of many of your Lordships, I shall hardly escape the charge of presumption in taking upon myself to introduce this subject to your Lordships' notice. As an independent Member of your Lordships' House, unconnected with any public Department, and not, therefore, possessing the influence which such connection would give, I may appear to be entitled to call upon your Lordships to express an opinion upon so momentous a subject as that I am about to bring before you. But, on consideration, it may appear that the very fact of my being unconnected with either of the great parties in this House may afford a good reason for my undertaking the duty I have assumed. Many of your Lordships, as well as myself, must have remarked that when the condition of Ireland forms the subject of private conversation, nothing is more common than to hear it said that there are certain measures the adoption of which would be useful to that country, but that it would be madness to propose them, because public opinion in England and Scotland is decidedly opposed to them. I will not stop to inquire whether that state of feeling be correct or not, or whether it be the fault of the people themselves, or of those who ought to be their leaders, that Ireland is in its present condition. Passing by that, I will only remark that, as long as public opinion in England and Scotland is believed to be what I have stated, we cannot indulge any sanguine hope that either the Ministers of the Crown, or those connected with them, on the one side, or the Leaders of the Opposition, who may expect to be Ministers hereafter, on the other side, will incur the risk of recommending measures not in accordance with public opinion. But if the duty is assumed by one who stands entirely unconnected with party, and who has long been withdrawn from the ranks of those who may hereafter be called upon to take part in the councils of the Realm

—I say that a person in that position is almost the only one likely to bring the subject before the House. Standing in this position I may not obtain the votes of many of your Lordships; yet, on the other hand, it will enable me, in explaining to you the grounds upon which I believe a change of policy towards Ireland is urgently necessary, to speak with an openness and an absence of reserve which, perhaps, could not be expected of one placed in a different position. I believe that by speaking with that plainness I may do something to prepare the way for that change of policy towards Ireland to which, I am perfectly convinced, Parliament will be compelled, sooner or later, to consent, and which will be the less likely to prove successful in proportion as it is longer delayed. In this belief I have thought it my duty to submit to your Lordships the Motion I am about to make.

Before I proceed further, allow me to say a few words with regard to the terms of my Motion. I do not move that the House shall, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the state of Ireland, with any view of calling witnesses to the Bar of your Lordships' House. It is the old Parliamentary form of calling upon the House to express an opinion on the state of the nation, and to declare that there is something amiss which requires to be remedied. It is not necessary that such a Motion should have reference to the whole kingdom, and, fortunately, it is not necessary now that it should. I propose that it should refer to the state of Ireland only. If the Motion is assented to, when the House goes into Committee I shall be prepared to move Resolutions which I will ask permission to read before I sit down. It would be manifestly improper in me to ask you to assent to the Resolutions now. All that I ask you to do now by your vote is to declare that the state of Ireland is such as to require our immediate consideration. I do not wish to commit any noble Lord who votes with me to the opinions I may now express. My task is rendered considerably easier by the circumstance that Ireland has formed the subject of discussion this Session in both Houses of Parliament. Recently a noble Viscount on the Bench below (Viscount Lifford) called attention to it and gave a gloomy description of the state of Ireland, which I do not think any of your Lordships can say is otherwise than correct. During the late Parliament the same subject was several times brought before the House of Commons, and in the course of the long debates that then took place there appears to have been no difference of opinion whatever as to the existence of great evils in Ireland, although there was difference both as to the causes of those evils and their extent. As there is this general concurrence of opinion that Ireland is in an unsatisfactory state, I am spared the necessity of endeavouring to prove the fact by an array of facts and figures. At the same time, it will make my future arguments clearer if I venture to recall a few of what I think are the main facts of the case as seem to be generally agreed upon by persons of various opinions. I think it is agreed that the physical condition of the great body of the Irish people is somewhat better than it was a few years ago. Their numbers no longer press so closely as they did on the means of subsistence, and on the whole they are in a more comfortable condition. Employment, except during a small portion of the year, is uncertain, and what there is is badly paid, the people are somewhat better fed and somewhat better clothed than they used to be; but still they are lodged in a most deplorable manner. Their houses, if houses they can be called, are hardly fit for the habitation of civilized creatures. Agriculture, which is the employment of the great majority of the people, is in general rude and bad. There are a few well-cultivated farms here and there; but it is universally admitted that these are the exceptions rather than the rule. For the most part the soil is unskilfully cultivated, and as a consequence both farmers and labourers are so poor and obtain so little return for their exertions that the recurrence of two or three bad seasons plunges the country, except in a few favoured districts, into distress. Trade is confined to a small number of places, and it is carried on upon a small scale, in proportion to the number of the people, compared with the trade of England and Scotland. The most significant thing of all is, that the population, which in a wholesome state of society ought to be increasing, is undergoing by emigration diminution at a very alarming rate. There are many who do not consider that this is to be deplored—who think that emigration is the natural law for adjusting the supply of and the demand for labour, and who look to it as the means of eventually raising the condition of the Irish peasant. I will not deny that in these respects emigration has its advantages. I am aware that it cannot be checked directly, and that it can only be diminished by improving the condition of the Irish people. But, at the same time, I am convinced that Ireland ought to maintain in comfort a far larger population than it at present does. I cannot see without great concern the rapid diminution of the population by emigration, for by it Ireland is losing the services of many of her most industrious sons, and the Empire is losing that which ought to be considered precious. Unfortunately, Ireland has long been distracted by political and religious animosity. Class has been set against class, and there is a general feeling among the people of alienation from the Imperial Government. The recent disclosures relating to the Fenian conspiracy afford striking illustrations of the state of feeling prevalent in the country. We find from those disclosures that so bitter is the animosity felt by a large portion of the Irish people against the Government under which they live that when they seek a new home on the other side of the Atlantic, instead of forgetting their hostile feelings under the influence of the better prospect that there awaits them, they manifest their hostility towards this country even more strongly than here. It appears that on their arrival in America the first use they make of their earnings is to subscribe large sums of money to a fund established with the avowed object of overthrowing the Government which they left at home. We know that very large sums indeed have been subscribed in America, and I believe in Australia also, and I believe that these collections form the main support of this Fenian conspiracy of which we have lately heard so much. My Lords, it is, in my opinion, a very striking circumstance that these Irish-Americans should be found doing so much to create or keep alive in the United States hostile feelings against this country. We have the strongest interest, and so also have the United States, in the two nations being on the most friendly terms with each other, and, therefore, the existence of any circumstance which tends to prevent the existence of friendly relations between the two countries is deeply to be regretted. But the fact of these large collections having been made is of still more serious import. It shows what is the prevailing feeling among those classes in Ireland of which the emigrants are chiefly composed; and, judging from the hostility they show when they are in a position to show it openly, I think it is hardly possible to exaggerate the extent of the hostility of the lower classes in Ireland to the British Government. The same conclusion, unfortunately, is forced upon us by what has happened with regard to the Fenian conspiracy in Ireland. Probably there never was a plot more utterly wild and hopeless than the Fenian conspiracy, and yet even this plot has been able to command the active support of a great many of the lower classes in Ireland, and the sympathies of many more. This circumstance shows, I think, the state of mind which exists in that country; because, as has been well remarked, the agents of a foreign conspiracy, however well supplied they might be with money, and however well organized they might be, would have attempted in vain to enlist thousands of followers in England or Scotland for the purpose of overthrowing the Government. In Ireland, however, such efforts have unfortunately met with a certain amount of success. We have been told that none of the respectable classes, or, at all events, only a very few of those who had anything to lose have had anything to do with the conspiracy, or shown any sympathy for it, and the conduct of the jurymen during the recent trials goes far to prove the fact. My Lords, I rejoice to find that it is so; but I observe that it is stated by one who ought to know the feelings of the Irish people that the classes from whom jurymen were taken were alarmed at and opposed to the conspiracy because they believed it to be directed against all property and all existing social institutions, and not because they were in favour of the existing Government. Then there is another fact which seems to be generally admitted with regard to Ireland—namely, that the prevailing disaffection in that country is not produced by distress. Now, we know it very often happens that physical distress is the cause of political discontent. It was the cause of the Swing riots in 1830 and 1831; and the Chartist riots a few years later were, I think, clearly traceable to the pressure on some portions of the population. It has, however, been often pointed out that in Ireland disaffection does not exist in those districts where there is the greatest distress. For instance, there is more disaffection in the South than in the poorest counties of the West, and it was a remarkable fact that during the great suffering in the famine of 1847 political discontent was far less than it was eight or nine years afterwards, when, from the high prices caused by the Russian War, the people were comparatively prosperous. Indeed, this disaffection in Ireland is much more the cause than the effect of distress. The feeling of insecurity which exists in Ireland prevents the influx of capital into the country, and the development of those resources with which, whatever may be said to the contrary, she is very richly endowed by nature. How can you expect that men will embark in agricultural improvements or in great industrial undertakings when every day at public meetings speeches are made which, if they mean anything, mean that those who deliver them contemplate sooner or later the overthrow of the existing institutions of the country? It is, I think, perfectly clear that it is this feeling of insecurity which is the main cause which prevents the industrial improvement of Ireland. I believe that the description which I have now given of the state of things in Ireland—a description founded on the concurrent testimony of men of all parties—is an accurate one, and I think none of your Lordships will venture to deny the reality of the evils which I have mentioned. Now, if disaffection and poverty are the chronic conditions of Ireland, it is impossible to account for such a fact except by attributing it to the misgovernment of that country; and, indeed, I believe it is universally admitted that the evils of Ireland spring from misgovernment; but many of us think it is not the misgovernment of our time. It is often said that since Ireland was brought under the authority of the Imperial Parliament the old abuses have been remedied, and the ancient grievances removed, so that there remain no serious grounds for complaint. Such, if I rightly understood him, was the opinion of the noble Lord at the head of the Government expressed in the short discussion which arose the other night on the Motion of the noble Viscount on the Bench below me (Viscount Lifford). My noble Friend opposite, while condemning the old misgovernment, told us that we ought to look back with great satisfaction at the useful measures which had been passed since the Union, and that we ought to wait the result with patience, because evils like those which prevailed in Ireland were so inveterate that they could not be suddenly removed. Now, I agree with my noble Friend that Parliament has passed many useful measures with respect to Ireland, and I agree with him also that the inveterate evils which beset that course cannot easily be cured; but I cannot admit that we ought to wait and see what will result from them unless we are convinced that there is at least a beginning of real progress. I would ask my noble Friend to recollect how much time has elapsed since the measures to which he alluded were adopted. We are now far advanced in the second half century since Ireland was united to England, and brought under the power of the Imperial Parliament; and thirty-seven years have gone by since the last remnants of the Penal Code were abolished by the Catholic Relief Act of 1829. My Lords, in six years after that the system of national education, from which such important results were expected, was established in Ireland; and it is almost thirty years since that fruitful source of bloodshed and violence, the levying of tithes, was put an end to by the Tithes Commutation Act, and since the Poor Laws were introduced into that country. It is nineteen years since the potato famine occurred—that frightful calamity which caused such a terrible amount of suffering to the people, produced such an enormous and sudden diminution in the number of the population, and led also to the establishment of the Incumbered Estates Act and the improvement of the Poor Law. The most sanguine hopes were entertained that a better order of things would have resulted from the various acts of legislation to which I have just referred. My Lords, since the Incumbered Estates Act was passed, I am not aware that any measure of considerable importance regarding Ireland has been adopted by the Imperial Parliament. It is, therefore, not less than seventeen or eighteen years since all the measures for the improvement of Ireland which the Imperial Parliament hitherto has been able to devise have been in complete operation. Surely that is a sufficiently long time to test the effect of these measures. If they had not produced a perfect cure, at least we might have expected to see by this time some undoubted symptoms of improvement and progress. But, I ask, has any man pointed out such symptoms? On the contrary, I find, when I talk about Ireland with those who, I believe, are best acquainted with her present state, they all concur in saying that in some respects the prospects of that country are more gloomy than ever. They say that the state of political feeling is worse than it was some years ago. In this respect compare 1836 and 1866, and there can be no doubt that political disaffection and dislike to the British Government and Parliament are more wide-spread and more deeply rooted in the minds of the people at the latter period than they were at the former. My Lords, only very lately we were occupied in suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. Can any man assert, then, that the state of political feeling there is not getting worse ?—and remember, the state of political feeling is the root from which all other evils arise in Ireland. If this is a fact, the case does not seem to be one in which we ought to adopt the advice of my noble Friend, and wait with patience. It is not one in which we should look on in listless apathy, waiting to see what may arise, without taking any active measures ourselves. It is a case for presuming that there must still be something greatly amiss in the laws or in the manner in which they are administered in Ireland ; and it behoves us to apply the best energies of our mind to discover what the evil really is, and, when we have discovered it, to adopt the best remedies we can devise.

My Lords, in considering what may be the real cause of this unfortunate state of feeling in Ireland, one naturally looks to the speeches made during the last Parliament by those who are supposed to give the most accurate expression to the feelings of the people of Ireland. The principal points to which they have adverted are these :—They complain of what they call fiscal injustice ; of the neglect of the Imperial Government in respect of public works and other measures for the development of the resources of Ireland ; and lastly, they speak of what is commonly called "tenant-right." I confess that if we carefully examine what has been said on these subjects, it appears to me that the Irish Members have not succeeded in making out their case on any one of the points to which I have referred. With regard to the fiscal injustice towards Ireland, it appears to me, as the result of a careful inquiry, that England has nothing to accuse herself of upon this head. I think she has been not only just, but generous to Ireland. I believe that Ireland instead of paying more than her share of the burdens of the Empire pays less ; and I think we can fairly challenge any Irishman to point out a single tax levied in Ireland which has a tendency to either discourage industry or check improvement. In this respect the position of the small occupiers in Ireland will contrast favourably with that of the same class in any other country in Europe —with that of the small occupiers in France or Germany, for instance, as far as the demands of the State are concerned. So that, not only in respect of taxes, but also in respect to money voted in grants from Parliament, there is no ground of complaint. Then as to the Imperial Government not having done more to develop the natural resources of Ireland by great public works, I cannot help remarking that this complaint is founded on a complete misapprehension of the functions of a Government. Save in very exceptional cases, the Government has nothing to do with public works. It is not by State money, but by private enterprize, and funds raised from local resources that so many magnificent public works have been constructed in England and Scotland. It is in this manner our canals have been made and our harbours and estuaries improved ; that our docks have been constructed, and that channels which formerly admitted only small coasting vessels, now receive the largest ships in our commercial navy. When the system of leaving these matters to private enterprize has been departed from, and the money of the State has been expended on public works, it generally turns out that the money has been misspent, and only evil results have followed—witness, for instance, the case of that costly folly, the Caledonian Canal. With respect to tenant-right the case seems to be much the same. Great fault has been found with the British Parliament for not passing various Bills which have been brought before it. But the more closely we study those Bills, the more, I think, we come to the conclusion that to have passed such measures would have aggravated instead of diminished the evils which they were intended to remedy. Some of those Bills involved such an infringement of the rights of property, that if they had been passed they could not have failed to aggravate the feeling of insecurity which unfortunately now exists, and thus to have discouraged still more the application of capital to the soil of Ireland. The Bills which were not liable to this fundamental objection have been so cumbrous, that if carried into practical operation they would not have removed, but would have increased, the existing difficulties connected with land in Ireland. My Lords, I am persuaded that the only sound policy in this matter is to leave landlord and tenant to settle their relations by mutual agreement between themselves, and with as little legislative interference as possible. I do not mean to say that the law of landlord and tenant is quite satisfactory in Ireland. It is confused, and requires to be simplified and made clear. I believe that law stands in need of material improvement. The alterations should be of such a nature as to increase the desire of the landlord to have solvent tenants instead of tenants who make the highest bids, and would induce him to give leases or agreements which would encourage tenants to employ their capital on the land. But granting that there are those faults, still we must remember that, substantially, the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland is the same as that in England. I am persuaded that the bad working of that law in Ireland arises less from the law itself, than from the extreme competition for land, which competition owes its origin to the stagnation of all other industrial pursuits besides those connected with the land, and enables the landlords to let their farms for more than those farms are worth to good tenants.

I do not believe, therefore, that it is possible to account for the evils afflicting the country by reference to the state of the law on the subject of land tenure. There must be something more seriously wrong at the root of the matter; and if we search for it honestly and diligently, we shall have no great difficulty in discovering what is the weightier grievance from which all these disasters have sprung. My Lords, it is a grievance which has not been unnoticed by public orators in Ireland, though it has attracted, I think, in this country less attention than it deserves. I allude to the fact that the whole Church property in Ireland is applied to the exclusive maintenance of the Established Church, while the Church of the great majority of the people is left without any State provision, and depends upon the individual contributions spared with difficulty by the poorest classes of the people. This, I am persuaded, is the weightiest grievance which lies at the bottom of the difficulties of Ireland, and I am persuaded that a plain statement of the facts of the case is all that is necessary to convince your Lordships of the extreme injustice of the present arrangements. Let me remind you that the Church property in Ireland formerly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and that when the people of England shook off their connection with Rome, though the Irish people adhered to the ancient faith, the Church property was transferred to the clergy of the conquering nation, while the Church of the majority was left without any endowment whatever. To make that injustice more galling, at a later period the Presbyterians, who were as much Dissenters as the Roman Catholics and far better able to provide for their own wants, received the assistance of Parliament towards the maintenance and spread of their own religion, while none was given to the Roman Catholics. I venture to submit to your Lordships that it is impossible, on any ordinary principles, to defend the existence of such a state of things. I know it may be said that the tithes are not paid by Roman Catholics. But, surely, those who put forward such arguments as that have a great contempt for our understandings. The Irish proprietors acquired their property subject to the burden of tithes, and the portion of their land represented by that tithe was never, in point of fact, their own. The claim to have these tithes applied exclusively for the benefit of the Protestant Church, because they were paid by Protestant landlords, is just as sensible as if the proprietor of an estate sought to have the amount annually contributed from his estate in payment of mortgages applied for his sole benefit. The national property intended for the national object of teaching religion to the people has been diverted from the mass of the poorer population and applied to the exclusive use of a small minority, composed mainly of the wealthier class. Again, we have heard this state of things defended on the ground that the Church which now exists in Ireland is the real successor of the original Church, and the rightful inheritor of its property. That appears to me to be an argument of the most extraordinary kind; because whatever might have been the case at an earlier period, there can be no doubt that for some centuries before the Reformation, the Roman Catholic religion was in full possession of all the property of the Church; and though the heads of that Church may have conformed to Protestantism the population did not. And to say that their property ought to be transferred to the Reformed religion, while the people remained of the old way of thinking, seems to me opposed to all the dictates of common sense and reason. It is said, too, that the maintenance of the Protestant Church formed one of the stipulations at the time of the Union. But there really does not seem to me anything valid in such an argument. The Parliament of that day did not represent the people of Ireland, they were merely the representatives of a small minority; and it is idle to say that an arrangement made with that corrupt Parliament ought to be maintained against the interests of the great body of the population. The arguments in favour of the existing system seem to me not only to rest upon sheer sophistry, but to be contrary to the opinion of the whole civilized world out of the United Kingdom. You can read no account of Ireland by an unprejudiced foreigner, no statement of the condition of that country, in which it is not always stated that the Irish people have been grievously wronged by withdrawing the endowments meant for the religious instruction of the great body of the people, and devoting them for the advantage of the small minority of the inhabitants. And the grievance does not consist merely in the injustice of the existing arrangements; it extends to the manner in which for many years these have been maintained and defended. Look at the conduct of the Irish Parliament all through the last century. Could anything be more monstrous? My Lords, we know that up to a very late period every circumstance which could add to the despicable position of the Roman Catholics was retained. Not only did that Parliament, representing the Irish landlords, insist upon the collection of tithes for objects in which the people had no interest, but, in order to prevent a small diminution of income, refused to consent to any equitable arrangement whatever. Within the recollection of most of us this state of things continued. Do your Lordships not remember that not thirty years ago what was then called "the Tithe War" was still active? At that time tithe was collected only by military force. The tithe law in all its cruelty and injustice was maintained under circumstances calculated to make it still more detested, and remained so until a late period. The mode of collection afterwards was even more oppressive than that if possible, and you refused for a long series of years to make any improvement in the method of collection, lest there should be some diminution in the amount collected for the Protestant Church. At length, however, this system of things was abolished, simply because it could not be any longer maintained. The titheholder ceased to obtain any income at all, because the collection was so imperfectly carried out; and it was thought necessary to keep the titheholder compensated by the payment of large sums from the Imperial Treasury. But the system broke down, and it was then, and then only, that Parliament consented to abolish it. But something worse than the tithe system continued to embitter the minds of the Irish against the Protestant Church. You all know, my Lords, what an atrocious code the old Penal Code was. There is not a man in this day who would say a word in its defence. It is admitted on all hands to have been the most detestable code of tyranny ever created in the civilized world. It was calculated not merely to oppress, but to demoralize and degrade those upon whom it was inflicted; and this monstrous code was passed, and enforced with a view to the security of the Church Establishment. My Lords, every step of relief from that code was taken with difficulty. I believe scarcely a single point of relief was granted, except under the pressure of urgent necessity and fear of the consequences of refusing. This, I need not remind your Lordships, was especially the case with regard to the last step of relief from that code—I mean the grant of Emancipation in 1829. Only four years before, when that measure had been passed by the House of Commons, it was rejected by this House; and when, after a time, it was found that the old system could no longer be maintained without the risk of civil war, the very persons who had been so long the instruments of maintaining it came down to Parliament and asked that this last remnant of the Penal Code should be repealed; and, accordingly, in 1829 we saw the great Act of Catholic Emancipation. And, my Lords, more than this. Even now, my Lords, we can hardly forget the old vicious principle. As lately as last year we were called upon to reject a measure which proposed to relieve the Roman Catholics of Ireland from a piece of oppression which had been originated with a mistaken desire to buttress the position of the Protestant Church Establishment. I need not tell you that I refer to the Oaths Bill, and in rejecting it this House was advised to maintain on the statute-book a law which imposes upon the Roman Catholics for the imagined security of the Protestant Establishment, but which they feel to be degrading and oppressive. My Lords, I say then that under these circumstances, if we suppose that the Roman Catholics of Ireland have the feelings of other men, it is impossible that they should not be deeply impressed with the injustice to which they are subject of devoting all the national revenues which originally belonged to the Roman Catholic Church to the exclusive support of the rich minority, while the poor majority are left to their own resources. And I say further that if they have the feelings common to mankind it is impossible that they should not resent this injustice. I have frequently been told that this is a complete mistake. I have been referred to the tone adopted at public meetings in Ireland. The Protestant Establishment, I am told, is not the grievance which forms the staple of their discussions and animadversions; and I have been asked whether the Fenians, who are equally opposed to the Catholic and Protestant clergy, have any interest in this matter. This is the language of shallow observation. It is not always the grievances most felt which are most talked of. It is not surprising the Catholics have not agitated so much upon this topic. Since the passing of the Tithes Commutation Act it is quite true the Irish Church has not pressed so much upon the great mass of the people, and therefore those who wish to excite opposition to the Imperial Government naturally dwell upon topics that make more impression in the mass of the people. But, my Lords, there is unmistakable evidence to show how acutely the upper classes feel the injustice done them, and how deeply they resent it; and do you suppose that you can have the superiors against you and not have the middle and labouring classes against you? Although the lower class may not feel so directly the grievances which press upon their superiors they take their tone from them. My Lords, the Government of Ireland has always had extreme difficulty in conducting its affairs. How is this to be explained except by the existence of a revolutionary feeling on the part of the higher orders of the Roman Catholics of Ireland? While they stand aloof and will do nothing to aid you, how can you expect that the mass of the people will be obedient? It is this I am persuaded, which is at the bottom of the disaffection of the Irish people, and in this direction we must look if we would cure the evil. Thus the questions that appear at first sight least connected with this great grievance of the Irish Church all practically turn upon it; in short, my Lords, while this great grievance of the Irish Catholics exists, all the benevolent measures which you adopt for their country simply feed that feeling of envy of the Imperial Government which is at the bottom of the whole of the disaffection of the people of Ireland. I might pursue this topic further and point out how the Irish Church Establishment poisons the whole state of Society in Ireland, and prevents the people of that country from accepting measures which are intended for their benefit; but I feel that I have already trespassed upon your Lordships' patience. I have said enough to show that there is a feeling of injustice rankling in the minds of a large portion of the people of Ireland, and this feeling must be removed before the people of that country will look with satisfaction upon any measures designed for their welfare. It is absolutely necessary therefore, if you wish to improve the condition of Ireland, to convince the people that you wish to deal by them justly in this great matter. If you do this my persuasion is that they will accept your good intentions in a corresponding spirit, and that you may succeed in restoring satisfaction to the people; but without it I am persuaded that you can expect nothing but failure. Much time has unfortunately been lost, and what might have been accepted willingly thirty or thirty-five years ago would not be so eagerly received now, but I believe that if you will fairly look the predicament in the face a settlement, and one that will be satisfactory, may still be arrived at.

My Lords, after the arguments I have adduced, it may be said that I ought to propose some practical remedy. It may argue presumption in me to recommend to your Lordships any mode by which such a settlement may be arrived at; but, though by such a course I may incur some censure, I feel it necessary in support of my arguments to name some propositions on the subject and to point out to your Lordships how, in my opinion, justice may be done to Ireland, and the people of that country reconciled to the Imperial Government. I think that in all changes that may be made the two great objects to be aimed at are, first, to establish religious equality; and next, to avoid, as far as possible, the disturbance of existing interests. I would be the last to deprive any individual of rights to which by law he is entitled, but I cannot admit that the principles by which we regulate our conduct towards individuals are always applicable to corporate bodies. I maintain, therefore, that in order to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of this question you must be prepared to make a large diminution in the funds allowed to the Irish Church Establishment. The arrangement which I think may be made is this:—the whole of the property of the Established Church in Ireland ought to be invested in the hands of Commissioners, and these Commissioners should be empowered to divide the total income of the establishment among the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Presbyterians, in such proportions as each might be entitled to. In saying this I think that substantial justice does not require that the Roman Catholic Church should receive a share of those funds proportionate to their numbers. The clergy of the Roman Catholic Church are not permitted to marry, and as they have no families to maintain a smaller income would suffice for their requirements than would be necessary for the support of the clergy of the Established Church, and the grants to the members of the latter Church might be more considerable than the incomes assigned to the Roman Catholic clergy. These Commissioners, after the payment of all necessary expenses, should appropriate the remaining funds for the benefit of the several Churches in such proportions as may be determined upon. The money intended for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church should, I think, be paid over to trustees appointed on behalf of that Church, consisting partly of Roman Catholic prelates and partly of laymen, and these trustees should have full power to apply the amounts placed at their disposal in the purchase of glebe-houses and other matters, and also in cases of necessity in paying the stipends of some of the Roman Catholic clergy. The distribution of these funds should be unfettered by any conditions, save those to be prescribed by Parliament and the necessity of laying before both Houses an annual statement. In the same manner, the funds intended for the benefit of the Irish Church Establishment should be placed in the hands of a body of prelates and laymen as trustees for that Church. It will be absolutely necessary that Parliament should grant to the Commissioners an annuity, to be charged upon the Consolidated Fund, sufficiently large when combined with the share which will accrue from the Church property to pay the present dignitaries and clergy of the Established Church in Ireland the incomes which they at present enjoy; but as the payments to the existing holders of Church preferments cease, the proportion of the annuity thereby set free can be carried to the general account of the Commissioners and divided between the three Churches in the proportion prescribed by Parliament. The share assigned to the Presbyterians should also be placed in the hands of trustees, partly clerical and partly lay, which should pay the clergy of that denomination who are now provided for by the Parliamentary grant commonly called the Regium Donum. The result of this arrangement would be that the clergy of the three Churches—the Protestant Episcopal, the Roman Catholic, and the Presbyterian—would all be paid out of one fund by Commissioners to be appointed by Parliament, such fund consisting partly of existing Church property, and partly of a payment to be annually granted by Parliament, the whole to be divided in such proportion as should be fixed by Parliament. By this arrangement the Protestant Episcopal Church would in the first instance receive a larger share than it would eventually obtain. I think by some such arrangement as that I have proposed great advantages would be obtained. In the first place, the Roman Catholics have for many years past objected to any arrangement which reduced their clergy to the position of stipendiaries dependent upon the State; but by the arrangement I have suggested the difficulty arising out of that objection would be avoided, as the money would be paid to special trustees, who should be appointed in such a manner as would give the best security for their independence, and who should be subject to no control but that of Parliament, to whom alone they should be compelled to give a full account of their administration of the fund committed to their charge. So also with regard to the Protestant Episcopal Church. In the first instance, the income from the fund would be applied to pay the existing clergy; but as existing claims fell in, and the total amount available for that purpose increased, I think the trustees on behalf of that Church, consisting of prelates and laymen of that religious denomination, should be enabled to alter the proportion of the payments according to the wants of the Church, and so to pay the whole sum in the manner in which they may think would be best calculated to promote the real interests of the Church they represent.

It appears to me that this arrangement would give such an amount of freedom to the Protestant Episcopal Church as would be no small compensation for the sum which they might lose by its being carried into effect. But I venture to remark that this Church would obtain a far larger and more valuable compensation by being relieved from the stigma it now labours under of being maintained by injustice. Why is it that this Church has failed to make itself acceptable to the people of Ireland? I believe that it teaches Christianity in its purest form, and it has for many years had the services of a body of clergy deserving of the highest praise for their sincere devotion to the interests of their Church. Although I do not approve the Established Church of Ireland in its present form, I am anxious to pay the individual clergy the tribute that is their due, and to express the high respect I feel for them. The only way to account for the failure of the Established Church is to attribute it to the false position in which it stands. The Irish people feel that the Church is a standing injustice to them, and that it is maintained only by the superior power of England. I believe that to relieve it from this odium would do much to promote the real welfare of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and I do not hesitate to say that I am anxious to promote by all fair means its success. The mere possession of wealth by a Church will not enable it to influence men's minds; on the contrary, when the taint of injustice rests upon an arrangement which is sought to be carried out by money, it works far more harm than good to the interests you seek to advance. I am persuaded that the right rev. Prelates opposite will agree with me that true religion is a thing which cannot be purchased by money. My Lords, I have now given you the broad outlines of the arrangement I propose for your consideration; but, at the same time, to establish religious equality some additional measures of importance will be required, of which the most material one would be a repeal of the enactments prohibiting Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops from assuming the titles of their sees, which restriction is felt, and naturally felt, to be a great injustice. I therefore propose that this restriction should be removed, and that they should be allowed to assume, with the prefix of "Roman Catholic," their proper titles. My Lords, the Resolutions I have to propose are as follow:—

"1. That in legislating for Ireland it is the duty of the Imperial Parliament to adopt such measures as might be expected to gain the approval of an Irish Parliament, fairly representing the people, and expressing the opinion of the majority of men of education and intelligence in Ireland.

"2. That the application of the whole income derived from Church property in Ireland to the support of a Church Establishment, for the exclusive benefit of a small minority of the people of that country, is unjust, and ought not to be continued.

"3. That, with a view to the correction of this injustice, it would be expedient to vest the whole property of the Church in Ireland in the hands of Commissioners empowered to manage it, and to divide the net income derived from it, in such proportions as Parliament may prescribe, between the Protestant Episcopal, the Roman Catholic, and the Presbyterian Churches.

"4. That it would further be expedient to grant to the said Commissioners such a permanent annuity on the Consolidated Fund as would be sufficient, together with the share of the income from Church property in Ireland assigned to the Protestant Episcopal Church, to provide for paying to the present bishops and clergy of that Church the full incomes they now receive. As these payments to the existing holders of ecclesiastical preferment cease to be required, the proportion of the annuity thereby set free, to be carried to the general account of the Commissioners, and divided between the three Churches in the proportion prescribed by Parliament.

"5. That the proportion of the net income at the disposal of the Commissioners assigned to each of the three Churches ought to be paid to Boards of Trustees appointed to receive the same, and apply the amount for the benefit of the said Churches.

"6. That the Board of Trustees for the Protestant Episcopal Church, should consist of five prelates and five laymen of that Church, and that, subject to the claims of existing holders of benefices and dignities, the said Commissioners should be empowered, with the approval of the Lord Lieutenant in Council, to make such changes in the application of the income of the Church as might be considered expedient with a view to the more effective performance of its duties.

"7. That the Board of Trustees for the Roman Catholic Church should in like manner consist of five prelates and five laymen of that Church, and that the income placed at their disposal should be applied, at their discretion, to the building and maintaining of places of worship and glebe-houses, and to the payment of stipends to the clergy.

"8. That the Board of Trustees for the Presbyterian Church should consist of five clergymen and five laymen of that Church, and that the income assigned to them should be applied, in the first place, to the payment of the stipends to clergymen now provided for from the Parliamentary grant known as the Regium Donum; and, secondly, to the general purposes of their Church.

"9. That the said Commissioners and Boards of Trustees should be required to lay annually before both Houses of Parliament full accounts of their receipts and expenditure.

"10. That the enactments whereby the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church are restrained from assuming the titles of their sees ought to be repealed, and that they ought to be allowed to assume the style of Roman Catholic archbishops and bishops of the said sees.

"11. That with a view to the improvement of agriculture in Ireland, it is desirable that the occupiers of land should have greater facility for the secure expenditure of money on permanent improvements, but that the difficulties now complained of would be aggravated instead of being diminished by any enactment infringing upon the rights of property; nor could the object in view be attained by any change in the law, which, without infringing upon these rights, would empower tenants to compel their landlords to pay for improvements, since the creation of such a power would probably induce landlords to exercise their right of resuming land held by tenants proposing to use it when not protected by leases, and would also tend to increase the reluctance of landowners to grant long leases to their tenants.

"12. That it is the true interest of both owners and occupiers of land that they should be left free to settle the terms on which it is to be held by mutual agreement, with as little legislative interference as possible, but that it deserves to be considered whether the Irish law of landlord and tenant might not be made more clear and simple, and whether some changes in its provisions, especially the repeal of the enactments which give to landlords the right of distress, and a preference over other creditors, might not tend to make the owners of land more desirous than they now are to let it to solvent tenants, on conditions and for terms of years which would encourage permanent improvements."

Such, my Lords, are the Resolutions which, in the event of your adopting my proposal for a Committee of the Whole House, it is my intention to move. They are far from including all the measures which I believe to be required for the benefit of Ireland. I will mention one. For many years I have been of opinion that the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland ought to be abolished. My noble Friend who now holds the office (Lord Wodehouse) deserves great credit for the energy he has displayed in very trying and difficult circumstances. But that fact has not changed the opinion I have long entertained that the system of government of Ireland through a Lord Lieutenant ought to be done away. But, though there are many measures which might be adopted with advantage to Ireland, I have thought it right to confine the Resolutions which I propose submitting to you if you should consent to go into Committee to those subjects which I consider most urgent. I have concluded with the land question, because I think it of great importance, and if your Lordships should concur with me you will go far to show the Irish people that, while you are ready to act with justice, you are not disposed to encourage that vague hope of alterations which would lead to mischief instead of good. The other Resolutions are principally confined to the Church question, and they lay down two great principles—principles by which, as was so well said in the other House of Parliament, in our legislation for Ireland we ought to be guided. The first is, that we should legislate, as far as possible, according to the wishes of the Irish people; and the second is, that in this important question of the Irish Church we ought to do full and impartial justice to the Irish people in the same spirit as, if the circumstances of the two countries were reversed, we should desire the Irish people should do unto us. My Lords, I am persuaded you are bound to adopt those principles, because they are founded on justice and good sense. Justice requires that we ought not, even if we had the power, to impose upon Ireland a system which we know if applied to ourselves would meet with the most determined opposition; and which was attempted to be applied to Scotland, and which fortunately evoked from the Scotch not only determined but successful resistance. On grounds of policy the case of Ireland seems still more clear. My Lords, it seems to me that Ireland as she is is a source not of strength, but of weakness. She constantly calls for deep anxiety from every reflecting statesman, and she would, in the event of our being involved in a dangerous foreign war, if her present state of feeling remains unaltered, be a source of serious danger. My Lords, I am persuaded that you ought to make an attempt to conciliate the Irish people. But I anticipate being told in answer to the arguments I have used that the policy I have recommended would not succeed in gaining the affections of the great body of the Irish people, while it would offend our only true friends—the Protestants of the North. It is not my wish, and still less is it my duty, in discussing this great subject, to avoid any difficulty that may be raised. I therefore do at once confess that I do not look for an immediate settlement of the affairs of Ireland from the adoption of the course which I recommend. I know that political evils of long standing admit only of gradual cure. But that is no reason why we should not begin. We ought not to allow that we have but little confidence in the power of justice. I am persuaded if you can only convince the Irish people that you mean to deal justly and fairly by them, and to abate nothing of what is their due—if you do that in a kindly spirit I am convinced that by degrees their animosity will subside. When I say I recommend you to do full justice in a kindly spirit to Ireland I am far from meaning that that should be a spirit of great indulgence. I am persuaded that the mistakes in our past Government were occasioned by the circumstance that we had to a great extent to make up by indulgence from our shrinking to do full justice, and, therefore, we exhibited weakness in the administration of the law. At all events, we felt that there was something wrong and rotten in the whole system, and, therefore, we shrank from carrying the law fully and impartially into effect. Let us only do all that justice and reason require, and then we can put down party processions, whether of Green or Orange, with a firm hand, and maintain the majesty of the law against all who may attempt to call it in question, whether they belong to one party or the other. That is the policy which I am convinced you ought to adopt if you are disposed to restore peace and prosperity to Ireland. And though I am quite aware that in the first instance a change in our policy may make the Protestants of the North for a while discontented, yet I am convinced that feeling would soon subside. What creates those religious animosities which have been the cause of so much violence and bloodshed in Ireland is, that both parties feel that the existing state of things cannot be permanent. It is felt by one party that they must do all they can to maintain and by the other that they must endeavour by every means to overthrow the existing arrangement. But let an arrangement be once effected on just principles, and I firmly believe that before many years angry feeling on both sides will subside, and that the same spirit will prevail in Ireland which obtains in countries where no unjust domination and no religious ascendancy of one party over another exist.

My Lords, there are, I believe, two objections which will be advanced against the policy which I recommend. In the first place, it will be said that it would be unjust to the people of the United Kingdom to apply any portion of the public revenues to the purposes which I have indicated. Well, my Lords, if I did not feel that the Irish people had so much to complain of the injustice of the system by which they have been governed, I would have hesitated

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to recommend the application of any part of the general revenues of the Empire to Irish purposes. I feel appalled when I consider the history of our government of Ireland, and how far we are from having redressed all the grievances of that country. I fully expect to hear the arguments that were used some time ago in the House of Commons with reference to Maynooth. It is said that it is a sin to give any support to the idolatry of the Church of Rome, and that we are not justified in contributing any money whatever to the revenues of the Roman Catholic Church. I meet that argument by saying that, according to the arrangement which I venture to propose, not a single shilling of English money would be applied to the support of that Church. The endowments of the Roman Catholic Church would be exclusively derived from Church property in Ireland; and the Parliamentary grant would go to the maintenance of the Protestant Church. I do not, however, rest my argument on so low a ground. I object to the present system as unsound in principle, and as directly contrary to the principles of the religion we all profess. Who gives us the right to say that the Roman Catholic religion is false? Who are we that pretend to judge the religion of a large proportion of the inhabitants of this realm? The fundamental principles of Christianity are held in common with ourselves by the Roman Catholic Church. We say that they have corrupted the pure truth by the addition of human inventions. They say that we have without warrant despised the authority which belongs to the Church. Who is to decide between us? If numbers are to be the test of truth as between the two religions, it is clear we cannot claim to be right. If, on the other hand, the soundness of doctrine is to be tested by the character and conduct of those who profess it, the Roman Catholics need not shrink from the test. True it is that the Roman Catholic religion has been disgraced by men who, under the pretence of spreading the truth, have resorted to cruelty and oppression, and have advanced their own worldly interests. But is our own Church, or is any Christian Church, free from the reproach of having been so disgraced? I am afraid it is not so. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church can produce a long list of the names of men distinguished for their learning and virtue, and who have shown the sincerity of their faith by the purity of their lives and their devotion to the good of their fellow creatures. What right have we to maintain that the religion held by such men was a false religion? And what right have we to presume that it is so clearly so that it is our duty to legislate for Ireland on that assumption? My own opinion on the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is very decided; but does that give me a right to impose my opinions on others? Have not the Roman Catholics the same right to their opinion that I have to mine? In a country like this, inhabited by men of various religious opinions, unless we are prepared to respect each other's opinions, and not hold that we ourselves are necessarily right and that those who differ from us are necessarily wrong, we must give up all hope of civil peace, and of the advancement of that true religion which consists, not in the profession of faith, but in the practice of Christian charity and virtue.

I do not ask your Lordships to assent to or dissent from the views I have expressed. I simply ask your Lordships to declare by your vote that the state of Ireland requires consideration, that she cannot be left as she is, and that you are bound to make some vigorous effort to improve her condition, which has so long been a reproach to the British Crown. We have heard it stated in strong language in this House, and perhaps it has been stated in stronger language in the other House, that the deep feeling of animosity against Russia, which prevails in Poland is conclusive proof of Russia's misgovernment of that unhappy country. May not a similar conclusion be drawn against us from the state of Ireland while she continues as she is? I have shown you that disaffection in Ireland has not diminished, but has kept increasing, during the last thirty years. While this state of things exists, every advance which Ireland may make in other respects only increases our peril. If she increases in wealth and population and still remains disaffected, our position will become far more perilous than it is now. We are therefore in this condition—that, until we succeed in gaining the affections of the Irish people, every measure we pass for the benefit of Ireland only increases the evils of which we complain. The necessity for applying to Parliament for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus was clear evidence as to the state of Ireland; but I think it is the duty of the Government not merely to repress the outward symptoms of disaffection in that country, but to ascertain the true source of the danger, so that the danger itself might be removed. I cannot think that it is any excuse for them to say that they have been unable to devise measures for improving the condition of Ireland, and removing the disaffection of the people, for such an excuse is the same as saying that they are unequal to the duties with which they are intrusted. Still less is it an excuse to say that these are measures which they cannot venture to propose, because they think public opinion in this country is not prepared for them. There are, no doubt, many cases in which Ministers of the Crown have properly abstained from proposing measures which they themselves were in favour of, but which, in their opinion, public opinion was not prepared for. Such precedents, however, do not apply to cases where the highest interests are at stake. It is a degrading thing to suppose that the Government can properly deal with an important question like this by floating wherever the popular feeling may carry them. In cases like this it is their duty to act as guides; and they are bound, whatever may be the consequence, to propose such measures as they believe to be right, and to recommend to Parliament the course which they deem the best for securing the safety of the State. If they fail they are, at all events, preparing the way for the ultimate accomplishment of that which is right, and avoiding the possibility of allowing the nation, without warning and without check, to proceed on a course which must eventually lead to ruin. I say, therefore, that in a case of such importance as this the Government ought to have proposed a measure which was in their judgment calculated to avert danger from Ireland. After all that has occurred the Government ought to have come forward and laid down some clear and distinct line of policy. They have not done so, however, and therefore the duty devolves upon us of declaring in the proper Parliamentary manner our opinion that the condition of Ireland is one which ought not to be allowed to continue without serious efforts being made for its improvement, and I now conclude my remarks with the Motion of which I have given notice.

Moved, That the House will on Tuesday next resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the State of Ireland.—(*Earl Grey.*)

LORD DUFFERIN: My Lords, I think that I ought, perhaps, to make some apology for addressing your Lordships at this period of the evening, when so many other noble Lords are anxious to offer some remarks on the important topics which have been brought under the notice of your Lordships by the speech of the noble Earl (Earl Grey). I thought, however, that it might not be displeasing to this House, and not inconvenient for the purpose of the impending discussion, that some one who, like myself, is not identified with any political party or religious sect in Ireland, but whose material interests are connected with the prosperity of that country, should submit to your Lordships such facts and considerations in connection with the present condition of Ireland as his own personal experience and observation will enable him to do. And in endeavouring to discharge that task I can assure your Lordships that my sole aim and anxiety will be to put the House in possession of what I believe to be the actual and simple truth, without any endeavour to exaggerate or distort it. In the first place, I beg leave, both as a Peer of Ireland and as a Member of your Lordships' House, to tender my most hearty thanks to the noble Earl for having given us this opportunity of discussing the state of Ireland. When it has become necessary to apply such a severe measure of repression to that country as the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, it is right and fitting that we should as soon as may be enter upon an examination of the relations subsisting between the two countries, and that we should, however disheartening the task may be, take down the volume of Irish wrongs, which it was hoped had been closed for ever by the remedies which past Parliaments have provided, and go again, item by item, line by line, through the whole of that sorrowful account. But though approving the course adopted by the noble Earl as far as it enables your Lordships to consider the condition of Ireland, it will, nevertheless, be my duty to ask your Lordships to negative the Motion upon two grounds. The first objection to the Motion is on the ground of form. I believe it would be most inconvenient if the House were called upon, whether it went into Committee or not, to pronounce an opinion upon Resolutions with which it has not had an opportunity of making itself acquainted. It appears to me that in the course which the noble Earl has pursued in making his speech and reading his Resolutions, he has adopted the practice of the American duellist, who, first concealing a 12-barrelled pistol about his person, engages his antagonist in conversation, and then discharges the weapon at him through his pocket. But I also object to the Motion because I believe it is founded altogether on the erroneous assumption that the evils, the discontent, and the disaffection which it cannot be denied exist to a certain extent in Ireland are the result of legislation. In reality, however, they do not result from legislation, nor can they be removed to any considerable degree by any abnormal or exceptional legislation at the present moment. I do not for one moment mean to say that there are no remedial measures which can be applied to Ireland. Indeed, I should be sorry to make such an observation in regard to England or any other prosperous country; but what I do say is, that the subjects which are put forward as grounds of complaint by the promoters of the Fenian movement, and by the promoters of that wider sphere of discontent which also exists, though I believe it to be extremely attenuated, are not the result of any legislation or want of legislation, but are to be traced, in the first place, to a traditional hostility to this country, engendered by evils long since abolished; secondly, to certain peculiarities in the national character; and thirdly, to the operation of certain natural laws which neither the ingenuity of statesmen nor the legislative omnipotence of Parliament can pretend to control. Now, in order to ascertain how far this view of the case is correct, I would ask your Lordships to consider what are the things of which complaint is made by those who represent themselves as champions either of the Fenian movement or of the national party in Ireland. As far as I have studied the manifestoes issued by the leaders of the Fenian movement or their followers, I have only discovered three subjects of complaint within the competency of Parliament. The first of these is that which enlists the sympathy of the noble Earl—namely, the Established Church; the second is the right of the tenant to compensation for improvements; and the third, the extensive emigration. I ask your Lordships to examine the three counts of the indictment preferred against the Imperial Government. The first inquiry is as to whether the disaffection now existing in Ireland can be referred to any one of them; and the next is whether any change which we could make would have the effect of extinguishing that disaffection. Now, with regard to the Established Church in Ireland, the noble Earl has made a very vigorous and a very formidable attack upon that Church; and I do not appear here as the advocate or apologist of the Established Church system in Ireland. In a great deal which has fallen from the noble Earl I am disposed to agree; but what I say is this — that the presence of the Established Church in Ireland has not the slightest to do with the present disaffection. If the £480,000 a year which constitute the revenues of that Establishment were transferred by a prospective measure to take effect at the death of the present incumbents, I do not believe that would keep a single man from crossing the Atlantic or prevent the casting of a single Fenian bullet. The designs of the Fenians are directed as much against the moral supremacy of the Catholic priesthood as against the material emoluments of the Established Church. Persons connected with the Fenian movement have been heard to express regret at the passing of the Emancipation Act, on the ground that it kept men from their ranks who otherwise would have joined them. I am ready to acknowledge the anomalies of the Established Church in Ireland, and I am ready to argue the matter in the abstract—on general grounds of policy; but considering the humble position which I occupy in the Government, I think it will be more becoming of me not to follow the noble Earl through the details, or to trouble the House with any lengthened statement of my private opinion on the subject. I think it will be more convenient that I should proceed to the other subject, which other persons have considered to be a more essential element of Irish discontent—namely, tenant-right. My Lords, I admit at once that the inquiry how far the uneasiness which undoubtedly exists in the minds of the occupants of land is to be identified with the Fenian movement is a more difficult investigation than that connected with the Church: but, nevertheless, I am convinced I shall be able to show your Lordships that the agrarian revolution which the Fenians have in view in connection with the land is a thing entirely distinct from those extravagant pretensions advanced by persons who put themselves forward as the advocates of the tenants in Ireland; because while the small farmers are generally loyal and are interested in the security of land, their farmsteads and their cattle would be the first sacrifices to a successful Fenian insurrection. I do not propose this evening to enter into a minute investigation of the nature of the transactions between landlord and tenant in Ireland. I may, however, observe that as estates in Ireland are so subdivided it is very difficult for a landlord dealing with a number of tenants who do not occupy more than thirty acres, and some whose holdings are as small as five acres, to find the necessary buildings and farm accommodation for all his tenants. Moreover, it has become evident of late years that these small patches of ground cannot be cultivated with advantage, and consequently the landlord is reluctant to build four or five farmhouses, where, if the farms were of proper size, one would suffice. The result is, that it has become the practice for the tenant to make the improvements himself; but I think it right to say that this rule is not without an exception. Since 1847 no less a sum than £1,800,000 has been expended by the Irish landlords in the improvement of their properties, and of that amount no less than £75,000 has been expended on farm buildings, and £4,500 on the erection of cottages. But, notwithstanding this, it must be admitted that improvement by the tenant is the rule; and I must say that the Irish tenant without a lease is in a much more unfavourable position than a Scotch or an English tenant. But in consequence of circumstances to which I have referred, the Irish farmer is placed at a disadvantage in another respect—namely, the unwillingness of some landlords to grant leases. I think they are wrong. On the other hand, the Irish peasant has such a desire for the possession of land, that the small farmer cannot be induced to pass from the condition of an impoverished tenant to that of an independent labourer. He will make any promise and endure any privations to acquire the possession of land. I can understand that in countries where side by side with the small holdings of the peasants there are other means of absorbing the extra labour of the peasantry, and where thus there are means of preventing the perennial division of those small holdings, small farms may be found to answer; but I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my conviction that this system has been the curse of Ireland. In illustration of some of its evil effects I may observe that the small farmers, not being in a position to pay for labourers, are forced to take away their children from school at the very time when they ought to be receiving such an education as would enable them to earn their own livelihood. As long as their father is alive these children live in a worse position than that of any labourer, and when he dies their sole ambition is to divide his farm in small patches among them. From this state of things has sprung up that unfortunate competition for land from which we have the unprotected position of the tenant. As long as the old management of estates prevailed the evils of the system did not display themselves so strikingly; but when under the operations of the Incumbered Estates Act the old tenants were brought into contact with men of more businesslike habits who had bought the property to make money of it, those tenants became more sensible of their position; and hence the cry of tenant-right. But there could not be a greater mistake than to confound this appeal for what the tenants suppose to be their rights with the proposal of the Fenians for a re-distribution of land in Ireland; and it must be recollected that, no matter what law might be made to improve the relations of landlord and tenant in that country, such a law would not reach the people who are participators in this conspiracy. Such a law as this could be only prospective in its operation, and the question arises, how many people would it affect? The whole population of Ireland is 5,700,000; and the number of persons who hold farms is 438,000, and 164,000 of these hold on an average about ten acres; and these tenants, though they might benefit to a certain degree, could only derive the small benefit in proportion to their holding; and if you deduct the whole of the tenantry of Ulster, who are likely to lose more than they gain by any Tenant Right Bill that has the slightest chance of passing through the Houses of Parliament, your Lordships will see how infinitesimal must be the amount of discontent to be traced to this source. In fact, my Lords, it stands to reason that those very persons who are anxious for Parliamentary interference on the ground that they are about to lay out considerable sums of money on their farms would be the very last to jeopardize those important interests by embarking in so dangerous an enterprize as the Fenian insurrection. If it were necessary, I could prove that, were we to adopt some of the amendments in the law suggested by the more enthusiastic friends of the farmer, though ultimately these might prove beneficial, in all probability in their immediate effect they would be more likely to stimulate discontent than to extinguish it. Take, for instance, a very favourite improvement suggested in the North, and which I admit might be beneficial—I mean the taking away from the landlord of the right of distraint. Suppose that such a law was seen to be impending in either House of Parliament, what would be the immediate consequence? On every estate in Ireland where a heavy weight of arrears exists, no matter how indulgent the landlord may be, to protect his own interests he would at once call in those arrears; and however satisfactory to the philosopher and philanthropist such a clearing up of old scores would be, it is very doubtful whether you could persuade the unfortunate tenant, who suddenly finds himself overtaken by an unexpected demand for payment to the landlord of all that is due to him, that the legislation productive of such a demand is of the beneficent character which it is represented to be. In fact, the misfortune of the state of Ireland is this, that for a series of years the fabric of society has grown on a wrong foundation. In consequence of what I shall call a dispensation of Providence, the re-construction of that fabric has in some degree become necessary; but a state of transition in any community is always a state of suffering to a great number of individuals affected by it. Even by producing improvements which are likely to place the machinery of society on a better footing hereafter, by stimulating the progress of transition, you are very apt at the same time to increase the actual amount of discontent. Of one thing I am perfectly certain—that not any portion of the present disaffection in Ireland can be traced to neglect on the part of the Government in introducing laws for the improvement of the relations of landlord and tenant; although I may take this opportunity of stating that I think it would be very possible to improve that law and to render it, what it is not, as liberal as the law of landlord and tenant in either of the sister kingdoms. Now, my Lords, it only remains for me to notice the third ground of complaint cast in the teeth of the Imperial Government, and insisted on with considerable force by the noble Earl—namely, the excessive emigration which has taken place from Ireland during the last twenty years. It has been said by a very eminent person in another place that deep-seated indeed must be the evils of any country from whose shores so vast a proportion of the population is compelled to flee. With that observation I entirely and cordially agree. But the question is, are these evils the result of legislation, or are they due to causes entirely beyond the power of any Act of Parliament to deal with? Let us consider calmly and dispassionately the nature of this emigration. In the first place, I must be permitted to correct three misconceptions—namely, that emigration only commenced after the potato failure; that it was principally confined to the Celtic portion of the population; and that it was mainly stimulated by evictions carried out by the landowners. The fact is, that in the ten years previous to 1841 more than half a million of persons had already quitted the shores of Ireland; and on a comparison founded upon the denominational Census of 1834 and 1861, it will be found that, although over the whole of Ireland the decrease among the Celtic portion of the population might have been in a more rapid ratio, yet that in the purely agricultural districts the Protestant and the Roman Catholic emigration was nearly identical. How very little influence upon the emigration from Ireland is to be attributed to evictions by the landlords will be seen when I mention to your Lordships that on an average the number of evictions during the past few years has been from 600 to 700 annually, while the emigration has been from 80,000 to 110,000. And that some such change was necessary is amply proved from the following simple fact, which is one of the most significant that ever came under my notice, and which is vouched for on the conjoint authority of Archbishop Whately, Archbishop Murray, and Mr. More O'Ferrall:—In 1841 it appears that five persons were engaged in the cultivation of the soil in Ireland, where only two persons were engaged in similar operations in England; though at the same time the total agricultural produce of England was exactly four times the total of the agricultural produce of Ireland. The fact is, that the whole fabric of the State at that time was based on one of the most unsubstantial and insecure foundations on which any country ever existed. From the landlord in his mansion down to the peasant in his cabin, everyone was more or less dependent on the potato. Undoubtedly every man in those days was happy enough, and I believe they are looked back to as "the good old days before the potato famine." It is quite true that the poorest peasant could always find a patch of mountain where he could grow his favourite vegetable; there were always stones and mud at hand out of which to construct a cabin; there was always a bog near at hand to cut turf from; there was always a handsome girl to make him the father of twelve children in about a dozen years; and there was always the domestic pig to pay the rent. Potatoes, pigs, and children were propagated in a highly agreeable and free-hearted manner. But, my Lords, will anybody tell me that this species of existence is one to be regretted, or re-established, if that were possible? Will anyone say that the thousands and thousands of energetic, industrious men who are now pushing their way in the world on the other side of the Atlantic have been nothing benefited by the change imposed upon them, not through any interference on the part of Parliament, but by a most merciful interposition of Divine Providence. It is quite true that to the people themselves the crisis of transition was a period of great discomfort and great physical suffering. Naturally they resented the change; they felt aggrieved at being compelled to leave the fields and glens endeared to them by so many happy memories. But, once having made the change, that they neither regretted it nor failed to benefit by it is proved by one of the most touching facts which has probably ever occurred in the history of any nation. Within sixteen years from the commencement of this emigration the people who had quitted their native shores, almost in the guise of paupers, had actually remitted no less a sum than £12,000,000 for the purpose of enabling their friends and relations to share the happier prospects which were being opened up to them in their new country, whose wonderful fertility and scanty population at once stimulated their industry and rewarded their labour. These remittances of money, it is needless to add, were long anterior to any suggestions of Fenianism. There cannot be a greater mistake than to imagine that emigration is anything but a benefit to those that go and those that stay. If we compare the density of its population with that of other nations, we find that Ireland is still more densely populated than any European nation. In every square mile in Ireland there are 181 persons, in France 177, in Prussia 171, in Austria 148, in Scotland 101, and in Spain

90. Unhappily, the resources of Ireland, mineral, manufacturing, or natural, are in an inverse ratio to its population. At this moment there are in that country no more than 815,000 persons engaged in the pursuits of commerce or manufacture, while in England 5,500,000 are absorbed by these industries. On the other hand, there are in Ireland twice the number of persons engaged in cultivating an equal area of land to the numbers that are so engaged in England — in fact, there are probably 300,000 families, or 1,000,000 of persons, dependent on the land in Ireland, more than are needed for its proper cultivation. Although some exception may be taken to these figures, which I have taken from the Census tables of 1861, yet, nevertheless, the great fact still remains unqualified that a large proportion of the people of Ireland remain hanging on, as it were, to the skirts of society, and standing aloof from the disciplined ranks of labour. But, my Lords, perhaps it may be objected, that if we were only to develop the resources of Ireland, we shall find occupation for all these millions. That is an observation to the force of which I at once bow. I believe Ireland is capable of sustaining a far larger population than it has yet borne—I believe there are a hundred fountains of wealth still to be unsealed in Ireland; but what I say, my Lords, is this—for Heaven's sake do not keep thousands and thousands of industrious, able-bodied men in a degraded state of idleness until we shall have discovered the secret for unlocking those fountains of wealth and for attracting the necessary capital to work them. Of those who speak of developing the resources of Ireland, I would ask, how can you expect that the resources of any country can be developed as long as a state of insecurity prevails in the country? Thousands of years ago Aristophanes observed that Plutus was a most timorous person; and depend upon it Plutus is much too wise a person to trust himself in a Fenian agitation. Now, my Lords, in connection with this part of the subject it so happens that certain facts have come to my personal knowledge, and I think it desirable not only that your Lordships but also the public at large should be made acquainted with them. To those who have been carefully watching the progress of Ireland during the last three years I do not know that any symptom is so encouraging and hopeful as the evident desire which had begun to operate a short time ago among English capitalists to invest their money in Ireland. I observed in the summer of last year that an English company which had been formed for the purpose of spending a million and a half of money in building speculations in Ireland had commenced operations within three miles of where I live by purchasing land. But the Fenian agitation declared itself, and rather than continue their enterprize the promoters of the speculation sacrificed the capital which they had already invested, and disappeared out of the country. Another case is that of a gentleman who, having made his fortune in Manchester, left England for Drogheda, the birth place of his ancestors, and from a feeling of benevolence towards his fellow-countrymen he established a large cotton manufactory. In consequence of the cheapness of labour and the advantages offered by the waters of the Boyne for the manufacture of cotton he was able to prosecute the industry with success, and last summer half-a-dozen of his friends in Manchester went over to Ireland, from no motive of benevolence, but simply from a desire to share in the profits of what they hoped would be similarly successful ventures. Then the tourists who visit Ireland during the summer were a very large source of revenue to many of the towns and villages in the south of Ireland. The number of visitors to Killarney alone amounted to 500, representing an expenditure of several thousands, a week; but immediately the Fenian agitation occurred the whole of them left. I myself met them returning from Dublin in a panic, and after September not a dozen visitors showed themselves in the place. I could multiply instances such as these, my Lords, to show the way capital was turned aside as it was in the very act of flowing into the country. And the worst of it is, my Lords, that at that time, I have no hesitation in saying, notwithstanding the statement made by the noble Earl, Ireland was in a very prosperous position. And at this moment I declare Ireland to be in a very prosperous condition. The noble Earl unfortunately took it for granted that we should be ready to accede to his statement when he spoke to us of what he called "the admitted decline of Irish prosperity." I will not trouble your Lordships with too many statistics, but I will mention a few facts which I have culled from authentic Returns, and these will show the kernel of the case. In 1865 the cattle of Ireland was valued at two millions of money more than the valuation of the pre-

vious year; and the value of live stock at this moment is £26,000,000 in excess of what it was in 1841. Then if we turn to other agricultural statistics we find that during the last year 125,000 acres of land were brought under pasturage more than were cultivated in the previous year; and since 1841 200,000 acres of waste land have been reclaimed. Then we had 233,000 acres under flax last year, which is an advance of as much as 63 per cent on the cultivation of flax in 1861. Then, with regard to wages. The noble Earl stated that the Irish labourer was underpaid; but in my own county an Irish labourer can always earn 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 4*d.* per day; in harvest time he gets not less than 2*s.* a day; a railway labourer earns from 10*s.* to 12*s.* a week, while the carpenter, mason, and skilled workmen generally make from £1 to £2 a week. And Judge Longfield, who, I believe, will be accepted as an authority capable of forming a correct judgment upon these matters, states that the actual rise of wages in Ireland has amounted to 80 per cent within the last twenty years. Well, then, my Lords, if we again refer to the Poor Law, which is another test of the condition of the country, we shall find that in 1865 no less than 34,224 fewer persons were in receipt of relief than in 1863. If we turn to the police Return, we find the diminution of crime has been absolutely marvellous. The cases have been reduced from 10,000 in 1841 to 4,600 cases in 1850. Then, if we go to the deposit banks, we find that there has been an increase from £4,000,000 in 1863 to £11,000,000 in 1865, and at this moment they stand £1,000,000 in excess of the largest sum deposited at any sime during the last twenty years. If we look to our manufactories, we find that the power-looms in the North of Ireland have been actually doubled within the last five years; the exports of Belfast have doubled within one year, and although I quote from memory, I think I am justified in saying that the actual wealth of Ireland at the present time is £52,000,000 in excess of what it was in 1841. These facts, I think, show plainly enough that Ireland is far from retrograding; but I have something even more surprising still to relate. It is that Ireland has outstripped England in its progress in agricultural wealth. England's position in 1815 was stated at £41,000,000, and in 1856 it amounted only to £38,000,000; and whereas in 1815 the farmers' profits were put down at £21,700,000, in 1856 they were estimated at £24,224,000. It may, perhaps, be asked to what is the present disaffection of Ireland to be attributed if it is not to be accounted for by the existence of the Established Church or by the alleged unsatisfactory condition of the land question. I believe that that question can be easily answered. Let us see for a moment what have been the invariable characteristics which have signalized the periods of disaffection in Ireland. In every case demonstrations of a rebellious character in Ireland have been propagated from without. In 1798 the rising in Ireland followed upon the French Revolution. In 1848, too, the events of Ireland were the consequence of European disturbances; and the abortive attempts of 1866 may be traced even more clearly to foreign influence. It may with great justice be demanded why the Irish people are always so willing to lend themselves to the wiles of these alien sedition-mongers? but that question is very easily answered. I must, however, first of all deny that the Irish people generally are disaffected. I believe that, as a whole, the Irish nation is essentially loyal and contented; but there does undoubtedly exist among the lowest class of the Irish people a traditional hostility to this country—a feeling engendered, no doubt, by the evil treatment that Ireland has met with at the hands of England during past centuries—a feeling which it is, of course, absurd to expect will disappear at once. Nothing, however, is more remarkable than the loyal and enthusiastic devotion which pervades the minds of the Irish people towards what they regard as a national cause. I would only remind your Lordships, as an instance of the attachment of the Irish peasant to what he considers his faction or party, of the feud which existed between two villages—I do not for the moment remember their names—in which the respective parties were dignified by the appellations of the "two-year olds" and the "three-year olds." Those factions availed themselves of every opportunity they could find to break their adversaries' heads, and to commit upon one another every kind of cruelty, and all on account of a dissension which had been completely forgotten in the lapse of time. When therefore a large number of adventurers spread themselves over the country, opening the beerhouses and scattering handfuls of silver in all directions, telling a poor and excitable population that an American fleet was on its way to Bantry

Bay for the purpose of bestowing upon each of the enraptured listeners a smart house and property, it is not to be wondered at that they have been to some extent successful, although it is satisfactory to notice that the victims of these delusions are confined to the most ignorant of the masses. Your Lordships now will observe that each successive attempt at revolution in Ireland has been weaker than its predecessors. In 1798 many members of the higher ranks of society in Ireland were involved in the rising; in 1848 the attempt was weaker, for it only reached the level of the middle classes; and now, in 1866, the movement is confined to the lowest and the most ignorant portion of the people. The disaffection which at present exists in Ireland cannot, I believe, be removed by any exceptional legislation which you may attempt. That disaffection is entirely unconnected with the Irish Established Church, and has nothing to do with the landlord or tenant question. It is, moreover, entirely unshared by those who have anything to lose, or by any religious community who recognize the first principles of morality. It has been propagated by filibustering hordes among the ignorant and uneducated class of the people, whose material comfort and social status have unfortunately been compromised by the changes which have taken place in Ireland since 1846. Although I have endeavoured to prove that the present disaffection in Ireland is not attributable to any want of proper legislation, and that it is not to be removed by special enactments, I am anxious to guard myself from the imputation of believing that no legislation is required for Ireland. On the contrary, I believe that much remains to be done; and when the suitable time arrives your Lordships will, I doubt not, give your best attention to any remedial measures which may be proposed. Still less am I disposed to think that nothing has been done by the moral influence of those who are connected with Ireland by ties of property. It is to them, indeed, that we have to look for assistance in our attempts to effect the regeneration of that country; and it appears to me that those who derive a large portion of their revenue from Ireland incur a very grave responsibility if they confine their interest in their fellow-countrymen and their tenants to ascertaining the colour of their money. It is not, however, only the benevolence or the generosity of the landed proprietors of Ireland that can effect a change in the feelings of the people. What they demand is your sympathy, the actual presence of yourselves, your wives, and your daughters, moving among them in the villages, active in the promotion of works of charity, thus convincing the people that you regard them as your fellow-countrymen, and Ireland as your country. I do not, however, wish to exaggerate these influences. I believe it would be as wrong to place our hopes for the future prosperity of Ireland upon the exertions and influence of individual landlords as it would be to expect Ireland to be regenerated by exceptional Parliamentary legislation. It is on higher, wider, and more powerful agencies that we must fix our hopes; and those agencies have already commenced their operations in the more equal distribution of the population in the fields of labour and employment. In the meantime no other course is open to us but to pursue that policy so happily inaugurated by the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and with a temperate, firm, and irresistible hand to protect the industry, the property, and the education of the country against the evil designs of the unprincipled adventurers by whom they are assailed, and to save, as far as possible, the dupes of these adventurers from the consequences of their folly.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH: My Lords, if your Lordships are pleased to grant to the noble Earl the Committee for which he has asked, it will then, I think, be the proper time for me to meet his statements respecting the Established Church in Ireland. I will, therefore, for the present, confine myself to a few observations. It appears to me that the noble Earl wishes to dis-establish us because the members of the United Church in Ireland form the minority of the population. But this calculation will only hold good if you sever the Irish from the English branch of the Established Church, and this severance would be contrary to the history of the last 700 years as well as to the Act of Union. In the year 1172, at the Council of Cashel, the usages, customs, and the doctrines of the Irish Church were conformed to those of the Church of England; and, to accomplish this object, in the reign of Henry II. tithes were for the first time established in Ireland. We have many instances recorded of the intercommunion of the Churches of England and Ireland in that time. In the Council of Constance, in 1414, the Ambassadors of the English King claimed a separate vote as representing the Churches of England and Ireland. The question was entertained by the Council, and, after discussion, was allowed. At the Reformation, in the oath of supremacy to be taken in Ireland, under the Irish Statute, 28 *Henry* VIII. c. 13, s. 6, the King was to be acknowledged as the supreme head of "the Church of England and Ireland;" and in the oath of supremacy to be taken in England, under the Statute 25 *Henry* VIII. c. 1, s. 11, the King was to be acknowledged as the supreme head of "the Church of England and Ireland." At the time of the Union the two Churches were consolidated into one. Lord Castlereagh, in proposing that Union, addressed the following words to the Irish Parliament:—

> "One State, one Legislature, one Church—these are the leading features of the system, and without identity with Great Britain in these three great points of connection we never can hope for any real or permanent security. The Church in particular, while we remain a separate country, will ever be liable to be impeached on local grounds. When once incorporated with the Church of England it will be placed upon such a strong and natural foundation as to be above every apprehension and fear from adverse interest, and from all fretting and irritating circumstances connected with our colonial situation. As soon as the Church Establishments of the two kingdoms shall be incorporated into one Church, the Protestant will feel himself at once identified with the population and property of the Empire, and the Establishment will be placed on its natural basis. In accordance with these principles the 5th Article of the Treaty of Union enacted 'That the Churches of England and Ireland be united into one Episcopal Church, and that the continuance and preservation of the said United Church, as the Established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union.'"

Now, my Lords, the Act of Union was a national compact, and as long as that Act remains in force there is "one State, one Legislature, one Church," and that Church is the Church of the Empire, and consequently the members of the Irish Church do not constitute a small separate minority, but form a part of the Church of the great majority of the Empire. The noble Earl, in referring to the Act of Union, said that it was the Act of a Parliament which only represented a part of the people; but the noble Earl forgets that the Act of Union was approved by the Roman Catholic prelates acting on behalf of the Roman Catholic people of Ireland, and that the then Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin was one of the principal agents who aided in bringing about the Union. It must, therefore, be admitted that the Act of Union was not the Act of a minority, but was a national Act, approved at the time by the great majority of the Irish people. Neither must it be forgotten that the Established Church of Ireland comprises within it at least eight-ninths of the landed proprietors of the country, and that it is they who support the Church. The noble Earl says that the money comes eventually from the land. That may be perfectly true; but the tenant makes the best bargain he can with his landlord; he then pays his rent, and it can make no difference to him whether his landlord does or does not pay a portion of his income to the Church. By this means the Roman Catholic tenant never comes into collision with the Protestant clergy. It is true that one-ninth of the Irish Church revenue derived from the land is paid by Roman Catholics; but I have never heard that any one of them ever objected to pay their porportion—on the contrary, the payments are in every case made willingly and with regularity. I do not see any possible advantage that can accrue from adopting the proposal of the noble Earl to throw the whole property of the Church into one common fund, to be assisted by a grant from the Consolidated Fund, and then apportioned to the requirements of the three religious denominations in Ireland. In the first place, I think I can show by a few statistics that the property of the Irish Established Church is barely sufficient to meet its wants. There are altogether 1,510 benefices in Ireland. Dividing the whole net income of the clergy by these 1,510 benefices would give an average income of £245 to each benefice, which is £55 less than Mr. Justice Shee stated in 1854 was the smallest sum that should be given to clergymen. Again, the congregations are much larger than, perhaps, your Lordships imagine, the total number of Church people in Ireland being 700,000, or 459 persons to each of the 1,510 benefices, which is a larger average congregation than that of the country districts of England, if towns containing upwards of 10,000 persons are excluded from the calculation. Each of these benefices contains on the average 13,800 acres; so that the income of £245 on an average can scarcely be regarded as too high a remuneration for the services required from the clergy. Of the fund in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, about £30,000 is applicable to building, enlarging, and repairing churches, and this sum is not at all adequate for those purposes. The

Irish congregations, however, are extremely liberal, and within a very few years they have contributed upwards of £100,000 in aid of that fund. The noble Earl was also in error when he stated the property of the Roman Catholic Church was handed over to the Protestant Church at the time of the Reformation. In the first place, tithes were given to the Church of Ireland for conforming to the Church of England by Henry II.; that was the condition of the grant, and when the majority of prelates and clergy of the Church of Ireland adopted the reformation the property of the Church followed the change. No doubt at that time a great part of the abbey lands were given to the landed proprietors; but that was not transferring them to the rival Church. No less than 114,218 acres of glebe lands, which never belonged in any way to the Roman Catholic Church, have been given since that time to the Established Church. Again, the funds of the Established Church have been increased at different times by the liberality of private persons; so that much of the property of the Church as it stands at present may be said to be a new creation. Again, the value of the glebe lands was but small when they came into the possession of the Established Church, and above 700 glebe-houses have been built upon them, since the beginning of this century, whereby their value has been largely increased. Another very important argument in favour of the maintenance of the Established Church is, that it is the occasion of 2,000 educated gentlemen residing in the various country districts exercising a vast influence for good over the population, and that thus the great evil of absenteeism is in some degree mitigated. The plan sketched by the noble Earl would reduce the remuneration of the clergy to such a degree that no educated gentleman would accept it. The proposition, then, of the noble Earl would lead to no good; while, on the contrary, it would shake the foundation of property, would give contentment to no party, and would most probably be rejected by all. I therefore ask your Lordships, in your wisdom, to decline to accept such a proposition.

Lord HOUGHTON: My Lords, while agreeing in much that has fallen from my noble Friend who introduced this subject (Earl Grey), I do not think that any great advantage is obtained from that argument which he intended to lay down—namely, that every other process of conciliating Ireland had been tried, and therefore it was absolutely necessary to dis-endow the Irish Church, because there was nothing else left of which the Irish nation could justly complain, or which was in any degree remediable by law. I cannot entirely go with my noble Friend on that point. I believe there are many subjects connected with Ireland of a material character to the revision of which we may address ourselves with great advantage to that country. I quite agree with my noble Friend that the matter cannot be argued purely upon economical grounds. It is quite clear in all Irish questions—even including that of tenant-right, which would seem at first sight as much as possible nothing more than a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence—that there is a great deal beyond that, and that it touches the whole subject of the relations between landlord and tenant as produced in Ireland by the course of events. If that relation was the same in Ireland as it is in England, the question of tenant-right would never have arisen; or, if it had, it would have received immediate solution. We are not strangers to the name in England—it forms part of the customs of the country in a portion of England, and yet it never leads to any social disturbance or any political ill-feeling. And why? Because with us the relations between landlord and tenant are, on the whole, really satisfactory. Your Lordships know that on your large estates your tenants-at-will have a perfect sense of security, not only in what may be called the customs of the country, but also in what may be called an honourable engagement. A tenant-at-will knows that as long as he pays his rent he is as safe as if he held under a lease; he makes his improvements and he enjoys them, and if he goes out of the farm the incoming tenant pays for them, and the tenant-at-will does not suffer. Now, unfortunately, you have not that relation subsisting between the landlord and tenant in Ireland. On the contrary, you have a continued and abiding distrust, which runs through the whole of that relation, and is the unhappy moral foundation upon which all the evil rests. I do not pretend to say that this is the fault of the Irish landlord, for it originally rested on violent confiscation—confiscation still remembered, still rankling in the minds of the Irish people. And, this being so, I think the landlords of Ireland would do well to see whether they could not make some surrender of that absolute right of property which we in this country enjoy, and by so doing derive considerable material advantage by conciliating their tenants. When I saw such a deputation as went up the other day to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this subject—some of the gentlemen who composed it may be said to hold extreme opinions, but there were some leading landlords of Ireland among them—when I saw their recommendation tending to induce the landlords of Ireland as far as possible to grant leases to their tenants, I could not help thinking that there was something in that deputation far beyond a mere demonstration of popular feeling. I do not mean to say that the landlords of Ireland could come into the same relations with their tenants which prevail with us in England; but it is impossible to read the blue book which has been laid before this House and not to feel that there is, from whatever cause, an abiding distrust between a large portion of the landlords and tenants in Ireland, to which I do think it will be necessary in some degree to apply a remedy. Whether that remedy shall be applied by some alteration in the law of contract, by determining that, when a tenant improves, the improvements which he makes shall be submitted to arbitration—which I think was the proposal of the noble Lord (Lord Dufferin) who lately addressed you with so much ability—or in some other way, it is not for me as an Englishman to say; but this I will say—it is impossible for any man who wishes for the permanent prosperity of the people of Ireland not to see that something must be done to alter the relations between landlord and tenant in that country. There is no doubt, if it were possible to determine what those improvements are, and to see that they are legitimate improvements, and not fictitious or collusive arrangements, in that case the landlord himself would be a considerable gainer, even though he placed himself for a short time in a less favourable position. There is another point, my Lords, to which I think the attention of Parliament must be directed, and that is the question of the education of the middle classes in Ireland. There was no man who hailed with more delight than I did the establishment of the Queen's Colleges, but it is impossible not to feel that these Colleges have not realized all the hopes with which they were initiated by Sir Robert Peel. At the present moment the number of Roman Catholics attending the Queen's Colleges is only about the same as that of the members of the Church of England—thus showing that these establishments have by no means supplied the want of middle-class education to a large mass of the people. There is reason to believe that some arrangements are now in progress to remedy that defect, but as that question will probably come before us in a distinct form I will not detain your Lordships with the consideration of it now. I will merely say that when it comes before us I hope we shall not allow ourselves to be guided by our pre-possessions, or by considerations of what in the abstract we think best. Devoted as I have always been to the cause of mixed education in Ireland, and though I should give up any part of that system with regret, at the same time I think it might be well that we should do so. But, my Lords, the question to which my noble Friend mainly directed our attention was of a much more difficult kind. I cannot shut my eyes to the conviction that upon our settlement of that question much of the future of Ireland depends, and I say, with the greatest respect to the most rev. Prelate who has last addressed you (the Archbishop of Armagh), that the time is past when many of his arguments would have power even in your Lordships' House. In the present current of public opinion I do not think that the Irish Church can stand either on the basis of the Act of Union, or upon what is a much stronger basis, that it is admitted to be the religion of the land of Ireland. There is no doubt that according to historic analogy the Church has ever gone with the land, and therefore, although we are always told by foreigners that the Church in Ireland is something monstrous, there is really no reason why we should think so. It has gone hitherto with the land, and according to the prevalent notions of the relations between Church and State. It is not for me to tell your Lordships that the relations which have hitherto prevailed are considerably altered, and the arguments which at one time seemed absolutely omnipotent will now have little effect upon your Lordships' mind. I cannot go further without laying down what I consider a sound principle—namely, that in all our future discussions with respect to the Church in Ireland we must consider solely and simply the advantage of that Church to Ireland. We cannot take it in its relation to the Church of England or to the State of England—upon its own merits, upon its own utility, upon its own advantages it must stand or fall. But there is another question intimately connected with that of the Church of England in Ireland, to which I think we might apply ourselves, and to which I should be glad that the attention of Her Majesty's Government were directed. It is more than thirty years since I called the attention of the other House of Parliament to the question of the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. I believe that if the measure proposed by Mr. Pitt, and assented to even by George III., and continually kept present to the minds of its authors, had been carried out, we should now have a different state of things in Ireland. The abandonment of that proposition has been one of the main causes of the little progress which has been made in drawing closer the relations between England and that country. Why are the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland so different from their brethren all over the world? Why is it that in every other country the Catholic clergy have always supported civil order and have been the great conservators of society in the State, while in Ireland they have been the promoters of treason and the engines of sedition? There was little else for them to do. There was no position in which your Lordships could imagine a priest, however honourable and right-minded, feeling himself sincerely loyal to England and devoted to the interests of the United Kingdom. I hope the able speech delivered a few nights ago and this debate will cause the subject to receive the attention of the Government. I do not believe what is said of the difficulty of dealing with this question. Let it not be approached in a spirit of domination — let it be approached in such a spirit that it cannot be implied we wish to gain anything from the Roman Catholic clergy—and means may be found to conciliate the heads of the Roman Catholic Church. The real question is the independence of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland. Surely there is no degradation to the Catholics of Ireland in their clergy being placed in such a position that they shall not be dependent solely on the dole of the people. If they were not so dependent, how differently they would look on the question of emigration! If they were properly provided for, so that they were unaffected by the diminution of their congregations, they would not regard emigration as involving a pecuniary loss to themselves. They would feel themselves more on an equality with the clergy of the Anglican Church in Ireland, to whom they would no longer present such a contrast as they do now. If you can begin by remedying to some extent the present anomalous position of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland, you may come—as I believe you must some day come—to the ulterior question of the present condition of the Protestant Church in Ireland. I believe all these questions may come within the grasp of the statesmanship of the next few years. How it must shock, affront, and pain the Irish spirit, not in the lower class only, but in all classes, to feel that the priest is in a position of degradation, while the clergy of the Anglican Church are in a position of power, wealth, and honour. When a Catholic gentleman leaves his house for a barn, crowded with worshippers to the exclusion of numbers who remain outside, and on the way sees the pleasant Protestant church where service is decorously conducted, however loyal he may be, he must feel a sense of degradation, and a sense of injustice must rankle in his heart and prevent him feeling as one united with Englishmen. These are questions for the next few years, to be dealt with in a generous spirit, in a spirit of conciliation, and in the feeling that both Irishmen and Englishmen are subjects of an Imperial Government. Upon all questions of importance to Ireland let Irishmen show the united front Scotchmen do upon Scotch questions; and they will then be settled with less difficulty. I trust we may live to see the time when Irish difficulties will have disappeared, and when Irishmen and Englishmen may be a thoroughly united people.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON: My Lords, the noble Earl who initiated this debate (Earl Grey) stated that he only wished us to declare that Ireland was in an unsatisfactory state; and had he confined his speech to the support of that proposition it would have been unanswerable, for it cannot be denied that the state of the country is eminently unsatisfactory, when three-fourths of it is disaffected; but the Resolutions which the noble Earl read to the House are so precise and definite in their character that his Motion of to-night must be construed by the light of them. The noble Lord the Under Secretary for War (Lord Dufferin) has described Fenianism as the last expiring wave of former antagonism; but it seems to me to be the greatest wave of all. Previous movements against this country were led by the higher and the richer classes, and were backed up by an immense amount of patriotic sentiment; but Fenianism has the support of the lowest and least respectable class: it has descended to mere Jacobinism. It is more even than agrarian: it is an attack upon life, property, and everything that constitutes civilized society. Taking into consideration what is notoriously the present condition of Ireland, no reasonable man can deny that the state of Ireland is unsatisfactory; and, if so, it deserves the attention of Parliament, and justifies this Motion. The Under Secretary for War drew a pleasing picture of the state of Ireland, and described it as making progress in almost every department of civilized life—in the reclamation of land, in commerce, in the diminution of pauperism, in the reduction of crime. Indeed, he represented it as almost marching abreast of England. I do not dispute his knowledge of Ireland, but if this be so why is it that Ireland is in the state we know it to be? The noble Earl (Earl Grey), however, went beyond the condition of Ireland, and one-half or two-thirds of his speech was an attack upon the Irish Church. That is a question upon which I do not desire to enter at this time. The noble Earl has announced twelve distinct Resolutions. Of the twelve, two relate to land tenure, one is general, and the other nine go to the very existence of the Established Church in Ireland, proposing alterations so extensive as to amount almost to abolition. Of course, it is quite open to any Member of your Lordships' House to bring forward the question of the Irish Church; but when it is to be brought forward it is desirable we should have notice, in order that we may be prepared for the discussion. I do not think we ought to go into Committee, ostensibly to consider the unsatisfactory state of Ireland, which results from a combination of causes, and in reality to discuss Resolutions which involve the existence of the Established Church in Ireland. For these reasons, while agreeing with much that fell from the noble Earl, I shall feel it my duty to vote against his Motion.

THE MARQUESS OF CLANRICARDE said, he was decidedly of opinion that the Established Church of Ireland ought to be retained. He was in favour of the existence of Established Churches in all countries. Ireland furnished an extreme instance of an Established Church, and he did not wish to do away with it. He did not wish to see the voluntary system adopted in any country; and he considered that it would be undesirable to mix up the funds of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches. He would make provision for the Roman Catholic clergy, but not out of the revenues of the Established Church. The two things ought to be kept entirely distinct. He had been informed that the Regium Donum was insufficient; and if such were the case it ought, in his judgment, to be reasonably augmented. With regard to the difficult subject of tenant-right, he thought legislation ought to be mainly directed to facilitating voluntary agreements between landlords and tenants. He confessed that the speech of his noble Friend the Under Secretary for War (Lord Dufferin) appeared to him of rather too roseate a hue, when he spoke of Fenianism as the last wave of Irish discontent. Everything in the present state of the country was pleasing to his noble Friend. The people were loyal, wages were high; but still, everybody who could go was leaving the country. The emigration from Ireland was a very serious matter, and would deprive us of great facilities for recruiting our army. They must not suppose in dealing with Ireland when the last Fenian left our troubles were over; for unless something were done to improve the condition of the Irish people, we should have people like the Fenians (though they might not be called by that name) periodically making their appearance, because they would have good grounds for thinking it was the weakest part of the British Empire. Until Ireland was allowed to share in a larger degree than she had done hitherto in the prosperity of England, there would not be peace and quiet in the country.

THE EARL OF BELMORE said, that he had listened with considerable surprise to the remarks which the noble Lord who spoke last but two (Lord Houghton) had made at the beginning of his speech. He lived a good deal in Ireland, and knew something about that country, and he could assure the noble Lord that, as a general rule, landlords did not seek to appropriate the property of their improving tenants. In Ulster, where tenant-right prevailed, tenants, unless evicted for non-payment of rent, on quitting their farms usually got as much, and often more, than their improvements were worth, or had cost them. Cases of hardship, sometimes, no doubt did occur, and these were often in cases where persons who had made their money purchased land,

and were anxious to make as much profit as possible. But, as a rule, tenants had confidence in their landlords where landlords were actuated by principles of justice and influenced by the feelings of gentlemen. With regard to the question of compensation, he fully admitted that a tenant who had laid out money on improvements had a right, if he quitted the farm, to receive the value of his improvements; but the great practical difficulty would be to obtain competent and trustworthy valuators; and, on the other hand, landlords ought to be able to set off deteriorations. Some tenants were very fond, for instance, of making a number of useless ditches, which cost a great deal to level when a farm was given up, and which, if made across the face of a hill (and hills in Ireland were very apt to be wet), did irremediable harm. Then as to the Irish Church, one of the main reasons why the Reformation had not the same success in Ireland as had attended it in England was well stated by Dr. Todd in his *Life of St. Patrick.* The rev. doctor remarked—

> "It is highly probable that had the Reformation been presented to the Irish people in a Gaelic dress, and in the Gaelic language, it would have been accepted without difficulty. But, unfortunately, the reverse was the case. The Reformation was almost studiously brought into Ireland in ostentatious connection with the Church of the Pale and the English colonists; it was planted on the basis of Puritanism and iconoclastic outrage; and to this day the influence of that unhappy mistake continues to destroy the usefulness and paralyze the energies of the Irish clergy. The Reformed doctrines were regarded by the oppressed and degraded natives of Ireland as essentially English; and accordingly they were rejected without examination, and spurned with the detestation and abhorrence with which the English and everything coming from England were, as a matter of course, received; and, as if effectually to prevent the Reformed faith spreading among the lower orders of the people, no part of the Bible was printed in the vernacular during the whole of the 16th century, and no edition of the Prayer Book appeared in Irish till 1608, more than seventy years after the commencement of the Irish Reformation!"

At the Reformation, one-half the tithes were held by the monasteries, and passed into the hands of laymen; 680 parishes became impropriate, and 1,480 glebes passed into lay hands. Then the poverty of the clergy and the consequent union of parishes was another reason. Dean Swift observed—

> "The clergy having been stripped of the greatest part of their revenues, the glebes being generally lost, the tithes in the hands of laymen, the churches demolished, and the country depopulated, it was necessary to unite small vicarages."

The Earl of Belmore

And Sir John Davies, who was Attorney General and Speaker of the House of Commons in 1609, says that, in Cavan, many vicars had no more than 40*s.* a year, a sum which, even allowing for the difference in the value of money, was quite insufficient to support persons in that position. Then there was the tithe of agistment—that is, the title of dry and barren pasturage—concerning which, in 1735, the Irish House of Commons passed a Resolution that it ought no longer to be paid. The landlords, and probably their tenants, acting on this Resolution (although there was no statute passed), declined to pay this tithe, and it had never since been paid to this day. Some noble Lord had spoken of the wealth of the clergy, but their average incomes, excluding stipendiary curates, was only £245 a year, and there were 276 out of 1,570 benefices below £100 a year. So that the Irish Church should be considered as a poor rather than a rich Church; and if, as the noble Earl on the cross-benches (Earl Grey) suggested, the income were to be divided equally between the three Churches — the noble Earl shakes his head; well rateably — and why the noble Earl omitted the very important body of Wesleyan Methodists he did not understand—the provision each clergyman would receive would be manifestly inadequate. Why did he not propose to take the Regium Donum, and the Maynooth grant also, because if you were to take the endowments of one body for public purposes, it would logically follow that you must take the endowments of all. A noble Earl (the Earl of Carnarvon) had talked of the very unsatisfactory state of things in Ireland, but he (the Earl of Belmore) rather took the view and approved of the figures of his noble Friend the Under Secretary of State for War. He thought that those who took their opinions not from newspapers and from speeches emanating from people whose object was to get up a case against the English Government, but from experience, would (putting the question of Fenianism, and the, he hoped, temporary discontent connected with it out of the question) agree that the country was steadily advancing in prosperity. Then, as to the question of railways, spoken to by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Clanricarde). No doubt, some of them were in a very bad condition, but he attributed this not to legislation, nor so much to local circumstances as to the manner in which they had been got up. If you pay a contractor £3,000 in shares for £2,000 of work (and he was told that was a very moderate statement of what had been done in some instances), you could not expect prosperity. The noble Marquess compared them unfavourably with English lines, but he could not admit that the case was exceptional. Whilst the Irish system as a whole paid 1½ per cent on the average, the English Great Eastern line, which had about the same capital (or approaching to it), not only paid nothing to its ordinary shareholders, but had great difficulty in paying its preference shareholders. Some people said it was the duty of the Government to advance a large sum of money to subsidize, as he must call it, the Irish railway companies. One well-known gentleman (Mr. Dargan) laid it down that it was the duty of Government to advance, or, as was clearly pointed out by Lord Overstone with regard to another matter the other night, to lend the credit of Government to withdraw from investments in England in which it would otherwise be employed a sum of money—to do what? Why to set free a corresponding amount of Irish capital now invested in railway loans for investment in other ways. Now he (the Earl of Belmore) was of opinion that to subsidize trade in any way was very bad policy, and what was bad political economy in England could not be good political economy in Ireland. In conclusion, he was of opinion that the future prosperity of the country must be looked for, not from the results of legislation, but from the energy and self-reliance of the people.

Lord LYVEDEN said, that if his noble Friend pressed his Motion to a division he should fell bound to vote against him, though he agreed in many of his propositions. The time at which the Motion was brought forward was injudiciously chosen, and the manner in which his noble Friend's propositions were submitted to the House was inconvenient. A moment when insurrection was smouldering in Ireland would be an extraordinary one at which to deal with the questions now introduced for their Lordships' consideration. If their Lordships went into Committee of the whole House, they must discuss all the evils which were said to exist in Ireland; and as they could not remedy all those evils they would only aggravate them by discussion. Then the manner of the Motion was inconvenient, because he had never heard of a proposition to go into Committee without a Motion stating more definitely than did his noble Friend's the object for which they were to do so. His noble Friend had read the Resolutions which he meant to propose in Committee; but no man could make up his mind on such Resolutions from merely hearing them read. The noble Earl ought to have laid those Resolutions on the table before he asked the House to go into Committee. In many of the proposals he agreed. Indeed, for a number of years such proposals had been with him a sort of programme of what the Liberal party ought to do in Ireland. It had long been his opinion that they ought to deal with the Irish Church and with the Catholic clergy. Their Lordships had heard that Ireland was discontented, and they had heard also that she was prosperous. Strange this indeed —disaffection and prosperity existing in a country at the same time! He did not think the discontent in Ireland arose from any present misconduct of the Imperial Government, or from the fact that certain measures might be useful for that country. There was always something to be done for England herself and for the colonies; and one might as well allege this as a reason why there should be discontent in the mother country and in our distant possessions, as say that the present discontent in Ireland was owing to the want of those useful measures. He believed the feeling arose from a long rooted hostility towards the conqueror arising from past misgovernment and from an intense feeling of nationality on the part the Irish. The object we should have in view was to remove every mark of domination in Ireland; and in doing this we should have to deal with the Irish Church. The most rev. Primate (the Archbishop of Armagh) had said that the Church in England and the Church in Ireland were one and the same. Technically, that was so; but it was not so in any man's idea of things as they really were, hardly anyone could bring himself to regard the Irish as a part of the English Church; it was thought of merely as the Church of a minority. It was hard to say what actual hardship was inflicted by its existence, but there was little doubt that its existence did foster a spirit of anti-nationality which in itself was a fruitful source of evil. His opinion, therefore, was in favour of dealing with that Church; but, at the same time, such enormous difficulties stood in the way of approaching the question at the present moment that he did not wonder that his noble Friend hesitated to grapple with these obstacles, knowing them to be insurmountable. With regard to tenant-right, he left it to his noble Friend beside him to lecture Irish landlords on the subject of tenant-right, and he had not been at all surprised that the noble Earl who had just sat down (the Earl of Belmore) felt indignant at the tone that was taken towards them. He was not an Irish landlord himself, but was closely connected with many who were, and felt sure that, as a body, they lived upon as good terms with their tenantry as any of their Lordships in England. The question of payment to the Roman Catholic priesthood was one highly deserving of consideration when the proper time came; but, at the present moment, when all the Dissenters in England and a great body of the Churchmen would be arrayed against such a proposition, he was not surprised that his noble Friend felt unprepared to put it forward. He heartily deplored, however, that the subject had not been dealt with earlier, either at the time of the Union, or when Lord Ellesmere brought forward his Motion. A stipend offered to the Catholic clergy of Ireland would not only place them on a like social footing with the Protestant, but would have the effect of attaching them to the State, though he was bound to say that in the recent instance they had shown themselves well affected and done all they could, he believed, to suppress insurrectionary tendencies. There were rumours now, as there always had been, that the Catholic clergymen would not accept payment at the hands of the State ; but Mr. Sheil, speaking on the same subject, once said, "Give us a fund here in Dublin, and try if that won't effect the object." For his own part, he believed that a moderate payment to the Catholic clergy would act as a very great tie between the two countries. With many of the objects contemplated by the noble Earl in his Motion he fully sympathized, and gave him every credit for the ability with which it had been introduced. At the same time, he felt obliged to dissent from the course which had been suggested, and if the question were pressed to a division he must vote against it.

THE BISHOP OF DERRY said, he felt reluctance in trespassing upon the time of their Lordships after the remarks already made by the Lord Primate. Having, however, come over expressly from Ireland to be present at this debate, he should be wanting to the position which he occupied in the Church if he did not put forward briefly the view which he entertained. It was not difficult to account for the disaffection towards the Church in Ireland. Bearing in mind the unnatural and unholy combination which had taken place between the Liberation Society and the Catholic Association in Ireland, it was not surprising that there should be a ferment in the minds of the people, or that they should be filled with disaffection towards the Established Church. He had hoped that the ameliorating process of national education would be allowed to go on undisturbed ; but, alas for Ireland ! there were persons of extreme opinions who would not suffer education to have that weight upon the minds of persons in that country which otherwise it would naturally exercise. Their Lordships should never lose sight of the fact that the same combination by which it was now attempted to unsettle the Church of Ireland, properly applied, would unsettle the Church of England also. Upon this question his feelings probably were stronger than those of many others, for he was himself an Englishman, and looking back with affection to his native land, and to his mother Church, he perceived but too plainly that the same appliances which were to work mischief in Ireland would undoubtedly work mischief in England as well. If their Lordships valued their own property, if they valued the Established Church in this country, they must take care how they swept from the face of the earth the Established Church of Ireland. For himself and for his brother Prelates he admitted that there were anomalies and inequalities in the Church of Ireland which they would be glad to see rectified. But it was one thing to rectify anomalies, it was another to endorse the sweeping observations made by the noble Earl on the cross-benches. Upon a matter of such serious importance he hoped that calm and collected feelings would come over the minds of their Lordships, and that by every means in their power they would encourage and enable the clergy of Ireland to fulfil their sacred duty, to be wholesome patterns and examples of peace and quietness among all Christian people. His own object and that of the clergy under him was to promote the peace and welfare of the country ; and surely it would be a bad return for all their efforts if from time to time they were to be filled with anxiety as to the position which they were to occupy. Under the

Act of Union the Church of England and the Church of Ireland were one and undivisible, and, if the compact was to be respected, they must stand or fall together. One in doctrine, one in head, one in hope and expectation, they had all the same object in view. Whatever, therefore, the measures which might be adopted with regard to the Church of Ireland, whether in that House or elsewhere, he trusted that they would only be sanctioned with the object of promoting the peace, welfare, and happiness of the country at large.

EARL RUSSELL: My Lords, it is one of the inconveniences attaching to the time at which this Motion is brought forward, that the temporary question of Fenianism has been connected throughout this discussion with the permanent questions affecting the welfare of Ireland. With regard to Fenianism, I believe my noble Friend the Under Secretary of State said what was perfectly correct when he contended that it was another of those movements coming from foreign countries; that as the movement of 1798 had been connected with the French Republic, and as the movement of 1848 was connected with the revolutionary ideas which were rife at that time on the Continent, so this Fenian movement of our own day has been connected with the American Civil War. There is, however, this great difference — that with the insurrection of 1798 were connected men of the highest aspirations and the noblest characters—such men as Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Wolfe Tone, and Emmet, who, though they were following a mere *ignis fatuus*, certainly did aspire, and I believe honestly, to give their country a better position. Those connected with the disturbance of 1848 were inferior men, though they—at least some of them—may have honestly sought the good of their country; but with those connected with the Fenianism of the present day, their bond of unanimity seems to have been a common desire for the robbery of the property of their neighbours. That spirit, I trust, will not be one of long duration, and it certainly is not one which ought to be connected with the general condition of Ireland. I think my noble Friend who brought forward this Motion (Earl Grey) had he gone over in his own mind the various changes that have taken place in Ireland, would have found that the changes for a long series of years have been favourable to the prosperity of Ireland. We all know that more than a century ago—about 1760 — there were many circumstances consequent upon which there was such an increase in the population, and such an exceeding demand for the occupation of land, that wages became extremely low. In that valuable and interesting book by Sir George Cornewall Lewis with respect to the Establishment in Ireland, I read that the wages in 1836 were from 6*d.* to 8*d.* a day, and we have heard from my noble Friend that they are now from 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 4*d.* There is, therefore, a great improvement in the wages of the present day. My noble Friend has mentioned, as among the evils that had afflicted Ireland, the collection of tithes. No doubt it was a very severe scourge, and none can read the speeches of Mr. Grattan without seeing how much the peasantry of Ireland suffered from the levying and collection of those tithes in small and minute portions. Well, that evil has disappeared altogether. The collection of tithe is made by an arrangement with the landlord and then transferred to those to whom the property is due, and there is no execution to be levied in default of paying them. My noble Friend who spoke early in the debate (Lord Dufferin) showed that the wealth of Ireland had increased, that the value of the stock at present was much greater than it was in former times, and, generally, he produced facts which showed that the dissatisfaction which prevails to-day arises from an entirely different cause from that which brought about former dissatisfaction; and he showed us clearly, I think, that the course of events in Ireland tends to progress and improvement. That, indeed, is the moral which I learn from the debate of to-night. My noble Friend, however, lays chief stress, in supporting his Motion, on the subject of the Church of Ireland. Now, my Lords, I can very well believe that the majority of the people of Ireland, seeing that the Church Establishment remains for the benefit of a minority, may feel that an evil and a grievance. But, when the question is as to what should be done by the Government and by Parliament in regard to the subject, I must say that any such violent measure as my noble Friend proposes would, in my opinion, instead of remedying the evil, increase it to a very great extent. I am afraid that if my noble Friend were permitted to carry his proposed Act of Parliament into effect and divide the Church property of Ireland between the Established Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and Presbyterian Church, he would create more religious discord, more heartburning, and more division than we have ever yet seen in Ireland. It is a simple thing to say—and my noble Friend (the Marquess of Clanricarde) spoke in the same sense the other night—that we ought to establish the Roman Catholic clergy, and give them their half of the funds of the present Established Church, or place them upon the Consolidated Fund of the country. I believe the latter proposition is the wish of my noble Friend. He is quite willing that the House of Commons should vote a considerable sum out of the Consolidated Fund for the Roman Catholics of Ireland; but I very much doubt whether the House of Commons would vote any such sum, and if they did they would raise the ire of some of those who inhabit the northern part of this country, for Scotchmen have a peculiar dislike to the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church. They think it contrary to their religious duty and injurious to the political framework of our Constitution to endow the Roman Catholic Church. Well, without discussing that question, I think it is quite easy to see that you could not possibly obtain from Parliament an endowment of that kind without producing the gravest religious animosities, and very great discontent, not only in the enactment of such a law, but afterwards in putting it in force. Even in countries that are almost entirely Catholic, such as Italy and Belgium, religious feuds are constantly arising on account of the relations between the Roman Catholic clergy and the State. While, therefore, I admit the evil of the present state of things, I am not ready to embark on a sea over which I can see passing nothing but a future of tempest. If, then, the course proposed is not to be adopted, it would certainly be unwise to go with my noble Friend into a Committee of the whole House. And really it seems to me that the whole purport of the proposition of my noble Friend is in order to upset the present Established Church, and to establish a sort of hybrid Church of Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Protestants. To that proposal I cannot consent. My noble Friend says I had not signified that the present Government had any intention of introducing in the present Session of Parliament any great measure with regard to Ireland. I quite admit that; and my opinion is that we should rather attempt from time to time to improve the law by well-considered measures than by introducing any vast changes into the country. The noble Lord opposite expressed a hope that the Government would compensate those evicted from their holdings. That is a question of extreme difficulty, and should be dealt with very carefully. I quite agree with my noble Friend that some means should be established for ascertaining the fair and equitable compensation which should be paid to tenants so evicted. But it seems to me that Government and Parliament would be better employed in making sound alterations of a quiet character with a view to effect any improvement that may be made by such action; and I would agree with my noble Friend who suggested that for the rest we should rather trust to the energy and activity of individuals than be always looking to the Government to be constantly proposing grants for public works for Ireland, with a view of producing a fictitious prosperity which does not arise from the genius and industry of the people. With these few remarks, I may say that I must oppose the Motion of my noble Friend.

The Earl of WICKLOW said, he should support the Motion, but remarked that he would not interfere with the Established Church, nor touch one shilling in its possession. It was, in his opinion, an underpaid rather than an overpaid institution. But still he agreed with the noble Earl on the cross-benches (Earl Grey) when he said that peace could never be established in Ireland until payment of some sort was made to the Roman Catholic clergy officiating there. But the noble Earl had stated that the whole of the revenues of the Church were in the hands of the Establishment. The fact was, however, that the clergy of the Established Church in Ireland possessed but a small portion of the tithes of the soil, the remainder being in the pockets of the landed gentry. The landed gentry, therefore, might reasonably be called upon to contribute towards the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy, who at present owed their support to the exertions of the poorer classes of the community. Such a measure would, he believed, do much to restore the peace and the tranquillity of Ireland, and the landed proprietors would thus be more than compensated for their pecuniary loss in the improved state of the country.

Earl GREY: My Lords, I wish to say a few words before the conclusion of this debate. It has been objected to this Motion that it is not brought forward at the right time; but it appears to me that this is precisely the time when such a Motion should be introduced, because a severe measure having been recently passed against the Fenian conspirators, the action of Parliament in the direction I have indicated cannot be attributed to motives of fear. The manner in which the Irish people generally have supported the cause of law and order warrants them in expecting us to legislate upon the grievances of which they can reasonably complain. After all that I have heard in the course of this debate, I remain of the opinion I originally entertained, that the question of the Irish Church Establishment lies at the root of all these difficulties. We uphold the English Church because we feel that it is of the greatest possible advantage to this country; we believe that the welfare of the people ought not to be left entirely to voluntary efforts, because it so happens that those most in need of instruction are least aware of their want, and least inclined, too, to make any sacrifice for the purpose of supplying their deficiency. But the feeling of the Irish people is against the Established Church in Ireland. The most enlightened advocates of the English Church have founded their arguments upon the success and benefits which have attended her efforts; but the Irish Church is incapable of effecting the same results because the people of Ireland are determined not to avail themselves of her agencies. You may argue this matter as long as you please, but the feeling, not only of the Irish people, but of the whole civilized world, is against you. Out of the United Kingdom I doubt if you will find a single man prepared to maintain that the existing Church system in Ireland is consistent with right and justice. I am persuaded that some change is necessary, and, if necessary, I do not believe that it can be effected upon any other principle than the one I have named. It has been said that the Roman Catholic clergy would refuse to receive a grant from the Consolidated Fund; and that is, no doubt, to a certain extent true—they feel that their independence would be injured by such a grant; but they have, at the same time, never ceased to assert their claims to what was formerly the national endowment of their Church. If, therefore, the Roman Catholic clergy were supported in the way I have proposed, I feel certain that they would regard it as no infringement of their independence. I believe also that it is for the interest of the Protestant Church itself to submit to some diminution of its means, provided existing interests are taken care of, in order that this question may be settled. Sooner or later, the time must come when the present anomaly and unjust state of things in Ireland with reference to Church property must be remedied, and I can only wonder that the friends of the Irish Church do not themselves endeavour to make some arrangements while a compromise is still practicable.

On Question, *Resolved* in the *Negative*.

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS AND OFFICE OF THE GENTLEMAN USHER OF THE BLACK ROD.

Select Committee on, *appointed:* The Lords following were named of the Committee; the Committee to meet on *Tuesday* next, at half past Two o'clock:

Ld. Chancellor
Ld. President
D. Richmond
M. Lansdowne
M. Salisbury
M. Bath
E. Devon
E. Carnarvon
E. Malmesbury
E. Chichester
Ld. Chamberlain
V. Eversley
L. Steward
L. Colville of Culross
L. Foley
L. Redesdale
L. Colchester
L. Wynford
L. Stanley of Alderley
L. Chelmsford

The Fee Fund Account (laid upon the Table on the 23rd of February last), *referred* to the Committee.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eleven o'clock, till Monday next, Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, *March* 16, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Supply—*considered in Committee*—Navy Estimates.

Resolutions [March 15] *reported.*

Public Bills—*Resolutions in Committee*—Customs Acts; East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer; Exchequer and Audit Departments [Salaries, &c].

Ordered—Customs Acts*; East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer*; Practice and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1853) Amendment.*

First Reading—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* [75]; Practice and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1853) Amendment* [76]; Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment* [77]; Contagious Diseases* [78]

Second Reading—Court of Chancery (Ireland)* [19], Debate *adjourned;* Consolidated Fund (£19,000,000).*

Committee—Exchequer Bills and Bonds* [46].

Report—Exchequer Bills and Bonds* [46].

Considered as amended—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment [13].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, but he was desired to acquaint the House, that Mr. Speaker had received great benefit from the rest that had been granted him, and is making progress towards recovery:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

CONSTABULARY (IRELAND). QUESTION.

COLONEL GREVILLE said, he wished to ask the hon. Member for Sandwich, When the Report of the Commission on the Irish Constabulary, which sat recently in Dublin, and over which he presided, will be laid upon the table of the House?

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN said, in reply, that the Report of the Commissioners had been presented to the Treasury, and was now under the consideration of the Government. He must remind his hon. and gallant Friend that this was not a Royal, but a Treasury Commission, and therefore it would not be laid upon the House as a mere matter of course. He was, however, authorized to state that, considering the importance of the subject, the Report and other papers would be laid on the table when the Government had decided upon the precise course which they intended to pursue.

CHURCH RATE RETURNS.—QUESTION.

MR. READ said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he has any objection to issue the forms of the Church Rate Returns at Easter (at which time the Churchwardens make up their books and change office) with a request that the Returns should be made within twenty-eight days, and not "in the month of June," as hitherto ordered by the Government?

SIR GEORGE GREY, in reply, said, the forms of the Returns might, no doubt, be issued at Easter, but the Secretary of State could not desire that they should be made up within twenty-eight days, and not in the month of June, as the Act of Parliament providing for these Returns expressly required that they should be made in the month of June. The forms were at one time sent out about Easter, but the consequence was that, owing to the change of Churchwardens, the Returns were very imperfectly made. Lately they had not been sent out till after Easter, and the Returns had come in better than before, being made by the same Churchwarden by whom the form was received.

WAR BETWEEN SPAIN AND CHILI AND PERU.—QUESTION.

MR. SELWIN said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any communication has been made by the Foreign Office to the representatives in this country of the Spanish Government, as well as to those of Chili and Peru, with reference to any vessels of war which their respective Governments may be building in English yards; and, further, what replies, if any, have been received?

MR. LAYARD said, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government had been in constant communication with the Ministers and agents of the Governments of Chili, Spain, and Peru with regard to any vessels of war that might be constructing for them in England, and had been assured by them that no such vessels should leave England during the continuance of the war. Her Majesty's Government had every reason to believe that no such armed vessels of war had left England since the war broke out. He might state that the Chilian Minister had of his own accord addressed a written assurance to Her Majesty's Government that no vessel of war now building should be allowed to leave England during the continuance of the war, and that the intention of Chili was to conform entirely to the law of this country.

CLERKS OF CUSTOMS.—QUESTION.

MR. TREEBY said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether Her Majesty's Treasury have decided upon a revised classification for the London and Outport Clerks of Customs; and, if so, whether any, and what, steps have been taken for the ameliorations of the condition of the lower class of Her Majesty's Collectors of Customs at the Outports?

MR. CHILDERS: Sir, I have already stated to the House that a revised classification for the Port of London has been adopted by the Treasury. It is now completed in every respect except as to the numbers of one of the classes in two or three of the departments. I also stated a few days ago that the scale for the outports was under consideration, and this is nearly completed. The salaries of the collectors at some of the minor ports would naturally be considered with the salaries of the clerks, and the Treasury Minute on the subject will deal with both, though I can say nothing at present as to any increase in the rate.

CATTLE DISEASE—IMPORTATION OF SHEEP INTO IRELAND.

QUESTION.

MR. COGAN said, he rose to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to a report that sheep have been recently landed in the North of Ireland from Scotland; if he has ascertained whether there is any truth in such report; and, have the Government taken any steps to punish this violation of the Law, and to prevent its recurrence?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) said, in reply, that the transaction in question occurred in the month of January last, and that, so far as he knew, nothing of the kind had occurred since. The detailed correspondence on the subject would be laid upon the table, and orders had been given to the Coastguard and the constabulary which would prevent the repetition of such a proceeding.

INDIA—RUSSIAN MARCH UPON BOKHARA.—QUESTION.

SIR HENRY RAWLINSON said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If Her Majesty's Government have received any information of the march of a Russian force under General Tchernaief from Tashkend upon Bokhara; and, if so, what may be the avowed object of such an expedition?

MR. LAYARD: Sir, a rumour has reached Her Majesty's Government that the Russian forces have been advancing towards Bokhara, but no positive information has reached us on the subject, nor can we tell the object of the advance if it has taken place. But the Russian Government have given Her Majesty's Government solemn assurances that they have no desire permanently to advance their frontier towards Bokhara.

WRITS REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—QUESTION.

MR. CRAUFURD said, he rose to ask the Lord Advocate, What course he intends to pursue with regard to the Writs Registration (Scotland) Bill?

THE LORD ADVOCATE said, in reply, that he proposed to postpone the second reading of the Writs Registration (Scotland) Bill and the Summary Procedure Bill until the 16th of April. If the former Bill should be read a second time he should propose to refer it to a Select Committee.

COPYHOLD AND LEASEHOLD FRANCHISE.—QUESTION.

SIR FREDERICK HEYGATE said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What is the amount, by the proposed Reform Bill, of the annual beneficial interest in a copyhold or leasehold property situate in a borough which will convey to a resident in a borough a vote for the county, as is now done by an annual freehold interest of forty shillings?

MR. BEACH wished to know, at the same time, whether the 19th section of the Reform Act governs the qualification of copyholders, and the 20th section that of leaseholders in a borough to vote for a county?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, the case is as stated by the hon. Member for North Hampshire, and I apprehend that the 19th and 20th sections of the Act contain a complete description and answer to the Question of the hon. Baronet (Sir Frederick Heygate). The vote is given generally to the copyholds of the clear annual value of £10, and to leaseholds of the clear annual value of £10, if the lease in respect of which the elector claims to vote was originally granted for not less than sixty years, and to leaseholds of the clear annual value of £50 if the lease was originally granted for not less than twenty years. There is a provision also as to sub-leases and assignees of leaseholds. These sections remain untouched by the Bill. It is by the repeal of the following section, the 21st, that the class of voters referred to are let in.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

ARMY—ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE.

MOTION FOR A ROYAL COMMISSION.

Lord **EUSTACE CECIL** said, he rose to make the Motion on this subject which stood in his name, namely—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission, consisting of Military and Civilian Members, to inquire into the present constitution, system of education, and discipline of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, as well as into the general treatment of the gentlemen Cadets, as also into the rules and regulations under which candidates are admitted into those Colleges."

A Royal Commission had not long ago inquired into the state of our Public Schools, and, although the results of its labours had not been all that might have been desired, still considerable benefits would accrue from them not only to the public schools themselves, but to the country at large. But, if it had been necessary to remedy the acknowledged evils of our public school system by issuing a Commission of Inquiry, surely it was not less needful to issue a Commission of Inquiry into our Military Colleges, upon whose good management depended the efficiency of those scientific branches of the army which the altered condition of warfare and the improvement of military science were daily rendering more important. That such an investigation was requisite was manifest from the fact that frequent outbreaks had taken place, and a feeling of insubordination had exhibited itself among the cadets at Woolwich and Sandhurst during the last few years. To understand the present state of matters it was necessary to revert for a moment to the past history of these two Colleges. The Royal Academy at Woolwich was founded in 1741. It then had only 35 cadets, who were entirely maintained and educated at the expense of the Government. In 1764 the pay of a gentleman cadet was half-a-crown a day, and this served to defray all the expenses of their living. During the American and Peninsular wars the number admitted to the Academy was increased and diminished according to the exigencies of the State. The College at Sandhurst, founded in 1803, owed its origin to the very defective state of education then existing in the unscientific branches of the army, and the very great difficulty of obtaining competent officers to command our regiments; and there, as at Woolwich, the practice also prevailed of defraying the expenses of maintaining and educating the cadets by Government grants. Before 1831 there was no regular annual payment for the cadets. They were, in fact, recipients of the Government's charity, and their condition was very different from what it had since become. Now, as a rule, annual payments were exacted from them, and they had come very much to occupy the position of students in other ordinary educational establishments. Passing over the interval between 1831 and 1855—not because there had been no grounds of complaint during that period, but because they had not obtained that prominence which had unfortunately belonged to them within the last few years—they came to the years 1855, 1856, and 1857, which were very remarkable in our military annals. The Crimean War was then brought to a close, and the Indian Mutiny had broken out. There were several so-called improvements—he would not use the word "reforms," because that had, perhaps, at present, a doubtful and ambiguous meaning—introduced at that time in every military department of the State, and among others the system of competitive examinations. Without discussing the merits or demerits of that system, it was a singular fact, and one worthy of note, that very shortly after the establishment of the system of competitive examination very marked symptoms of discontent began to show themselves among the cadets, both at Woolwich and Sandhurst. In 1860 there were serious disturbances at Woolwich. If he had been rightly informed, the guns in front of the Academy were loaded by the cadets with loaves of bread and fired at the Lieutenant Governor's windows; while at Sandhurst the cadets formed themselves into a body and marched off to an earthwork situated in the College grounds and there took refuge for the space of some two hours. That secession of the Plebs to the Sacred Mount—if it might be so termed—was mainly put down by the judiciousness of the Governor, who seems to have displayed a temporizing policy resembling that of the celebrated Menenius Agrippa. In 1863 there were fresh disturbances in both of the Colleges. At Woolwich the outbreak arose, he believed, from the unpopularity of one of the subaltern officers; and the result of it was that some of the cadets took their practice swords and threw them into the bottom of the reservoir in the grounds of the Academy; one of the practice guns in front of the College being again surreptitiously fired off —a custom which appeared to take place on every succeeding anniversary of the great outbreak of 1860, as if to call the attention of the authorities to the existing state of things. Only last autumn there was again some practical joking at the expense of a corporal, which resulted in several cadets being rusticated or sent away, and which excited a great deal of scandal in the public newspapers at the time. Not that that in itself was a circumstance of very great moment, but when taken into consideration with other matters which he had already touched upon, it showed that a very serious feeling of insubordination and discontent continued to prevail among the cadets. Then came the very natural question, what was the origin and cause of all these disturbances? Grievances, they knew, were of two kinds; those that were imaginary and those that were real; and under the first head might be found some military and even political grievances. He thought, however, he should be able to show that that was not the case with the cadets at the Military Colleges, but that, on the contrary, they had some real foundation for the feeling that had led to those outbreaks. Students were not in the habit of quarrelling with their bread and butter, or of living in a chronic state of insubordination, unless they had some good cause for it. There was no doubt that the origin of that state of things was that, whereas the age of admission at Woolwich was formerly from fourteen to sixteen, and at Sandhurst from thirteen to fifteen, it had been suddenly altered, and the cadets were admitted to both Colleges at from sixteen to nineteen years of age, and in the case of gentlemen who had been to the Universities even up to twenty-two and twenty-three. So that these Colleges for boys were losing their character and becoming Colleges for men. The case of a graduate who had passed his examination at a University and been admitted as a gentleman cadet in one of the Military Colleges would best illustrate his argument. Most hon. Members knew what College life in a University was. The graduate enjoyed a large amount of liberty and many privileges. He had a room to himself, luxuriously furnished, and a servant to wait upon him; and, provided he attended the appointed prayers and lectures, and returned to his room at a certain hour in the evening, nobody could interfere with him. He could amuse himself according to his tastes, entertain his friends, and, in fact, do almost whatever he pleased. Every house was open to him, except, perhaps, public and gambling houses, and places of a similar character. When, however, the youth entered the Military College, although in no way controlled by the Articles of War or the Mutiny Act, he was at once subjected to a discipline very severe—discipline, he might almost say, of a Spartan character. He had to share a room with three or four other cadets of like age, while his dormitory, instead of having a carpet laid upon the floor, was scattered with sand, and the furniture was of the commonest kind. His cupboard, too, in which he put his goods and chattels, was not inaptly termed a birdcage. The very convicts in the nearest prison were, to a certain extent, better off, seeing that they at least had privacy in their cells. Every morning the cadet was compelled to brush his own clothes and perform other menial duties. Wine and spirits were forbidden him, he not being allowed even to partake of those light wines with which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been so much identified. It was necessary for the House to recollect while he was making these statements that he was talking of young men nineteen years of age. Each cadet was allowed for his diet 2*s.* per day, which was disbursed by the College authorities; but at Sandhurst the food was much better than that supplied at Woolwich. The superiority in this respect at the former place was due to the industry and admirable management of the quartermaster; but at Woolwich the food was not only inferior in quality, but scanty in quantity. Hon. Members who had been in the habit of paying 5*s.* or 6*s.* a day for their dinners would, perhaps, be able to imagine, he trusted that they might not realize, what luxury 2*s.* per diem would provide at Woolwich. Besides more than six hours' study each day, the cadet had to undergo drill for an hour and a half, and therefore he had few hours for leisure. He was at all times compelled to wear his uniform, and unless he had on a good-conduct stripe could not quit the College and go beyond a distance of two miles. He was expected, too, to be in his rooms at ten o'clock, and the lights were extinguished at half past ten. These facts showed that the condition of the cadet was hard enough; but this was not all. The cadet was at the beck of subaltern officers, who could punish him for the most trivial irregularities. When he was sick he was not permitted to have attendance in his own room, like an Undergraduate at the University or a schoolboy at Eton or Harrow. He was placed in the common hospital, and treated like a private soldier, neither better nor worse. It was not necessary to go into the question of the length and severity of the studies at the Military Colleges, although it would be a fit subject for a Royal Commission to inquire into. He, however, called the attention of the House to the preliminary examination which every candidate was obliged to pass before he was permitted to enter Woolwich. According to the new regulations of the Council of Military Education every candidate was obliged to obtain 2,500 marks, 700 of which must be for pure mathematics. He held in his hand a syllabus of the differential and integral calculus which every candidate was obliged to pass before obtaining admission into the Academy, but, as it was a subject of a somewhat abstruse character, he would not trouble hon. Members by reading it. It might suffice to say that he submitted several of the questions asked at the last July examination at Woolwich to a gentleman of great mathematical attainments, who was a tutor at one of the large Colleges at Cambridge, and his reply was, "It is quite impossible that young men of the age you speak of could answer these questions; it would require some of our best men, at least two or three years older, to do justice to them." There was another matter into which it was necessary that a Royal Commission should inquire and report upon. He had long—having regard to economy, to the interests of the country, and to the interests of the cadets—doubted the advantage of having two Military Colleges, believing that one would adequately supply all the necessary wants of the Army. This was not an original scheme of his, but it had been approved by very high military authorities, and had received the sanction of more than one War Minister. It was, in fact, brought before the House some years ago, and had it not been mixed up with the subject of competitive examinations, he believed the House of Commons would also have given its approval to the scheme. It was a matter, however, which required further consideration. The College of Marlow was founded at a time when military education was very defective, when a destructive war was raging which threatened our national existence, and when there was a great scarcity of competent officers. The circumstances of the present day, however, were very different from those at the time of the establishment of the College at Marlow. The country was not at war. There was now a Council of Military Education, which required every candidate for admission to the army to undergo a week's examination at the least. The necessity, therefore, for having a special College for the unscientific branches of the army no longer existed. He recommended that the two Colleges should be amalgamated. In that way—and this was an additional reason for the change—a great saving of public money would be effected. The Army Estimates for the present year showed that Woolwich cost about £9,000 more than it brought into the Exchequer, and Sandhurst £17,000. Now, were one College to be substituted for the two, £26,000 might be saved, and the 400 cadets now on the muster rolls of the two Colleges would be as well educated, and certainly better treated, for the money. The executive officers and professors at both Colleges were out of all proportion to the number of cadets. At Sandhurst, for instance, there were sixteen executive officers and twenty-nine professors to 222 cadets, or, in other words, there was one professor or executive officer to every five cadets. At Woolwich, however, it was even worse, for there there were fourteen executive officers and thirty-four professors to 180 cadets, or one professor or executive officer to every four cadets. He had made inquiries at the public schools and Universities, and found that in those establishments one master or tutor was held to be competent to educate and look after from twenty to twenty-five undergraduates or schoolboys. At Harrow there was one master to twenty-two boys, and the Public School Commission were of opinion that one master was quite competent to look after and educate some thirty boys. What was the inference to be drawn from these facts? Why, that there were too many professors employed, or else that the cadets at Woolwich and Sandhurst were so unmanageable and so stupid that they required five times the number of tutors and masters which was necessary in the case of our Universities and public schools. He would not enter into the question whether one College would answer the wants of the country in other respects than those which he had mentioned; whether, for instance, officers passing through it with a uniform system of education would be equally fit for the Artillery and Engineers as for the infantry. Upon that point he would simply observe that Addiscombe, in the days of the old East India Company, was able to supply officers for every branch of the service, while during the late Civil War in America West Point furnished a sufficient number of skilled officers to the large armies which were engaged in that contest. Surely, then, one College would meet the requirements of our small army, more especially as the majority of officers were admitted by means of direct examination. Lastly, he was of opinion that if a single College were substituted for the two now in existence many anomalies of which we at present had to complain would be removed. The system of competitive examination, for example, was enforced at Woolwich, while that enforced at Sandhurst was the system of examination by selection. There were Queen's and Indian cadets at Sandhurst, but none at Woolwich. The time of residence at Woolwich was something like two years, whereas at Sandhurst it was only one year, a period hardly sufficient to enable the cadets to learn the discipline or profit by the education afforded by that establishment. Those, then, were the reasons which induced him to ask the Government to appoint a Commission to inquire into the education and discipline of our Military Colleges. It had often been said, and he thought with some justice, of both Woolwich and Sandhurst, that they were neither barracks, schools, nor colleges, but institutions combining the faults of all three. He was most anxious, then, that there should be one College founded on the best system which could be devised, where the cadets, men in age, might be treated like men, in a manner similar to their brothers and cousins at the Universities, where in short they should be treated as officers with a certain amount of liberty, but under some control, rather than as schoolboys at Dotheboy's Hall, or private soldiers having no liberty at all. When that was done, and not till then, we should hear no more of those disgraceful occurrences which had been so long a scandal to the army and the country, and which had brought so much discredit on the system under which they had been perpetrated. The noble Lord concluded by moving an Address.

MAJOR STUART KNOX said, the question had been placed so well before the House by his noble Friend, that he felt assured the Secretary for War could scarcely refuse to accede to the proposal made. In most of the remarks which had fallen from the noble Lord he entirely concurred, but he did not quite agree with him in thinking that men before entering the army were at all the worse for a little roughing. Many Gentlemen opposite no doubt recollected the time when at Eton they had to brush not only their own, but the boots and clothes of other persons; nor were they to be regarded as worse members of society on that account. Before he sat down he wished to express a hope that the noble Marquess at the head of the War Office (the Marquess of Hartington) would inform the House whether it was true that the Government had deemed it right to reduce, under certain circumstances, the amount of provisions for the cadets at Woolwich? The question was one of importance, because growing lads required not only good food but a sufficient quantity of it. He was reminded by an hon. Friend sitting below him that a few years ago horses which had become unserviceable for the artillery were used as food for the cadets. That, no doubt, was an exaggeration; but he should like to learn from the noble Marquess whether the food of the cadets had been reduced, and, if so, whether he thought it right that those young men should be put on short commons?

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission, consisting of Military and Civilian Members, to inquire into the present constitution, system of education, and discipline of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, as well as into the general treatment of the gentlemen Cadets, as also into the rules and regulations under which candidates are admitted into those Colleges,"—(*Lord Eustace Cecil,*)

—instead thereof.

Mr. ACLAND said, that as one who felt a deep interest in the subject under discussion, he thanked the noble Lord for the manner in which he had introduced it to the House. In consequence of the notice that had been given by the noble Lord in reference to this subject he had deemed it his duty to spend a day at Sandhurst. The question, however, was not, he thought, so simple as the clear and able statement of the noble Lord would make it appear. It had been investigated by two Commissions and one Committee of that House, and the point was whether Sandhurst and Woolwich were so managed as to provide the professional knowledge requisite for an officer in the army, without discouraging the liberal education suitable to an English gentleman? How those two requirements were to be combined was a matter which it was not easy to decide. He could not help thinking that it was extremely difficult to learn any business except by experience in that business itself. The views which he entertained on the subject he derived from no less an authority than one of the most distinguished officers of our army, the late Field Marshal Lord Seaton. No officer ought, he thought, to be raised to the post of captain without distinct professional knowledge beyond an acquaintance with the ordinary regimental duties, but he thought that knowledge ought to be acquired after joining the service, and a good liberal education was the best preparation before entering the army. The important subjects involved in the question had not been neglected by the Council of Military Education. The Commander-in-Chief had given to them his best attention, and if the present Military Colleges were not all that the army required, it was not for want of due consideration. Having visited Sandhurst so lately, be could state, with respect to the birdcages and other hardships to which it was said the cadets were exposed, that he believed them to belong to a bygone state of things, although there was little doubt that formerly the boys were treated with an amount of restriction and espionage which did not, in his opinion, furnish the best mode of forming the characters of English officers. He understood that many alterations were in progress, and was glad to find that the responsibility with respect to Sandhurst rested on two officers, who were fully competent to the discharge of the duties required of them, for in addition to their military acquirements, they had received the advantages of a public school education. The cadets were governed by a code of honour, which was administered by officers in the army, who treated them as gentlemen and friends. His opinion was that young men intended for the army should be encouraged to profit by a liberal education, and that having received that, they should be further encouraged to acquire the science and knowledge of their profession after they had entered the service; but he much doubted the use of teaching men their drill at College. The great Lawrence in India said that any dolt could learn his drill in six weeks, but the higher qualifications for an officer required time and experience. However much young men might be taught about drill at College, when they joined their regiments they would have to learn their duties over again. Of Woolwich he could not speak from personal experience, but he had been told by a very distinguished officer that the standard of trust and confidence in the cadets there too had been a good deal altered for the worse of late. He ought to add that he had been informed by the father of a young officer who had entered the corps of Engineers with great distinction, that he had spoken of Woolwich as a miserable place, his great objection to it being that while there his word as a man of honour was not trusted. This was a subject which deserved the attention of Government. He trusted that the noble Marquess, who had now succeeded to a post of the highest importance, for which he had exhibited great qualifications, would not be turned aside from sifting the whole question of military education.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he desired to call attention to one point relating to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. The competitive system of examination pursued there for entrance had attracted to the annual competition some of the best taught young men in all the great schools of England, and when they found that out of 150 persons who were examined only seventeen or eighteen passed, that was sufficient to show that the test was very severe. A great hardship connected with the first examination was that, though they were then put through their classics and various other branches of a liberal education, in the great schools for their proficiency in which they derived a great proportion of their marks, the same subjects were of no use to them in the half-yearly examinations which followed, and that would sometimes involve the suspension of a cadet for six months, or his expulsion from the College. It was a great hardship that the subjects which ruled the admission of a cadet to the College should so totally differ from those which were required afterwards that those subjects which led to his admission should not contribute in any degree to his future success. Another matter that he desired to call attention to was the hardship sustained through the small number of commissions without purchase which were set apart for cadets at the Military Academy at Sandhurst. Owing to some alterations in the service, the authorities were unable to give nearly so many of those commissions without purchase as the cadets had had reason to expect. In the case of a poor man—who had obtained a large number of marks for learning and good conduct—that might lead either to his having to abandon his career or to very great difficulty in his obtaining the money necessary to enable him to purchase his commission. He thought the Government ought to keep faith with the cadets, and ought to make such arrangements as would give a sufficient number of commissions to meet the promises held out. With respect to the discipline at Woolwich and Sandhurst, it had been his fortune during the last few years to gain some knowledge of that, and he did not think that that discipline was too strict. On the contrary, he believed it was attended with this great advantage, that the cadets should learn to obey before they came to rule. If there was a fault in the discipline of those establishments, it was not that it was too strict, but that it was not uniform. If young men were subjected during a week to a system of rigid discipline, and then were given two days' leave of absence and allowed to run all over London without any control, it was not likely that they would submit without impatience to the discipline which awaited them on their return. As to the question whether the military academies should be united, no doubt that would be an economical step, but he did not believe it was an undesirable thing that officers should have to pass through a Military College. Turning to the practice of other nations, he found that in France, in Prussia, and in nearly every country in Europe where a disciplined force was maintained, persons desiring to enter the army were obliged to submit themselves to the special education provided for them at military academies, and he thought the House would do wrong to discourage a course of instruction which had so far been attended with the best possible results. There were points connected with the two institutions adverted to well worthy of the attention of the Secretary for War, but the object should be not to weaken them but to make them more uniform and efficient. Above all, let those who entered them feel that the conditions on which they did so would be fulfilled.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, I am sure that the subject brought forward by the noble Lord in a manner so able and creditable to himself will be admitted to be one of great interest and importance. Still I do not think it desirable that the House should agree to an Address for a Commission of Inquiry. The noble Lord is probably not aware that not further back than 1857 there was a Commission, though not a Royal Commission, appointed by Lord Panmure, to inquire into the whole subject of military education. That Commission consisted of Colonel Yolland, of the Engineers; Colonel Swift, of the Artillery, and the Rev. Mr. Lake. The Commissioners then investigated the whole subject, travelled over the whole of Europe, made themselves acquainted with the various plans of military education in Europe, and investigated the system at that time in force at Woolwich, with reference more especially to the scientific branches of the army. They made a very full and able Report, and I am prepared to lay the Report on the table or to place an adequate number of copies of it in the Library of the House. The system of the Military Academy at Woolwich was materially changed shortly after the appearance of that Report, and the new system at present in force there was almost entirely based on the recommendations of the Commission. Various modifications were also made in consequence of the suggestions of the Council of Military Education, and the result, as far as the scientific branches of the army are concerned, are admitted, I believe, to be eminently satisfactory. I did not understand the noble Lord to say that the system at present in force left anything to be desired in a scientific point of view, but he called attention to complaints on the part of cadets of their treatment, and to disturbances which have taken place. Those disturbances have not been frequent, and it is some time since any disturbance of a serious nature has occurred, either at the Academy or the College. Whenever disturbances have taken place, and have been brought to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, he has always had them thoroughly investigated by officers entirely unconnected with the College or the Academy, and the cadets have been invited freely to come forward and state their grounds of complaint. Some modifications of the system have in consequence been made, but it has generally been reported that there were no real grounds for complaint. It appears to me that the question raised is simply this, whether we are to continue to adopt at the Military College and Academy any system of strict military discipline at all. I do not think that in the army any difference of opinion exists on this subject. I do not think it is desirable to allow the cadets the same amount of liberty which is enjoyed at the Universities in this country. I agree with the hon. Baronet the Member for Ayrshire (Sir James Fergusson) that it is desirable that those who are to be placed in command of others should first be taught by a tolerably severe system what it is to obey. In the next place, it must be remembered that the instruction given at these institutions is not intended merely for the benefit of the cadets themselves, to take or to refuse—it is a national object that is contemplated in requiring them to make the best use of their time, that they should not leave without having acquired the knowledge which they came there to acquire. These institutions were kept up at considerable expense to the country, and the House would not be willing that the cadets should be left to the exercise of their own inclinations, as men are left at Oxford and Cambridge—that it should be entirely optional whether they should make use of the opportunities which are placed in their way, and if they choose to neglect them altogether. Another point referred to was the severity of the examinations for admissions to the Academy and the College. Now, the general scheme of the examination was recommended by the Commission to which I have referred; and, although it is possible that in some instances questions of a more difficult and abstruse nature than may appear necessary were put into the examination paper, it does not follow that it is expected they should all be answered. Those who are acquainted with the system of examination know very well that it is not uncommon to put down questions which it is not supposed many of the candidates will be able to answer; but there may be some of unusual attainments who are able to answer them, and who thereby will greatly improve their position in the Academy. That would not deter candidates from competing, and will not tend to make any undue proportion of them unsuccessful. Another point is, whether it is necessary to have these Colleges at all, but I will not enter into that at all, because I think the advantage of having them is sufficiently obvious. Another subject adverted to is, whether it be advisable to have both the Academy and College. This subject was fully considered by the Commission to which I have referred. The proposal of Lord Herbert for the amalgamation of the two institutions did not originate in any mere view of the saving that might be effected. His plan, which was rejected by the House, was, no doubt, that military education should be begun and carried on in the same institution; but supposing a cadet to show either unusual talent or peculiar aptitude for the higher scientific branches of the army, he should after a certain time be transferred and have the opportunity of pursuing them. I will express no opinion as to whether it is desirable that the whole scheme of military education should be contained in one institution—it is a difficult question, but I may say that the inquiries show that the present system has worked very well upon the whole. For myself, I cannot say that I think it would be desirable that any change should at present be made in the present system. No sufficient cause has yet been shown why it should be altered. I have now only to say a single word in reply to the hon. and gallant Officer (Major Knox) who has asked me a question as to the alterations which have been made in the rations of the military academy at Woolwich. All that has happened is this: Finding on inquiry a short time ago that the system of providing rations at Woolwich and Sandhurst was different, and that the provisioning of the cadets at Woolwich appeared to be conducted in a very wasteful manner, it was thought advisable to assimilate the system at Woolwich to that at Sandhurst. The cadets have as much food as it is possible for them to eat, and if there is any deficiency in this respect it would be immediately brought to the attention of the Horse Guards or the War Office by the authorities at Sandhurst. The hon. and gallant Officer, therefore, need be under no apprehension if he has any relative there that he is in danger of being starved. No complaint has been made of the quality of the food given. Another point was referred to by the hon. and gallant Officer the Member for Ayrshire—namely, that there had not been provided for the cadets at Sandhurst so large a supply of commissions, without purchase, as had been anticipated. But the number of cadets at Sandhurst has not been raised to the full establishment, and the proportion of commissions is not very far below the proportion anticipated. The want is entirely owing to exceptional circumstances. It has arisen from the amalgamation of the Indian with the Imperial army, and the necessity of giving, without purchase, a considerable number of commissions to officers in the Indian service. But these are now nearly provided for, and a number of commissions henceforward will be at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief for the cadets at Sandhurst. I feel that not only the House but the Government and the authorities of the War Office are much indebted to the noble Lord for bringing this subject before their attention; but I do not think it would be advisable to agree to the Address which he has moved. I believe the Council on Military Education is fully competent to investigate the matter. The subject of discipline is not, indeed, under the immediate cognizance of the Council; the Commander-in-Chief is responsible; but I am quite sure that no disturbance or complaint was ever made that did not receive careful and immediate attention. I do not think it would be desirable altogether to abandon the principle of keeping up strict military discipline; it is quite possible, however, that some particulars, not very vital, may be annoying, and alterations might be made. The subject, I am sure, will be carefully dealt with by the Commander-in-Chief and his advisers; and I do not think it advisable that the House should take any step in the matter.

GENERAL PEEL: There can, Sir, be no difference of opinion either as to the importance of this subject, or the merits of the speech by which it was introduced. My noble Friend (Lord Eustace Cecil) wishes us to see the Report of the Commission, and I must say I was rather surprised to hear what fell from the noble Lord the Secretary of State for War on that subject. The Commission was appointed by Lord Panmure, not only to make inquiry with reference to our own army, but also with reference to the other armies of Europe. It was on that Report that he decided to have only one College; and when I came into office in 1858, the Estimates had been prepared. It was then stated that the cadets at Woolwich should afterwards be removed to Sandhurst. An appeal was made to me that the candidates preparing for Woolwich would then be too old for Sandhurst, and measures were taken to enable them to appear at Sandhurst. What was my surprise when I brought forward the Estimates; the very Government that had prepared them turned round and voted against them. It is said that Lord Herbert was of opinion that there should be only one Military College, where those who distinguished themselves most should be selected for the Artillery and Engineers, and afterwards go to Woolwich; but it was only to the arsenal that was intended. With respect to the statement that the College of Sandhurst was entirely paid for by the public up to 1831, I may say, having been there myself in 1814 and 1815, the cadets then paid their own expenses. With regard to the cadets at Sandhurst, the great advantage was that they were able to hold their commissions and continue their studies at the same time. There is no doubt some ground for the complaints of the noble Lord (Lord Eustace Cecil); but if the cadets at Woolwich and Sandhurst had all the comforts he had described while they were undergraduates they would find themselves ten times worse off afterwards. No doubt the noble Marquess is perfectly right in saying that the competitive examinations and the altered ages at which the students are admitted are causes of the insubordination complained of. The competitive examinations are now so high that youths, instead of going direct from the public schools, go to cramming schools, where the discipline is nothing like what it is at Woolwich and Sandhurst, and that no doubt makes them afterwards unwilling to submit to closer discipline. I am convinced that there is great advantage in all officers going through a preliminary residence at a Military College —not merely in order to learn their drill, for that, I allow, is a secondary consideration; but the advantage consists in learning the character of the man before he gets his commission. When he has once obtained his commission it is a very difficult matter to get rid of him without going before a court martial, whereas, if by a previous knowledge of him you find that a person is likely to make a good officer he will then obtain his commission, but if you find him unpromising he will not have it. Another reason why the examination for admission into Sandhurst is of a high character is that people go there to compete for the commissions which are given without purchase. The cause of the number of candidates falling off is, as I pointed out the other day, because too many commissions are sold, and a sufficient proportion of them is not offered for competition. Were it only for this reason I should vote for a Commission of Inquiry into these schools, but if my noble Friend likes to wait till we see the Report of Lord Panmure's Commission he can do so. I am convinced, however, it was Lord Panmure's intention to have only one College, and it was undoubtedly my own intention to, but I was out-voted by the people who brought in the Estimates.

Captain VIVIAN said, he thought no one acquainted with the present condition and the past history of these Colleges could doubt that very great reform was needed. The question, moreover, whether there should be one or two Military Colleges, was of great importance. The right hon. and gallant Member who had just spoken, than whom there was no higher authority, had expressed his opinion in favour of a single College, and that opinion had been backed by other high authorities; but he (Captain Vivian), for reasons which it was unnecessary to go into on that occasion, humbly ventured to offer an opposite opinion. The Council of Education was not the body to decide a matter of this nature. A question of such importance could only be properly considered by a Royal Commission. The Secretary of State for War objected to the Motion which had been so ably brought forward by the noble Lord opposite (Lord Eustace Cecil), on the ground that a Commission was in existence that had been appointed by Lord Panmure; but he knew very well that great alteration had been made at Woolwich and Sandhurst not only with regard to the education of the cadets, but also as to the period of life at which persons were admitted, and this step alone had materially affected the administration of those Colleges. He hoped on these and many other grounds that his noble Friend would consent to the appointment of a Royal Commission, and he was persuaded that it would be attended with great benefit to the service.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 152; Noes 132: Majority 20.

IRELAND—FENIAN PRISONERS AT WATERFORD.—OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. BLAKE, in calling the attention of Mr. Attorney General for Ireland to the severe restrictions to which the prisoners arrested under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act are subjected to in the gaol of Waterford, and to inquire whether specific directions were given by Government as to the treatment of these prisoners; and, if so, whether he has any objection to state the nature of such directions; to which of the prison authorities they were transmitted; and through what medium; said, that in bringing before Parliament what he considered the unnecessarily severe restrictions to which the political prisoners confined in the gaol at Waterford were subjected to, he could assure the House that he would not bring the matter forward unless he felt quite sure there was great hardship in the case which he was about to detail, and that it ought to be redressed without delay. He had voted against the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act chiefly from a feeling that so extreme a measure was not required, and that it was more than probable it would be used in a very arbitrary and tyrannical manner by underlings of the Government anxious to show their zeal. What was going on in the city he represented went very far, he thought, to prove he was right in his anticipation. Over a dozen prisoners were confined there on suspicion of complicity with the Fenian conspiracy. The prison was a new building, constructed, he supposed, on the most approved principle for punishment and security. To aid the prison authorities in more effectually guarding the prisoners he alluded to, a military guard was provided, armed sentinels paced up and down before the doors of the cells, and in the exercise yards. Hitherto the Board of Superintendence had the management of the prison, and their directions were carried out by a local inspector and the Governor. He thought the section of the Act of Parliament which he would read was very clear, as to their powers and duties—

> "7 *Geo.* IV. s. 3, c. 74.—It shall and may be lawful for the Board of Superintendence to inquire concerning the due performance of the rules and regulations in and by this Act prescribed, and required to be observed in prisons throughout Ireland, and also concerning the due performance of such rules and regulations as may have been, or may from time to time be made, by or under the authority of His Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland, and also to inquire into the conduct and situation of the prisoners in every such prison or bridewell."

However, as he was informed, from the time the political prisoners were confined, it seemed as if the Board surrendered their power, so far as these prisoners were concerned, or the power of directing their course of treatment was assumed by a Government officer, Mr. Goold, stipendiary magistrate, a highly respectable gentleman, who, he was sure, only did what he was directed by superior authority. The prison was built on the cellular system; and the supposed Fenian sympathizers were each placed in separate confinement. Rule 9 of Prison Regulations lays down that—

> "All prisoners shall be admitted, at proper time in succession, to air themselves in the yard, or yards, for at least two hours every day; except prisoners under sentence of death, or such as are disorderly, or when there may be sufficient cause to apprehend that any escape may be attempted."

The directions given to the Governor appear to have been that these prisoners should be exercised alone; so that having only two exercise yards, he was not able to have more than two exercising at the same time; and having other prisoners to exercise as well, he could not, as stated, give the political prisoners the two hours a day, so that they were in solitary confinement twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four. The Governor, a retired officer of the navy, was a very humane, upright man, and he had no doubt obeyed his orders as kindly towards the prisoners as he possibly could; and he took for granted that Colonel Roberts, the local inspector, a much respected gentleman, only obeyed some one else's order in directing that the prisoners should be deprived of some of the privileges enjoyed before conviction. Besides being shut up in those cells for upwards of twenty-two hours, these unfortunate men were not allowed to see either their families or friends, or even to consult with the legal advisers, which the former were anxious to send them, in order to prepare cases to submit to the Government with a view to their liberation. It might seem incredible that a prisoner should be deprived of the benefit of seeing a legal adviser; but there was one case of the truth of which he believed, which would surprise them. A blacksmith, named Dillon, was arrested for having arms. His wife employed an attorney to defend him, expecting he would be tried at the assizes. The attorney sought admission to him to get instructions, but was refused; so, also, was the wife. Ultimately, the man was not put on his trial; but had he been he would have appeared at the bar without being allowed to adopt the proper means to defend himself. Whoever was accountable for that monstrous act ought to be exposed, and censured. The prisoners were not allowed, even under the inspection of the Governor, to receive or send out any written communications, so that in many instances their poor families were left without information or instructions how to carry on their business, the consequence of which might be very serious. At night, gas was left lighted in their cells, in order that the sentinels might see whether they were in them, although their only mode of getting out, as the door was guarded, would be to make a hole with their bare hands in the solid stone wall, and another in the outer wall; but since Stephens had outwitted the Government, there was an impression that a Fenian could make light of bolts and stone walls. For some Sundays past the prisoners had not been allowed to go to mass even though a military guard was in the prison. When first he heard those statements he hardly believed so much cruelty, injustice, and absurdity would be perpetrated in the blacksmith's case. He wrote to the attorney, a very leading practitioner, to know if what he heard was true, and he confirmed every word of it. He saw by a local paper that the prisoners had complained of part of their treatment to a committee of the grand jury who visited the prison. The latter reported the matter to the jury on their return, and as it was usual to lay such matters before the Judge, he supposed the Executive had heard of it also; but nothing had been done. He had numbers of letters from trustworthy persons confirming all he stated, and he would now like to know from the representative of the Irish Government in the House what had he to say about it? Was it by the orders or with the knowledge of the Government that the prisoners were treated with all this useless annoyance, certain to prove detrimental to their health, and probably to their reason as well. He was not then going to censure the Government for arresting these men, although he, believing the proof of being engaged in the conspiracy was very trifling, indeed, against some of them. But whatever justification there might be for arresting them, there was none at all for treating them worse than the untried murderer or robber. He begged of the Attorney General to make inquiries into the truth of the statements he had made, and to put a stop to inflicting such severities on untried and uncharged men. He would respectfully ask him were the Government justified when they suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in also setting aside the local prison authorities, and directing a course of treatment towards men whom they had not sufficient evidence to put on their trials, as if they had been found guilty? If the Government were accountable for this they were committing a most unjust and highly impolitic act; and if the act was really theirs, and that they persevered in it, they might feel assured they would only earn for themselves the disapprobation of every well-thinking man, the contempt of foreign nations, and incur the deserved resentment, not only of the prisoners themselves, but of a numerous body of their countrymen at home and abroad, who would be certain to sympathize with them.

Mr. BAGWELL said, he thought the manner in which the Government carried out the extraordinary powers conferred upon them ought to be jealously watched. Those powers, however necessary, should be exercised in the way that was in the least possible degree offensive to the people of the country. Persons were now sometimes taken up in Ireland upon very trifling reasons, and they certainly ought not to be subjected to any harsher or more stringent restrictions than were necessary for their safe custody, and the prevention of their carrying on any conspiracy against the Government. It should be understood that the Government took charge of that class of prisoners, and that the magistrates should not be held responsible either for their safe custody or for the mode in which they were treated, and he trusted that orders to that effect would be issued. He would recommend that the Government should send round to the different gaols instructions stating what was the treatment which the prisoners should receive.

Mr. Blake

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Lawson) said, he entirely agreed with the hon. Members that these prisoners ought not to be subjected to any restrictions save those which were required for their safe custody; and he believed that that rule had been fully adopted in the gaol of Waterford. As soon as he saw the Notice which the hon. Member had put upon the Paper he caused inquiries to be instituted upon the subject, and these inquiries led him to believe that the hon. Gentleman had been misinformed upon the case. He had been furnished with a statement from which it appeared that these prisoners were not subject to any severe restrictions, and in reply to the question of the hon. Gentleman whether the Government had given specific directions with respect to their treatment he had to observe that the prisoners who were taken up under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, who were not arrested upon trifling, but upon grave and serious grounds, were under the control of the Local Board of Superintendence, in common with other classes of prisoners, and the Government, therefore, had no authority to give any orders as to their treatment. The treatment to which the prisoners arrested under the measure for the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act were subjected was no exception to that rule. It so happened that the local authorities applied to the Inspector General of Prisons to know how those persons were to be treated, and the answer of the Inspector General was, that they should be treated as untried prisoners; that they should be allowed to supply themselves if they pleased with food, and that they should not be compelled to wear the prison clothes. He (the Attorney General for Ireland) was further informed that those instructions had been complied with—that the prisoners received through their friends abundant supplies of good food, and that they were not obliged to wear the prison clothing; so that the statements made upon the subject by the hon. Gentleman were not well founded, and he must have been misled by his informants.

Mr. MAGUIRE thanked the hon. and learned Member for Clonmel (Mr. Bagwell) for having expressed the opinion of every rational man in the country on that matter—namely, that while the Government had a right to be supported in the maintenance of law and order, they would not only deserve censure if they went one jot beyond what necessity required, but would greatly assist in spreading a feeling of discontent in Ireland. These prisoners must be regarded as men who had been proved to be guilty of no crime; and it would be monstrous to treat them with a severity to which unconvicted burglars and murderers were not subjected. When they had got hold of a man like Stephens they did not keep him safely, and now they appeared to be adopting very harsh and severe restrictions against every miserable creature on whom they laid their hands. He had a satisfactory account of the rules enforced in the gaol in the city of Cork, but it was asserted to him that that class of prisoners in the Cork county gaol were treated with greater vigour than ordinary untried prisoners. Many of these persons had been taken up in his own city and in other parts of Ireland, against whom no case could stand for a moment before a Judge of Assize; and out of the 500 they could not fairly reckon upon obtaining verdicts for the Crown against 200. He understood that in the county gaol of Cork the prisoners were allowed but two hours for exercise each day, and that during the other twenty-two hours they were kept in solitary confinement. They were only permitted to see their relatives twice a week, and they could not have free communication with a legal adviser, for the warders were present when friends came to see them. Now, that was a state of absolute and rigorous punishment, which he held to be utterly unjustifiable; and, although he admitted that a satisfactory answer had been given by the Attorney General for Ireland to the statement made by the hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. Blake), he thought that in the case of the county gaol of Cork the powers given by the recent Act had been greatly abused. At the time when the House resolved to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act the Government promised distinctly that the powers intrusted to them should be exercised with prudence and clemency. He contended, however, that the Government had not acted according to its promise, and that persons who had not been proved guilty of any offence by a jury of their countrymen ought not to be treated as the prisoners were at the gaol of Cork. Such harshness and cruelty were not necessary to preserve the peace of the country. He urged the Government to institute a searching inquiry into the antecedents of the prisoners, and, if it should be found that there was no real reason for detaining them from their families and ordinary employment, to liberate them. Should, however, conclusive evidence of the guilt of the men be found, of course then they should be held in custody.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that he did not recollect any promise being given by the Government that the powers vested in the Executive by the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act should be exercised with great leniency. But however that might be, the first object of the Government was to preserve the safety and the peace of the country, and after that to see that no unnecessary hardships were inflicted. As it was a matter of considerable importance, he thought it desirable that there should be no misunderstanding with respect to it. It was obviously right and desirable that no unnecessary hardship should be inflicted on those prisoners. The case of those confined in the gaol of Waterford had been brought under the notice of the House; the Attorney General for Ireland had inquired into that case; and the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Maguire) admitted, after the statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, that the charge made in that particular instance had not been borne out. But the hon. Gentleman referred to the alleged ill-treatment of prisoners in the county gaol of Cork. Now, upon that point, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) could only state that when any such abuse as that of which the hon. Member complained was indicated in any credible manner, the Government would immediately cause an inquiry to be instituted for the purpose of ascertaining whether such proceedings had actually taken place. The Government held firmly by the principle that unconvicted prisoners who were arrested under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act were to be treated in the same manner as all other untried prisoners. He ventured to promise, on the part of his right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland, that inquiry would be made into the Cork county gaol case, or any similar case; and that was the only assurance he could then give upon the subject.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, there had been two statements made upon that occasion —one with regard to the gaol of Waterford, and the other with regard to the county gaol of Cork; but the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Maguire) who had alluded to the latter subject had laid before them mere general allegations, and had stated no specific facts. He (Mr. Roebuck) believed that if the Attorney General for Ireland had an opportunity of inquiring into those allegations, as he had inquired into the detailed charges with respect to the Waterford Gaol, he would find that they were equally unfounded. The hon. Member for Cork used a curious expression when he told them that these prisoners had been proved not to be guilty. [Mr. MAGUIRE: I beg your pardon. I did not say so.] I beg your pardon, you did. I corrected you at the time. These men have not been proved to be guilty; but they have not been proved to be not guilty. [Mr. MAGUIRE: I did not say they had.] I beg your pardon, you did.

MR. MAGUIRE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a matter of Parliamentary—shall I say, practice?—I wish to ask you, whether one hon. Gentleman is to be allowed to stand up and declare, without any knowledge on his own part, that a statement, conscientiously made by another hon. Gentleman, will, on inquiry, prove unfounded? I can only say, that if that is our practice, the sooner we have a Reform Bill the better.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear any expression fall from the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) that appeared to call for my interposition.

SIR GEORGE GREY: I did not understand the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield to say that the hon. Member for Cork had stated anything that he knew to be untrue. He only said that he expected that the statement of the hon. Gentleman would, on inquiry, turn out to be unfounded.

IRELAND—FATAL RIOT AT THE ELECTION FOR MONAGHAN.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. WHITESIDE said, that he was not averse to proceedings in Courts of Law being criticized by the press; on the contrary, he believed such criticism exerted a very beneficial influence in the country. He had no objection whatever to Judges, counsel, witnesses, and all parties being fairly dealt with by the critic. The particular journal to which he referred—*The Times*—lately published an article of consummate ability relative to a cause of great importance, but the criticism which he was about to notice referred to a criminal trial which recently took place in Monaghan, arising out of the last election for that county, and he now asked the permission of the House to make a few remarks upon what was reported to have then occurred. He did not intend to complain of the criticisms of the journal which had yesterday taken up the matter; his object was simply to state the facts. On the 22nd of July, on the Saturday, the electors of the county of Monaghan were invited to record their votes at the very pleasing and formerly happy village of Castle Blayney, and a number of those electors assembled in the domain of a gentleman situate in the immediate neighbourhood of that place. The night previous to the election the Government very properly sent a military and a police force into Castle Blayney. The House should understand that a new theory had been broached in Ireland, which was not very satisfactory to the electors—namely, that the non-electors should attend the electors on the day of election, and dispose of them as might be found most convenient. He believed all parties to be most amicably disposed towards each other. The Government sent to the town a stipendiary magistrate and an additional force of police. On Friday night a large body of electors arrived there, and there was a disturbance, but the police authorities got the better of the rioters, a number of whom were seized, and very properly prosecuted, and prosecuted to conviction by the Government. A large body of non-electors also assembled in the town on the morning on which the polling took place, who were pleased to receive in not a very polite manner those adventurous voters who went to the poll, who in return called them, without the slightest respect, a mob. It also appeared that early on the Saturday morning a number of electors, who entered the town without any guard, were in a very disagreeable manner, legs foremost, removed from the car on which they were conveyed, and carried off by persons employed for that purpose. As soon as the resident magistrate was informed of the fact he proceeded to the place where those men were confined, and released them, and they afterwards voted for one of the candidates. That part of the proceedings passed off, but a party of 200 electors—a number sufficient to turn the election—arrived in the town from a place called Ballybay to vote for the Conservative candidate, accompanied by the old rector of the parish. It was a question of considerable nicety how to get those men to the poll. It had been thought better to place them in a special train, to which no one but the electors were admitted, and thus to convey them to Castle Blayney, where they would be received by a guard. They reached that town about eleven o'clock. One of the voters, a most respectable man, having been hustled by a number of persons, the magistrate swore that he took him to the polling-booth, and seeing that he had a pistol, asked him to give it to him. The man, whose name was Gray, did so, the pistol was afterwards restored to him, and there was nothing further remarkable in the circumstance. Gray was a man whose father was described by Mr. Wyse in his history of the Catholic Association as having taken an honourable part in the Catholic question, and there was no reason why he should have any dislike towards the person whom he was accused of having murdered. It appeared, however, that after the 200 electors had voted, it became a matter for consideration what was to be done with them until the starting of the special train, which was not to leave the town till three o'clock. Permission was obtained for them to enter the domain of the gentleman whom he had already mentioned, and there they remained for two hours enjoying the scenery until the magistrate was ready to convey them back to the railway station. Accompanied by a troop of fifty Lancers, consisting of an advanced guard, a rear guard, and flanks, the electors, well-protected in the centre, were escorted by a back way—for the magistrate very properly determined that it was not desirable to take them through the street—but when they reached a passage leading to the cattle-market a shower of stones and brickbats was hurled at them by the mob. One of the Lancers swore that he had his jaw broken, and that he suffered under the injury which he sustained for three or four months. The old rector of the parish was struck twice. No shots were fired for the best of all reasons, because they had, he believed, no firearms. The voters and their escort, however, reached the station about half past two, thus, unfortunately, having half an hour to wait for the starting of the special train. During that time, being obliged to stay where they were, they were attacked on all sides, and wherever they appeared they were pelted with stones. The magistrate read the Riot Act, and a lieutenant of Lancers, it was said without authority, charged the mob at the head of his men. During that interval it was that the event occurred to which attention had been called in the article to which he referred. A man named Shevelin was struck twice on the head; the doctor said not dangerously; but then somebody rushed forward suddenly, fired, and shot him dead. The question was whether the prisoner Gray was the man who was guilty of the murder. The Crown contended that he was, and it might be remarked that he belonged to the Conservative, or, as it was more distinctly called in the part of the country in question, the Protestant party. On the trial four witnesses were produced on behalf of the Crown. The first was a Lancer—a man named Heffernan, who said he was present on the occasion when Shevelin was shot; that he saw the ear of the man who fired, but not his face, and that he believed the prisoner, judging from his figure, to be that person. He could not, however, identify him, and added that the whole affair lasted not more than half a minute. Another Lancer gave evidence, who swore that he had a front view of the man who fired the shot, and that that man was not the prisoner. But the Crown produced, and very properly produced, a boy who said that he saw the disturbance, that there was a wall seven feet high between him and the station, but that he managed to raise himself up so that he had a view of what was going on, and he undertook to identify the prisoner as the man who fired the shot, although he had never seen him before. A surveyor, having drawn a plan of the place, stated that it was possible to see the figure of the man from the spot where the boy described himself as having been stationed, but not the lineaments of his face. None of the other witnesses carried the case further, and the trial taking place on Saturday and not being finished, it was adjourned till Monday. Now came the circumstances of which he complained. On the Sunday morning, before they went to church, the persons interested for the defence found the names of two persons, Kearnan and Wilde, on the back of the indictment, who were to come forward as witnesses for the prosecution without having previously made any deposition or statement which would enable Gray's solicitors to know who or what they were, or what it was they were about to prove; illustrating the saying of Curran as to an apparition appearing suddenly in the witness-box to be the supreme arbiter of life and death. Those two persons, it was discovered on Sunday, lived in the top room of a not very good house, paying 8*d.* a week for their lodgings, and it was shown that a person standing up or sitting down in that room could not see the railway station, although by lying down and placing himself in a crouching position he might obtain a view of it. It appeared, moreover, during the progress of the trial that a committee had been formed to procure subscriptions for the purpose of securing the conviction of the accused man, and accordingly these two witnesses appeared and swore that they saw the man who fired the shot through a window through which it was almost impossible that he could be seen without looking askance. He might add that they had been present at the inquest on the body of the man who was killed, which was held quite close to their house, and yet they had never given any information as to what they had seen until afterwards, so that they came before the Court under very suspicious circumstances. Yet the statement which had inadvertently been made the day before in a journal of vast influence was that four witnesses clearly identified the man, which was a complete misapprehension of the case. Under these circumstances the prisoner was properly acquitted; but what he (Mr. Whiteside) complained of was, that the case had been so strained, that these men who were neither examined at the inquest nor before the grand jury, should have been allowed to come forward at the last moment and endeavour to swear an innocent man's life away. It was no objection that the jury was composed of Protestants, because the number of Protestants on the panel was large. As to the statement that the High Sheriff conducted a body of voters to the poll, he had only to say that that gentleman was not High Sheriff at the time, and he acted as he did because he was told by a magistrate that he ought to protect those voters. That was all he did, and he never interfered in the trial, which was conducted in the usual course of law. It had been rightly said that this man was armed, but he was armed in self-defence, and he produced four witnesses to prove that he was not the man who fired the shot. He thought the House had a right to expect that the Attorney General for Ireland would not in future allow unauthorized persons to interfere in prosecutions, but would leave them to be conducted by the proper functionaries.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, it was not his intention to find fault with the verdict of the jury, but he must say that prosecutions in Ireland ought to be conducted on fair principles, and that juries should be so constituted as to induce the people to have perfect confidence in the impartial administration of justice. He protested against the very small proportion of Roman Catholics returned to the sheriff in the list from which the jury was taken, and also that the person who made it out should be the barony constable. He conceived that the system of jury panelling in Ireland was well worthy the attention of the Government. The persons who made the jury-book were the barony constables, and they were elected by the county grand juries, which were so constituted as to have a one-sided character.

Mr. O'REILLY said, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University (Mr. Whiteside), had erred against the usual practice of not travelling beyond the terms of his Notice in commenting on the proceedings of a legal tribunal. He fancied, from the notice given by the right hon. Gentleman, that his statement would relate to the conduct of the High Sheriff. But what had the right hon. Gentleman done? He had given a graphic and a more or less correct account of the Monaghan election. The right hon. Gentleman produced no authority for his statement, but only said that it was a true account. Now, it so happened that, living in the neighbouring county, he had himself formed as to the facts of the case an opinion totally at variance with the statements of the right hon. Gentleman. [Mr. Whiteside: They were all proved.] But the right hon. Gentleman did not say where or when they were proved. Statements with respect to elections in Ireland were not unfrequently made in that House which afterwards turned out to be inaccurate. The statements made by the right hon. Gentleman must have reference to what passed at the trial, and the right hon. Gentleman constituted himself a volunteer reporter, and gave his own summary of the evidence on what was, after all, a collateral issue, because the question as to the manner in which the election was conducted was not before the jury. He thought it most undesirable that counsel engaged in trials, criminal or otherwise, should come to that House and give their own statements of the evidence which had been adduced. With respect to the trial at Monaghan, the simple fact was that a man had been tried for murder and acquitted by a jury of his countrymen. Unfortunately, religious differences and animosities greatly interfered with the impartiality of juries in Ireland. It was therefore most desirable that every effort should be made to put the constitution of juries above suspicion. Riots, as they all knew, had taken place at Belfast, in which several murders were committed. There were the most aggravated assaults on both sides, yet not one single conviction had been obtained at the assizes. He did not charge partiality on the juries exclusively on one side. In one part of the country a jury of Roman Catholics would invariably acquit; in another a jury of Protestants would as invariably acquit. It was therefore advisable to act as far as possible on the direction giving by Baron Pigott in a certain case to obtain a jury of half Roman Catholics and half Protestants. The result in that case was that a satisfactory verdict was obtained. The case tried at Monaghan was a very remarkable one. It was a case of murder, which occurred when a party of voters were retiring from a contested election. The greatest possible prejudice existed on both sides, and the verdict necessarily depended on the constitution of the jury. The High Sheriff, it was admitted, had taken a very strong part at the election.

Mr. WHITESIDE said, that he had already stated as a matter of fact that the High Sheriff, Mr. Lucas, was not High Sheriff at the time of the election. He acted merely as an ordinary private gentleman.

Mr. O'REILLY said, that he had no intention of misleading the House. He thought that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had said that the gentleman who became High Sheriff in 1866 did conduct voters to the poll in 1865. That was the statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. [Mr. Whiteside: No!] The High Sheriff who presided at the assizes, and who formed the jury panel, had taken a leading part in the election. The same gentleman, Mr. Lucas, in 1838 had been charged with a want of impartiality in the administration of justice as a magistrate. An inquiry was ordered by the then Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Mr. Lucas was dismissed from the commission of the peace. The right hon. Gentleman was not quite accurate in saying that it was to be expected that a majority of the jurors in Monaghan should be Protestants. He lived within a mile or two of the county, and he knew that a majority of the farmers were Roman Catholics. [Mr. Whiteside: Not of the jury panel.] There were fifty-seven Catholics on the list of jurors. At the trial there were five peremptory challenges—three of Catholics and two of Protestants of Liberal opinions, but no one was ordered by the Crown to stand aside. A jury of twelve Protestants were empannelled, who were known to hold strong political opinions, to try a case in which strong political prejudices might be expected to influence men's minds. The result was a verdict of acquittal. That the trial was influenced by the jury panel was an opinion strongly entertained in Monaghan. It was most undesirable that such a state of things should exist, and serious blame was attributable to the Law Officers of the Crown, who ought to have taken steps to secure the impartial administration of justice in Ireland. Very lately the Law Officers of the Crown had to conduct a series of political trials, and they had conducted them very well; but it was notorious that they had ordered a considerable number of jurors to stand aside because they believed, and rightly, that their political prejudices would influence their verdict. He blamed them for not even seeking to prevent the appearance of partiality in the constitution of juries in Monaghan. There was such a thing in criminal trials as changing the *venue*. That had been done in the case of the Rev. Father Peter Conway, where the *venue* was changed from Mayo to Dublin. The Law Officers of the Crown were perfectly aware of these facts; their attention was drawn to the desirableness for the interests of the administration of justice that the constitution of the panel should be closely watched, and they must have known before the trial took place the actual constitution of the panel, and the singular exclusion from it of Roman Catholics. He could not understand, therefore, why the Government should not have changed the *venue* of the trial. He should also mention that two men who were holding and beating the murdered man when he was shot in the back, were also tried by a jury consisting exclusively of Protestants, the only Roman Catholic who was called being desired to stand aside, it migh be not without good reason. He believed the father of these men had been accused of slaying three men at different times in the same county. He had been convicted for murder, but the verdict was quashed at the time of Mr. O'Connell's appeal on technical grounds. [Mr. WHITESIDE said, that the father was convicted only of firing with intent to kill.] He had only alluded to these things to show how the impression in Ireland had originated; that impartiality in such trials was not to be expected. He thought some explanation was required from the Law Officers of Ireland as to this case. The facts he had detailed were sufficient to account for the want of confidence in the administration which prevailed among the Irish people. There was one passage in the article in *The Times* to which the right hon. Gentleman had not referred. It was as follows:—

> "Mr. Whiteside, who conducted Gray's defence with great ability, put the whole matter in a light perfectly intelligible to an Ulster jury when he stated that Shevelin's death, however much to be deplored, might be a salutary lesson to riotous mobs of non-electors."

He was surprised to find that the right hon. Gentleman had made no remark on this passage.

MR. SULLIVAN said, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University had not adhered to the terms of his notice, which was to draw attention to certain statements in the leading journal—*The Times*—reflecting on the administration of justice in the county of Monaghan by the High Sheriff of that county. He (Mr. Sullivan) did not expect, after reading that notice, to hear a long account of the circumstances which led to the trial which had been mentioned. The only passage in the article of *The Times* which reflected on the High Sheriff was this—

> "In this very instance the Orange contingent is alleged to have been led by Mr. Lucas, the present High Sheriff, and if this be true it is certainly an untoward circumstance that a gentleman personally interested in the transaction to be investigated should now fill that responsible position."

As one of the officers of the Crown he must say it would have been much better if Mr. Lucas had not been High Sheriff at the time of this trial. Not that he thought that gentleman would be influenced by party considerations in the discharge of the onerous duties imposed upon him in that capacity; but the administration of justice ought ever to be above suspicion, and the people could not be expected to rely on the impartial administration of the law unless that principle was strictly observed. He quite allowed, therefore, that the case called for some explanation, and this he would proceed at once to give. High Sheriffs in Ireland, as the House were probably aware, were selected by the Executive from three names which were sent in for each county by the Judges, and the invariable usage was to select the first gentleman on the list. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] He should, perhaps, have said the usual course was to do so, and the first name on the list was not set aside without some grave reason. In the present instance, the only person really able to determine whether the part taken by Mr. Lucas in the election disqualified him from being High Sheriff this year was his right hon. Friend the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Lawson), and his right hon. Friend, not being able to address the House a second time, authorized him to state that he took upon himself whatever blame the appointment might be thought to deserve. The fact was that his right hon. Friend fully intended to call the attention of the Lord Lieutenant to the circumstances of the case, not that he thought Mr. Lucas had interfered in the election in any way which would render his position as High Sheriff an embarrassing one, but he conceived that it would be better to avoid any suspicion of partiality. Owing, however, to the enormous pressure of business connected with the proceedings of the Special Commission for the trial of the Fenian prisoners, the appointment of Mr. Lucas, as Sheriff, was made before the Attorney General had an opportunity of conferring with his Excellency. Considering, then, that for the Government to supersede the High Sheriff on the very eve of the trial would have been open to grave imputation, the best course seemed to be not to meddle with the appointment, his right hon. Friend believing that Mr. Lucas would discharge his duty with the utmost fairness, and a close investigation had satisfied the Government that he had done so. With the result of the trial no reasonable person acquainted with the principles of our law could find fault, and the reasons for that opinion could not be better stated than in the very article on which the right hon. Member for Dublin University had commented. Its words were these—

> "The swearing on both sides was so hard, and the undoubted fact of great confusion prevailing at the time was so favourable to the defence, that an acquittal was inevitable."

The evidence was so conflicting that it could not be said that there was no reasonable doubt of the prisoner's guilt, and to the benefit of that doubt the prisoner was entitled. One other point he must allude to. What was the motive of the right hon. Gentleman in giving the whole history of the transaction he could hardly say. At one moment he thought his intention was to argue that the act was justifiable, and to a certain extent that seemed to be his object. It had been said by the right hon. Gentleman in his defence of the prisoner—

> "That some good might arise from what had taken place, because it would deter others from interfering to prevent the right of voting."

Such language was an unnecessary and an indefensible appeal to the passions of the jury. He (Mr. Sullivan) maintained that the man's death was as clear a murder as was ever committed. His life was wantonly taken without provocation, and when the voters were sufficiently protected. Under these circumstances, he put it to his right hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Whiteside) whether his observations merely were not calculated to rouse party passions, which it was the paramount duty of every Member of that House to endeavour to appease. The hon. Member for Longford was right in saying that the *venue* might have been changed. No doubt the Law Officers of the Crown were bound to consider this point. They did so, and came to the conclusion that they could not go to the Court of Queen's Bench and say that a fair trial could not be had in the county of Monaghan, which was a condition precedent to the consent of the Court to a change of *venue*. With respect to the setting aside of jurors, no man was directed to stand aside on the ground of his religious or political opinions. The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) had hinted at some aid having been given by some committee or other to the Crown in the prosecution. There was not a particle of foundation for such a statement. The administration of justice did not, either in England or Ireland, admit of such aid, and nothing was more strictly watched by the Crown prosecutors in Ireland than any interference by collateral or interested parties. He would submit, in conclusion, that the Law Officers of the Crown had done their duty. and that no blame attached to them in this matter.

MR. GEORGE said, he must express his astonishment that a simple Notice such as that placed upon the Paper by his right hon. and learned Friend should have led to a debate of such a character. His (Mr. Whiteside's) object was to correct an inadvertent and mistaken report in the leading journal of the day in reference to the manner in which his hon. and learned Friend, as the counsel engaged, had conducted this case. His object was twofold —first, to state that nothing of corruption or impropriety of conduct had appeared in the acts of the Sheriff or the swearing of the jury, and next to correct an unfair imputation that four credible witnesses had sworn to the identity of the man who was upon his trial. He did not believe that his right hon. and learned Friend had the slightest intention of impugning the conduct of the Law Officers of the Crown. [MR. WHITESIDE: Hear, hear!] It was, however, an unusual thing that any one should be allowed to interfere with a Crown prosecution, and it was stated on the trial that a committee had been appointed and funds collected to get up evidence in order to patch up the case. His right hon. and learned Friend had shown that there was no ground for impeaching the conduct of the Sheriff.

MR. SERJEANT ARMSTRONG said, that having read the article in *The Times* the right hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside) was not satisfied with coming from the county of Monaghan with his blushing honours thick upon him, but he must come down to that House determined to have a second verdict in his favour—determined to be not only his own reporter but almost his own trumpeter, and demanding of the House in effect to have the case re-tried. The right hon. and learned Gentleman had called in question the main statement on which the comments of *The Times* were founded—namely, that four persons had deposed to the fact that the prisoner Gray had inflicted the deadly wound upon the deceased man. Now, he was not himself about to ask the House to re-try the case or to travel again over the evidence; and he must say that the right hon. and learned Gentleman, having earned his fee and come back to this country to spend it, as an Irish gentleman ought, should have rested content, and should not have expected a re-investigation of the case. But, as the right hon. and learned Member had taken upon himself to challenge the accuracy of the statement of *The Times*, he must, on his own part, state that four persons did depose that the prisoner Gray was the man who discharged the fatal shot. There were some observations, perhaps, in the article of *The Times* to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman—if he did not in his own mind regret the language which he had used at Monaghan—might have objected. Certainly, he had employed a strength of expression which, however it might be pardoned as coming from the counsel for a prisoner, who sometimes took great licence, particularly in Ireland, no man would venture to repeat in this House or in any reasonable society in this country. [Mr. WHITESIDE: I say that not only would I repeat it——"Order, order!"] He was astonished that some feeling of annoyance at *The Times* having presumed to animadvert upon his conduct should have induced the right hon. and learned Gentleman to bring the matter forward. He himself repudiated the notion of there retrying that case; but when the attention of the House had been invited to an alleged misstatement of the leading journal, he must take leave to point out that the fact to which he had referred was testified to by four witnesses. With respect to what had been said about the committee at Castle Blayney for getting up subscriptions for the prosecution, he must distinctly state that on that occasion neither he himself as representing the Attorney General for Ireland, nor the eminent and learned Gentlemen who were associated with him in the case, nor the Crown Solicitor, nor any person on the staff connected with the Crown, had to his knowledge or belief any communication with or assistance from that committee or any person acting on its behalf. They knew nothing at all about it, and went to Monaghan perfectly ready to conduct their own case. As to the production of witnesses who had not sworn informations in the ordinary way, no one knew better than the hon. and learned Member for Wexford (Mr. George) that it was not a sufficient reason for rejecting the testimony of a witness in Ireland that he had hesitated till a late period, or even till the Assizes, to give his evidence. Sometimes in Ireland it was difficult to get witnesses to come forward at all. If a man and his wife went to the Crown Solicitor and stated that they both saw a certain thing done, and that they were ready to swear to it, what was the Crown Officer to do but to lay instructions to that effect before counsel? That had happened in this instance, and he and his learned colleagues therefore held a consultation, when it struck them all that of course the prisoner's counsel would animadvert upon the fact of those witnesses having come forward at the last moment as being a circumstance throwing suspicion on their testimony. But the man and his wife were persons of good character, on which, after they had undergone cross-examination, no blemish was left. He had never seen or known them before himself, and it was not for him to have said that they were unworthy of credit, merely because they had delayed in regard to giving their evidence. The value of their evidence under all the circumstances was a matter to be left for the jury; and in any similar case he would to-morrow repeat the course he had taken. In what a position would counsel conducting prosecutions for the Crown be placed, if they assumed the responsibility of discarding such witnesses as perjurers? He maintained that after what had taken place in that House, the High Sheriff of the county came badly out of that business. He was a fine, bluff, honest, country gentleman, and when he came to read his *Times* of to-morrow morning, and found it recorded to all time that some twenty-eight years ago, "in the merry days when he was young," he was dismissed from the commission of the peace, he would be apt to exclaim, "This is what Mr. Whiteside has brought upon me; save me from my friends!" With respect to what had fallen from the hon. and gallant Member for Longford, he would only say that a rule had long prevailed that had been recommended by high authority, by which a certain class of persons were set aside at jury trials in Ireland wholly irrespective of creed. It had been a practice to set aside publicans, and probably the person referred to had been set aside under that rule. At all events, he could positively state he was not set aside because he was a Roman Catholic, and that he (Mr. Serjeant Armstrong) would be no party to so monstrous an Act. He might say with regard to the jury, that on a panel of about 300 not thirty were Roman Catholics, and of the 100 who answered to their names only nineteen were Roman Catholics. It followed that the prisoner, who could challenge twenty peremptorily, might have an exclusively Protestant jury, and, in fact, he had it. Still, having regard to the principles upon which the criminal law of the country was administered, by which the jury were always directed to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt, in the present instance the jury were perfectly justified in giving their verdict of acquittal, as the evidence was conflicting, and reasonably suggestive of a doubt.

Mr. S. B. MILLER said, he thought that Mr. Lucas had reason to complain of the way in which he had been dealt with in this discussion. He contended that the hon. Member for Longford had unjustly raked up a dismissal of that gentleman from office which took place twenty-eight years ago. Since then Her Majesty's Government had thought it right to reinstate him as High Sheriff for the county; the Judges recommended Mr. Lucas for the office, and the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General had sanctioned that appointment. He had been struck by an observation that fell from the Solicitor General, that no person was allowed to assist in a case conducted by the Crown. Now, from his own knowledge, he had found this statement to be incorrect. He knew that solicitors and counsel had been allowed to act with the counsel for the Crown, and he had himself held a brief under such circumstances. The next of kin had repeatedly instructed both solicitors and counsel, and they had taken their turn in the examination of witnesses. With respect to the time which had been occupied in the discussion, he did not think that the paragraph which had been referred to could have been made intelligible without giving a statement of the facts which had led to it.

Mr. COGAN said, he did not think the time of the House had been at all wasted in discussing the administration of justice in Ireland, and thought a great deal of credit was due to the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) for having brought the Monaghan trials under the notice of the House. There was a widespread feeling of astonishment and dissatisfaction at the manner in which the trials had been conducted, and it was a striking fact that the jury panels, consisting of 300 persons, contained the names of only fifty-seven Roman Catholics, and that the first panel contained no more than seven, so that under no circumstance could more than seven have been challenged. It was a matter of surprise, considering what happened years before, that the present Sheriff should be in that office at the time of the trials. He considered it the duty of the Government to deal with the jury laws in Ireland so as to prevent such a miscarriage of justice as had taken place in this instance, where a foul murder had been committed and no person had been made amenable to justice.

TURNPIKE TRUSTS.—OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. WHALLEY said, he rose to call attention to the Report of the Committee on Turnpike Trusts, 1864, in which they state that—

> "Tolls are unequal in pressure, costly in collection, inconvenient to the public, and injurious as causing a serious impediment to intercourse and traffic, and that the abolition thereof would be beneficial to the community,"

and to ask what steps the Government intended to take to give effect to the said Report. If ever there was a case of breach of duty on the part of the Government, it was their not having followed up the recommendations contained in the Report of 1864. There was no subject which had led to so many riots even in Wales, one of the most peaceable localities in Europe. Ireland, with all her alleged wrongs, had not a single toll bar. The system of turnpike trusts operated as a great wrong throughout the country. The effect was, to relieve landowners from their common law liability of keeping the roads in repair, and to keep up a rapacious body of lawyers, surveyors, and officials by an unjust tax on the public. They were originally constituted with the view to the improvement of our roads, and nothing could be more just than that the repayment of the money required for making new or repairing old roads should be raised by means of a charge on the districts which were liable at common law, though it must, he thought, be admitted that turnpike tolls were the most costly and inconvenient system which could be adopted for the purpose. It appeared that nearly £1,000,000 a year was now raised under these trusts, notwithstanding that the payment of the charge within a period which had expired had been promised by the trustees. They had therefore not kept faith with the public, and he had to complain that the Government should renew the trusts from year to year in a Bill brought in at the end of the Session, and generally speaking at two o'clock in the morning, without giving any good reason for continuing to impose so heavy a tax on the public. The authorities at the Home Office were—doubtless owing to the pressure of local influence—not discharging their duty when they said that they were getting rid of the turnpikes by putting them in the schedules. They ought not to be satisfied with that, but they ought to do something themselves, or else encourage any efforts, however humble, made by independent Members. In the Bill introduced by him there was a provision which had received the approval of the late Sir George Lewis, and which would entirely remedy the present state of things. That provision was with respect to trusts which had expired that when application was made to Parliament for a renewal of the trusts it should be a condition that the tolls to be collected should be applied, not to the repair of the roads, but solely to the liquidation of the remainder of the debt. As regarded those cases in which the trust had not expired, he (Mr. Whalley) would recommend that the landowners should have power voluntarily to abolish them, a step which they would act wisely if they took, for the greater part of tolls was derived from local traffic, and it would be infinitely better to raise the money by a rate than by a system which was most inconvenient, most costly, and most injurious. He wished to know what steps the Government intended to take to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee of 1864?

MR. BARING said, he thought that the hon. Member's speech might have been more appropriately delivered on the second reading of his own Bill, to the principle of which the Government could not agree, because they did not think that it could be acted upon to any public advantage. With regard to the statesman who had been alluded to by the hon. Gentleman, and whose name always carried with it the greatest possible respect in that House, he must observe that Sir George Lewis was not at the Home Office subsequently to the Report of the Committee of 1864, and that while at the Home Office he brought forward no such measure as that described by the hon. Gentleman. He was, therefore, unaware of the grounds on which the hon. Member stated that Sir George Lewis would have supported such a measure.

MR. WHALLEY said, that the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Clive) had mentioned to him that that was the view of Sir George Lewis; and in an interview on the Highways Bill he had himself been given to understand by Sir George Lewis that such was the case.

MR. BARING said, he must remind the hon. Gentleman the Member for Peterborough that the Committee of which his hon. Friend the Member for Hereford was Chairman had made a Report by no means in accordance with his views. One question was, whether turnpike trusts which were free from debt should be at once abolished? That was negatived by the Committee. Another point of still more importance was, supposing turnpike trusts abolished, how the expense of keeping the roads in repair should be borne? [MR. WHALLEY: Each parish is at common law bound to repair its own roads.] The common law principle was inapplicable, for they were not local parish roads. Every one was aware how exceedingly disagreeable turnpike tolls were; but the expense of maintaining the roads in a proper state of repair must be provided for; and the Committee were utterly unable to recommend any feasible scheme by which turnpike tolls should be abolished. Whenever any tangible scheme was brought forward it was negatived. The proposal to throw the expense of keeping up the roads on the parishes through which they passed was negatived by thirteen to four. The next difficulty was how to fix the district upon which the burden should fall; and the Committee, having negatived a proposal that it should be put upon the highway district, and another that it should be put upon the county, came to no conclusion upon this essential matter. The only practical paragraph in the Report was the last, and on that the Government had acted. It recommended that attention should be directed to the several turnpike trusts whose Acts were continued from year to year by the Annual Continuance Act, and that those which were free from debt should be thrown open. In 1863 92 miles of turnpike roads had been thrown open on the expiration of their Acts; in 1864 63 miles were thrown open; in 1865 219 miles were thrown open, and by the 1st of November, 1867, turnpike tolls would be abolished on no less than 695 miles of road. Real progress had, therefore, been made in this matter. Till some great change was made in the area of taxation, it would be impossible for the Government to accept the proposal of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Peterborough. If the House should at some future time alter the state of the law with regard to highways, first by making the adoption of the Highway Act compulsory over the whole country, and next by adopting district instead of parochial rating for highways, it would be more easy to deal with turnpike trusts;

but until these preliminary steps were taken, it seemed to him idle to expect that any general system could be established. He fully appreciated the care and attention which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Peterborough (Mr. Whalley) had bestowed on this subject, but he should not be able to support the second reading of his Bill.

MR. SCOURFIELD said, that though not a Member of the Committee he had given evidence before it. Considerable difference of opinion prevailed as to the Report. He most approved the last paragraph but one, in which reference was made to the system adopted in Scotland and South Wales. Tolls were not abolished in South Wales, but the trusts were consolidated, and that system had given the greatest satisfaction. He hoped the Government, notwithstanding the reproaches of the hon. Member (Mr. Whalley), would continue the course it had hitherto pursued. He believed that Sir George Lewis had expressed himself in favour of tolls. After all, this constituted a very fair plan, whereas that of rating was a hap-hazard system, under which one man paid for what another enjoyed. A gross injustice would be caused by resorting to the parochial system, and the plan of the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Whalley) was exactly that which provoked the Rebekah riots in Wales, the trusts being deeply in debt and the tolls being absorbed in meeting the interest upon it.

COLONEL DOUGLAS PENNANT said, the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Whalley) spoke as if nothing had been done towards the abolition of turnpikes, but having sat on Committees on the subject for fifteen years, and having most of that time acted as Chairman, he could assure him that they had been acting on a regular system. They could not get rid of tolls all at once, but the aggregate debt had been reduced from £9,000,000 to about £4,000,000, and in no instance had the market value of the mortgage bonds been depreciated, for though the interest had been reduced this had been counterbalanced by the better security that had been given. Not a year elapsed in which the Committee did not reduce the debt and close some trust. Only those, however, acquainted with the circumstances of the different trusts could appreciate the injustice which would be done to parishes in certain districts by suddenly abolishing the tolls, and throwing the roads upon the parochial rates. In many of the agricultural districts of the south of England such a measure might not be attended with great hardship, but in the north there were roads connecting large towns and passing through parishes of small agricultural value. The expense of those roads, owing to the heavy traffic, was sometimes as much as £300 or £400 a mile per annum, and the towns, having generally adopted the Local Government Act, could not be made liable, so that the rating system would throw the expense on parishes which derived but little benefit from them. The formation of districts, moreover, was attended with great difficulty, on account of places being able to escape the burden by adopting the Local Government Act. He believed the Scotch system was the only way of rapidly abolishing tolls, but this was permissive—not compulsory as proposed by the hon. Member—meetings being held in each county at which it was agreed to consolidate the trusts or to adopt an assessment system, and then Parliament was applied to to sanction the arrangement. He believed this method might be carried out in England, but the precipitate adoption of parochial or district rating would involve great injustice.

MR. AYRTON said, the House was indebted to the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Whalley) for his continuous and persevering efforts in bringing so pressing a grievance before them. Nothing could be more monstrous than to have an army of tax collectors posted over the country, the greatest number of whom only raised enough for their own support. A Committee of that House had condemned the system unequivocally, yet they were told that no remedy was possible, a conclusion which was absurd, for, if the grievance was so bad, some remedy must exist. He understood the Under Secretary (Mr. Baring) to suggest that parties interested in expiring trusts should be allowed to come before Parliament to have their position considered, but he hoped he was mistaken, for such an overture would be very ill-advised. Parties would be only too happy to avail themselves of the opportunity of incurring the enormous expense of private Acts, in order to prolong the existence of the trusts, and he knew of one case in which the debt was only £700, and yet the trustees came before Parliament, at a cost of not less than £500, and so increased their debt to £1,200, much to the satisfaction, no doubt, of the clerk and other officials. The proper policy seemed to him to be to put all such trusts into the Abolition Bill, and then, if the parties desire it, the question could be investigated by the Committee, and at a trifling expense a satisfactory arrangement could be made. His hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough had been trying to please everybody, and seemed to have ended, as generally happened, by pleasing nobody; the person least pleased being the Under Secretary, with whom he had taken more pains than with any one else. The House was not now in a position to discuss his hon. Friend's Bill, with which, though his name was on the back of it, he had himself no knowledge. But he would urge him to persevere in his attention to the subject, and the course pointed out by the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken seemed to offer a solution of the difficulty.

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES.

Supply *considered* in Committee—Navy Estimates.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) £892,865, New Works, &c., Naval Establishments, *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £12,656, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the additional Charge for Half-Pay, Reserved Half-Pay, and Retired Pay consequent upon altering the system of Retirement of Officers of the Royal Navy, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1867."

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that this Vote was intended to secure a better flow of promotion in the Royal Navy by extending the system of compulsory retirement, including the flag list. The scheme had already been laid before the House in detail, and he need not therefore advert to it at any length. The object of the scheme was to retire the flag officers who had hitherto been exempt from the system of compulsory retirement. It would not, however, deprive them either of the pay or of a rise in rank from that of rear to full admiral. Although in certain cases there might be honourable and distinguished officers in the navy who might feel that their position was somewhat damaged, yet he felt satisfied that such was the public and honourable feeling of those officers that they would not stand in the way of a proper flow of promotion which would

enable young and active officers to rise to high grades in the service. He believed that for the benefit of the naval service those officers would not object to retire when they came to ages which would include them within the scheme of compulsory retirement.

Mr. O'REILLY said, that this was a scheme to effect acceleration of promotion in the navy, by making room at the top of the list. Although he did not object to it, he was anxious to call attention to another class of measure which might be adopted for the same purpose, but affecting the other end of the list. He thought that the object of quick promotion in the navy might be attained by not admitting so many into the junior ranks of the service. In the army there were no more officers taken on than there were occasion for, but that was not the case with respect to midshipmen in the navy. In a first-class vessel the proper complement, he was told, was sixteen midshipmen, but twenty-four were always taken. He should like, therefore, to hear some official statement from the noble Lord as to what was the rule of limitation as to taking midshipmen.

Mr. OTWAY said, that several hon. Members wished to make remarks on the Vote for new works which had come on unexpectedly, and had just been carried *sub silentio*, to the astonishment of himself, his hon. Friend near him (Mr. Samuda), and others. Perhaps his noble Friend would give some explanation in regard to the docks at Malta, a subject in which some hon. Gentlemen opposite took a good deal of interest. With regard to the present Vote it was, he thought, to be regretted that the navy was a close profession. No matter what a boy's taste might be for the navy, unless he obtained the patronage of an admiral, a captain, or some Member of Parliament influencing the Government of the day, he had no chance of entering the navy. There ought to be some method of open competition or otherwise, by which a certain number of young gentlemen could enter the navy every year. At a time when they were opening the Engineers and other branches of the public service to public competition, it was to be regretted that the system adopted in the navy shut the door of the most popular profession of the country against all except those who had naval or Parliamentary interest.

Mr. POLLARD-URQUHART said, that on the contrary, he believed there was a great improvement as to the chances of promotion in the lower ranks of officers. Such a thing now was almost unknown as an officer remaining a sub-lieutenant more than two or three years, and very few men were found languishing as lieutenants anything like the time they did ten or fifteen years ago.

Mr. SEELY said, he wished to call attention to the number of officers in the navy, particularly of admirals on the active and retired list. There were already 190 admirals, vice-admirals, and rear-admirals on the retired list. He had been told that only four of these had served their full time as captains. They cost the country not less than £81,510 a year. He made no objection to the amount of their pay, but when he looked at the number of ships in commission, and contrasted it with the number of admirals on both the lists, active and retired, he found there were 148 ships in commission, 190 admirals on the reserved and retired list, and 103 admirals on the active list. That gave more than two admirals to every ship in commission. He could not but regard this state of things as an unnecessary expense to the country and an injury to the naval profession. The case of the flagship *Edgar* showed the expense thrown upon the country by having on board of our ships an excess of officers over the full complement. The number of officers on board the *Edgar*, in one year and a half, over and above the full complement, was upwards of seven upon an average, causing an excess of cost of pay of £721. The total amount of the pay for the officers of the *Edgar* during the period taken for his illustration was £1,439; whereas, if the complement had not been exceeded, the sum would have been but £718. Thirty pounds a year each for provisions must be reckoned for those extra officers, making £337, so that the country paid no less a sum than £1,058 for overstocking the profession in the flagship *Edgar*. More midshipmen were admitted than was necessary, as shown by the smaller proportion of ensigns in the army admitted. This was to the detriment of the profession and the injury of the nation.

Colonel NORTH said, that the *Edgar* was a flagship, and that the excess over the complement of other ships was usual.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON (having just entered the House) said, he wished to ask when the noble Lord intended to invite the attention of the House to the plan for the retirement of flag officers which he had mentioned in moving the Navy Estimates.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that the matter was before the House then. His hon. Friend (Mr. Seely), the naval Reformer, ought to discriminate between that which was right and that which required correction. Every flagship had a certain number of naval cadets and disposable officers of every grade available for service as they were required in other ships. It was true they had a much greater number of Admirals and flag officers than was necessary for the navy, but there were many gallant and distinguished officers who had fought and bled for their country whom they could not treat unfairly. The Government were moving gradually in the direction of reducing the upper classes in the navy by filling up only two out of every three vacancies, their object being to bring the establishment down to the proper requirements of the service. The captains' list was being reduced. The lieutenants formed the pivot of the whole, and at the present moment they were short of lieutenants. During the past year the entries of cadets of the first class numbered 176; and if they meant to keep up the list of lieutenants they would have rather to increase than decrease the entries into the navy. His hon. Friend (Mr. Otway) had remarked that while the admissions to most other branches of the public service were open to competition, the entries into the navy were confined entirely to choice, and, in fact, it might be said went by patronage. That was a matter which deserved discussion in that House. It was desirable that there should be the means of throwing open a portion at least of the admissions to the navy to competition. A difficulty presented itself to that in consequence of the tender age at which boys entered the navy. A boy might afterwards grow up to be a person of great character, although when only twelve years old he might not have exhibited any striking degree of intellectual development, and it had been thought that they could not apply the principle of a competitive examination to boys of that early age. That was one of the principal reasons which had, of late, at least, prevented the Government from introducing that principle into the navy, although it had been adopted as regarded the Marines. Under the present system nominations were made by the Board of Admiralty with certain exceptions—for instance, flag-officers and captains of ships in commission had a certain number of nominations. The colonies received also a certain number. He could not conclude without expressing the great gratification he felt that it had fallen to his lot to close his official career—for it was not probable that he would again move the Navy Estimates—by proposing a plan for increasing the flow of promotion in the navy, which must redound to the advantage of the profession to which he belonged.

Mr. MOFFATT said, it appeared to him that flag officers, according to the proposal of the noble Lord, were to retire after a certain time; but an important exception was made in the case of those officers who had hoisted their flags or been employed in the Admiralty, seeing that by Clause 7 they would not be called upon to retire. There were 112 Admirals altogether interested in this matter, eleven of whom would be compelled to retire, while 100 would remain. He suggested that the noble Lord should postpone the Vote, that the subject might be more fully considered.

Mr. HANBURY-TRACY said, that he concurred in the recommendation just made.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, that he wished to express his sense of the importance of the proposal made by the noble Lord. He thought it should have occupied a more prominent place in the Estimates. A great change was proposed, and the House ought to have received notice of the time when it would be brought forward. It had taken him by surprise. He did not wish it to be understood that he disagreed with the plan of his noble Friend. On the contrary, when he left the Admiralty six years ago he put into the hands of the Duke of Somerset a plan similar to that of the noble Lord, involving the compulsory retirement of officers at a certain age. He then entreated the noble Duke not to consider the source whence the plan emanated, but to look at it only in connection with its bearing upon the interests of the service. Seven years had elapsed since that time, and the noble Duke had made various changes in the system of promotion. He was not prepared to discuss the details of the plan now before the House, because he had not known when it would come under their consideration. He had, however, been startled by what had been said by his hon. Friend on the opposite side of the House (Mr. Moffatt) as to the extent of the exemptions. He believed that the principle of retirement according to age was a very wholesome one; but the exceptions were numerous to an extraordinary extent. His plan would not have pressed so severely as the noble Lord's did on flag officers, for he required retirement of flag officers under seventy years of age while the noble Lord required the retirement of rear admirals at sixty-five, and of vice admirals at sixty-eight. His proposal was, that any flag officer who arrived at seventy years of age should not be deprived of his honours, but only that he should not stop the promotion of others.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that the scheme had been before the House for a week. He had been anxious that it should be discussed at an early date, because the navy were desirous that it should come into operation as quickly as possible, for there was a stagnation of promotion in the navy. The hon. Member for Southampton (Mr. Moffatt) had not given a fair view of the position officers would occupy under the system now proposed. The plan of the right hon. Gentleman on the Opposition side of the House (Sir John Pakington) met with serious opposition at the time it was proposed, because it included officers who had hoisted their flags and had had an opportunity of distinguishing themselves as flag officers. The scheme now before the House, however, would not affect an officer who had hoisted his flag or had served in the Admiralty. Flag officers on the retired list would rise in pay and rank precisely in the same degree as they would have done had they been on the active list. If his hon. Friend behind him thought that officers who had hoisted their flags, or who had served in the Admiralty, should not be exempted from compulsory retirement, let him make a Motion to that effect. He had no wish to press his proposal now if the Committee were in favour of deferring it.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, that he thought that little difference would be made by postponing the Vote till the following Friday. Every Member ought to have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the proposal. For his own part, although he approved its principle, he would not pledge himself to the details. He wished, therefore, to have time to consider it, and he trusted the noble Lord would deem it right to make a statement as to its whole scope.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES.

General PEEL said, he understood that Vote 14 was to be postponed. He should not oppose Votes not objected to, but it would be his duty to propose the reductions he had given notice of.

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £162,400, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge of the Establishments for Military Education, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1867, inclusive."

Mr. O'REILLY said, he had some observations to make on this Vote, but the hour (half past ten o'clock) was rather late to proceed with it. There were many hon. Members not present who were anxious to make some observations upon it.

Mr. NORWOOD moved that the Chairman report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Norwood.*)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he hoped that the hon. Gentleman would not persevere in the Motion. There was every disposition to meet the demands of hon. Members for delay, but it was, he thought, too early an hour to stay the further discussion of the Estimates. The understanding was that the Army Estimates would be taken if they were brought in before eleven o'clock.

General PEEL said, that such was the understanding, but since then Vote 14 had been postponed, and a great many Members were not aware of the change.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he thought such a Motion should not be made before eleven o'clock.

Colonel NORTH said, he was quite certain that there would have been a greater attendance of Members if it had been thought likely that the Vote would have been proposed that night.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. NORWOOD said, that pursuant to notice which he had given, he wished to call the attention of the Committee to the constitution of the Council of Military Education. That Council as at present constituted was, he said, the result of the disasters which had occurred during the Crimean War. A Royal Commission had been appointed in 1856, to take into consideration the subject of the military education of our officers, with the view to the introduction of improvements, especially in the Staff Department. That Commission made its Report in 1857, and a Council was shortly afterwards appointed, whose duty it was generally to supervise the education of the army, to control the preliminary examinations which all officers had to pass before obtaining their commissions, and, what was of more importance still, to conduct and control the competitive examinations in the higher branches of the service—the engineers and artillery. It was also its duty to conduct the examinations for appointments on the staff of officers below a certain rank. The duties performed by the Council, especially with regard to examinations, were very analogous to those discharged by the Civil Service Commissioners. They were extremely important, and it was therefore expedient that the Council should be not only composed of officers of great ability, but of considerable determination and firmness. Now, he had heard it rumoured that it was the intention to establish the rule that the staff appointments in future should be held only for five years. If that change were introduced and were to apply to members of the Council, a fatal blow would be struck at the usefulness and independence of that body. If that rule were adopted it would be impossible to procure the aid of distinguished officers, who would be unwilling to retire from active service to accept the appointment for so short a period as he had mentioned, while those who did so would not be placed in that position of independence—for officers, after all, were only human beings—especially with respect to their superiors at the Horse Guards, which it was desirable they should occupy. He wished to know whether or not there was any truth in the rumour that the Horse Guards meant to apply the five years' rule to the members of the Military Council of Education? The middle classes of the country were deeply interested in this question, and he would regret if anything took place to weaken their confidence in the entire independence of this Council. He hoped the noble Marquess would resist any interference with the duties and integrity of this Council, which stood between the old system of patronage and the new one of competitive examinations. The members of the Council were, in fact, civil servants, and military regulations ought not to be applied to them.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, he was not aware that there was any change in the original intention with respect to applying the five years' rule to the Military Council of Education, or that any assurance had been given to the officers composing the Council that their appointments would be differently circumstanced from ordinary staff appointments. He did not see the grounds why the rule should not apply to those officers, but, on the contrary, it seemed to him that the rule applied with greater propriety and convenience to their appointments than to many staff appointments. One object of the five years' rule was, that positions of this description should be held by a succession of men, who would import new ideas and bring fresh minds to the consideration of many questions, also men who knew something of the feeling of the army and of the progress of public opinion with respect to the great question—education. With respect to many appointments, such as that of the Adjutant General, the Quartermaster General, and other staff appointments, considerable inconvenience must ensue when an officer who had held an office for five years, and had become efficient in the discharge of its duties, suddenly quitted it and was succeeded by one comparatively unacquainted with the duties; but surely, when a Council was composed of five or six members, the appointment of one new member every now and then could lead to no practical inconvenience. He had never heard it argued that the members of the Military Council were to be held incapable of receiving promotion; indeed, only a few weeks ago General Hamilton, President of this Council, had been appointed to a command. If the hon. Member wished to carry out his views, he must abolish these promotions. He was not aware that the Military Council and the Horse Guards came to any serious collisions. Differences of opinion there might be, but they were always referred to the War Office. The Council was the mainstay of the competitive examinations. They were conducted under the superintendence of the Council, but it was not true that the Council themselves conducted those examinations. All the Council did was to recommend the examiners, receive their report, be present at the examinations, and exercise a general supervision. For the selection from the candidates, the examiners, and not the Council, were responsible.

Mr. Norwood

MR. NORWOOD said, that there was an order which compelled every member of the Council to sign its reports, and if a report unpalatable at the Horse Guards was made, the officer who signed it might, after the term of five years, when he gave up his office as member of the Council find that he had lost all chance of promotion. He was strongly of opinion that the fact of the examiners of the Council sending back a friend of the Horse Guards from the examination might be fatal to the subsequent promotion of the members of the Council, and this could not tend to their independence.

GENERAL PEEL said, he wished to ask whether the resignation of the officer after the term of five years was to be compulsory? He thought it perfectly right that the Commander-in-Chief should have the power of retaining in office any of the members of the Council longer than five years, if necessary. One or two of the members had been appointed as far back as 1858. The Council was perfectly independent and had shown its independence. It would be seen from the Report of the Committee on Military Organization, that when the Commander-in-Chief suggested that, as there was a scarcity of officers, three young men who had attained superior marks, though they had failed to obtain the compulsory number, should be passed for commissions, the Council was against the Commander-in-Chief, and no one acquiesced more readily in their decision than the Commander-in-Chief himself.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, that the rule was not peremptory in every case.

COLONEL NORTH said, he should like to know whether the rule with regard to the five years' appointments was compulsory or not? He could not help thinking the system of the five years' appointments would be most detrimental to the service.

MR. O'REILLY said, he wished to know what was the precise application of the rule as to these five years' appointments? The noble Marquess stated that it was not peremptory. Were the members of the Council to serve no longer than five years, or would it be competent for the Commander-in-Chief to re-appoint them at the end of five years? He could not agree that because the Council had hitherto been independent, they would always be so. Hitherto they had not been subject to this five years' rule, and, therefore, they had been independent. There must be very special qualifications for this service in connection with military education. He rather thought the noble Marquess had underrated the duties of the Council, and he could not agree that the five years' rule was at all applicable to the case. There was another point to which he wished to call the attention of the Committee—he meant the cost of the military schools. He considered the charge for education at military schools much too large. The cost of maintenance was as high in France as it was in this country, but that of teaching in this country enormously exceeded that of France. In Woolwich the cost of teaching was £60, of superintendence £30, and of living £80, making together £170. Another point was the entire division of the military supervision in these schools from the educational department. He thought it would be more economical, and of great advantage, if the military officers who had the supervision were also employed in teaching, as it would tend to promote more harmony and better feeling between the cadets and their teachers. An enormous amount of teaching power was apparently wanted, as there were at Sandhurst six teachers of mathematics, besides one in the Staff College; seven teachers of military surveying, and one in the Staff College; and three professors of military history, in addition to one in the Staff College. As compared with any of the great public schools in the metropolis, University College School, or King's College School, the amount of teaching power at Woolwich was greatly in excess. For teaching 180 students in Woolwich there was as much teaching power employed as for teaching 330 students in University College. There would be no difficulty in getting clever officers to act not only as captains of companies in those schools, but also as tutors; and this arrangement would promote a better feeling between the authorities and the students.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, he was not able at the moment to apply to the rule itself, but he thought he might say with regard to all staff appointments they were to be for a term of five years. There was, however, a discretionary power in the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary for War to extend the term if the exigencies of the service should require it. It only applied to military appointments. It had never been proposed to extend the rule. The only chance of collision between the Council and the Horse Guards was with reference to the examination of officers for staff appointments; but there was not much chance of the Council coming into collision with the Horse Guards on that subject. The rule had not yet been strictly applied, for the first officer about to retire under it had held office for eight years. As to what the hon. Member for Longford held to be the extravagant cost of the military educational establishments, in the first place he must remark that supposing any considerable reduction could be made in the expenses of those establishments, it would be of no great service to the Army Estimates, because a very large portion of the expenditure in those schools was met by payments from friends of the cadets, and if the cost could be reduced very considerably it would not be fair to charge the same amounts to students. Some reductions were made some time since, and so far as he could learn the Secretary of State at that time was satisfied that the efficiency of the Academy would be impaired if more extensive reductions were made. With regard to the number of professors, whether the figures of the hon. Member were correct or otherwise, he must remind him that mathematics, and the application of mathematics, required a much larger place in the military instruction at Woolwich than they did in public schools. As to the professors of fortification and of military surveying and drawing, he was informed that, as they had to teach their pupils out of doors, a much larger number of them was required in proportion to the number of students than if the instruction could be given indoors.

Mr. OTWAY said, he thought that when the subject of the chronic state of rebellion of the cadets at Woolwich was brought forward, the answer referring the House to a Report issued in 1857 was insufficient. This state arose from alleged insufficiency of food and other matters, and the Report of 1857 could have no sort of connection with the present state of things whatever. The whole of the present system pursued at the military colleges had been formed since the Report was issued. And so with regard to the discipline at Sandhurst. If there was one officer more important than another at Sandhurst, it was the Major Superintendent of Studies, who was supposed to understand everything, and to be able to examine in the several branches of study, as well as the professors themselves, and yet he had only £300 a year, a sum infinitely less than the professors. That was a matter which required explanation.

Colonel FANE said, he thought there was no good reason why boys should not go to Woolwich at fourteen or fifteen, and enter the army at an early age, as their fathers did before them. If that course were followed one-half of the professors and other persons employed in disciplining the cadets might be done away with.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, that the change in the age was a consequence of the recommendations of the Commission to which he had already referred. It was then thought that the defects in the two institutions were owing to the extremely early age at which the cadets entered. The present discussion had resulted in a proposition to increase the pay of the Major Superintendent of Studies. That was the only practical suggestion that had been made, and it was remarkable that it often happened that some proposition for increase of pay was the only fruit of a discussion which turned upon an economical question. He was not able to give an explanation why the pay of the Major Superintendent of Studies was not higher, but he would endeavour to find out, and he had no doubt that next year they would have to propose to raise the cost of these institutions considerably. He should wish to know whether there was any ground for saying that there was an insufficiency of food, or that the quality was not good. He felt quite surprised to hear that there could have been any complaint on the subject.

Mr. OTWAY said, it had been the alleged cause of the disturbances which had taken place at different times.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, that if there were good authority for the statement the matter ought to be inquired into at once.

General PEEL said, he hoped that a Commission would be appointed to inquire into the whole subject of the education of the army.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(3.) £88,300, Surveys of the United Kingdom.

(4.) £94,800, Miscellaneous Services.

Mr. Otway

(5.) £26,100, Rewards for Military Service.

(6.) £72,600, Pay of General Officers.

(7.) £457,200, Pay of Reduced and Retired Officers.

(8.) £161,300, Widows' Pensions and Compassionate Allowances.

(9.) £26,700, Pensions and Allowances to Wounded Officers.

(10.) £34,600, Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals.

(11.) £1,173,900, Chelsea Hospital Out-Pensioners.

(12.) £27,000, Non-Effective Services, Disembodied Militia, and Yeomanry Cavalry.

House *resumed.*

Resolutions to be reported upon *Monday* next; Committee to sit again upon *Monday* next.

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL—[Bill 13.]—CONSIDERATION.

(*Sir G. Grey, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Order for Consideration read.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, that he had understood when the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department last night undertook to have this Bill reprinted, that he would have given time to hon. Members to read it, as it now appeared, so that if they disagreed with any portion of it they might have an opportunity of placing Notices of Amendment on the table. It appeared to him that the course adopted throughout with regard to this measure was to force it through the House with as little consideration as possible. No one, however, could pretend that this was an insignificant subject, for it related to the repeal of the greater part of the oath relating to the Supremacy of the Crown and of the law, as it had existed since the first of Elizabeth. It was a measure which ought not to have been decided upon at a private meeting of Members; when the question came before the House it was introduced with the least amount of explanation he had ever heard with respect to any Bill of equal importance. He did not wish to move an Amendment at almost twelve o'clock on such a subject as this; but he therefore gave notice that he would on the third reading (as he had intended on the Report) move that the Bill be re-committed with a view to inserting the following words at the end of the oath :—

> "And I do declare that no foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath by law or ought to have any rightful jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority within this realm."

In this it would be seen he had added the words "by law," which were suggested by Lord Russell when the subject was before the Upper House, and "rightful," a word suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I will only detain the House while I quote a few words from *The Tablet* (the most influential of the Roman Catholic organs) of Saturday last, which expressed in distinct language the sort of expectations to which the decision of the House on this subject gave rise—

> "In our opinion it would be a good thing if the provisions in the Emancipation Act were repealed, which convert into criminals, punishable by deportation, such of Her Majesty's native-born English or Irish subjects as choose to bind themselves by monastic or religious vows. It would also be very desirable that, as we Catholics are very poor and commit many crimes, we should have the full benefit of the zealous ministrations of our clergy in the workhouses and prisons into which our poverty and crimes introduce us in such large numbers. It would also—at least we think so—be desirable that Catholics in England should be allowed to claim exemption from the payment of church rates for the support of the English Protestant State Church, and that Catholic landowners in Ireland should be exempted from paying rent-charge for the support of Irish Protestant State Church. . . . . . In our opinion also it would be desirable that the State, instead of ignoring the sees and titles of the Catholic bishops of England and Ireland, and instead of proscribing those sees and titles, should repeal the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and recognize the existence and legality of the Catholic Church and of its administration within the realm. Nay, we go so far as to think that it would be a wise and a good thing to give recognized rank and precedence to the highest dignitaries of the Catholic Church within the realm, by making Peers of Parliament of the Catholic Archbishops of England and Ireland . . . . Moreover, we need scarcely say that, in our opinion, the restoration of regular diplomatic intercourse between the Crown and the Holy See would be most advantageous to all parties ; and that it would be a good thing if the relations between the State on the one hand, and the Catholic Church in the British Empire and its dependencies on the other hand, were regulated by a convention between the supreme spiritual authority in the Catholic Church and the supreme temporal authority in the British Empire. In other words, we think that a concordat is advisable. Whether a State endowment for the Catholic Church, its hierarchy, clergy, universities, seminaries, colleges, and schools, would or would not be a desirable feature of the concordat, we do not assume to know, referring ourselves on that point to the wisdom of the Holy See . . . . . We need not lengthen this list of things thought desirable ; we have said enough to indicate the leading features of a whole system and of a distinct policy."

By its indifference to subjects such as these, the House then was raising expectations which by their disappointment would lead to great discontent. When he moved the re-commitment of the Bill on Monday night he hoped to find that hon. Members were not so closely bound by party ties as to be satisfied with the decision arrived at; and that at any rate they would think it necessary to have a distinct answer from Her Majesty's Government how far the expectations—which he had shown were raised by re-opening this matter of the Parliamentary oaths—would be gratified. He wished to observe, with respect to himself, that he had from the first thought the form of oath proposed by the right hon. Member for Bucks (Mr. Disraeli) to be insufficient, and had stated in his place that he would not be included amongst those who approved it. His opinion that the terms of that form of the oath of supremacy suggested in the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman were insufficient was confirmed by the opinion of the Attorney General and of other competent persons, and for that reason he felt justified in now giving notice of the Motion he had just read.

Mr. WHITESIDE said, he wished to call attention to a provision introduced by the Duke of Wellington into a Bill for regulating our diplomatic relations with the Holy See, and to suggest that the principle of that clause might be introduced into the present Bill. It might remove any uncomfortable feeling in the minds of Roman Catholic Members.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he thought it would have been better if the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) had given notice of what he intended to move on Monday. With regard to what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Whiteside), the House would not have forgotten that the right hon. Gentleman had voted yesterday in favour of the insertion of words which would have the effect of excluding every Roman Catholic from Parliament.

Mr. WHITESIDE said, he had stated that Roman Catholics would not accept them so far as related to the spiritual authority of the Pope.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, that if the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) was of opinion that the clause he had referred to was applicable to the present Bill, he might put a Notice of an Amendment on the paper, and the House would then see whether the party which acted under the guidance of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks (Mr. Disraeli) were prepared to agree to the addition of such words.

Mr. WHALLEY said, he was of opinion that the oath now imposed upon Roman Catholic Members was not the cause of a substantial, but merely of a sentimental grievance. He submitted that this Bill would inflict a further grievance on the Roman Catholic laity, whose interests, it should be remembered, were by no means identical with those of the priesthood. Roman Catholicism, as far as regarded its public position, must be regarded not as a religion at all, but as a political combination fraught with danger to this country. He could see no substantial grievance in Roman Catholics taking the oath which had hitherto been sanctioned by their own dignitaries.

Amendments made: Bill to be read the third time upon *Monday* next.

EAST INDIA MILITARY, &C., FUNDS TRANSFER.

Resolution *reported*,

"That it is expedient to authorize the Directors and Managers of the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay Military Funds, and the Bengal Military Orphan Society, to make over the Assets, Liabilities, and Management thereof to the Secretary of State for India in Council, and the Secretary of State for India in Council to take and assume the Assets, Liabilities, and Management thereof; and also to authorize the Managers or Trustees of the Bengal Medical Retiring Fund, the Madras Medical Fund, and the Bombay Medical Retiring Fund, or either of them, to make over the Assets, Liabilities, and Management thereof to the Secretary of State for India in Council, and the Secretary of State for India in Council to take and assume the Assets, Liabilities, and Management thereof, if at any time hereafter it shall appear, by a vote specially taken for the purpose, that a majority of not less than three-fourths of the Subscribers to those Institutions are desirous of transferring them to the said Secretary of State for India in Council."

Resolution *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Dodson, Mr. Stansfeld, and Mr. Baring.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 75.]

EXCHEQUER AND AUDIT DEPARTMENTS [SALARIES, &C.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That provision be made for the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom, of the Salaries and Pensions of the Comptroller and Auditor General, and of the Assistant Comptroller and Auditor, who may be appointed under any Act of the present Session relating to the Duties of the Exchequer and Audit Departments, and also for the Payment of Annual Allowances to certain Officers whose offices will be abolished under the said Act.

Resolution to be reported upon *Monday* next.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1853) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Whiteside, Bill to amend the Practice and Procedure Act of 1853 (Ireland), *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Whiteside and Mr. George.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 76.]

DOCKYARD EXTENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill "to amend 'The Dockyard Extensions Act, 1865,'" *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 77.]

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES BILL.

Bill "for the better prevention of Contagious Diseases at certain Naval and Military Stations," *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 78.]

House adjourned at One o'clock,
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 19, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Took the Oath*—The Lord Dunsandle and Clanconal.

Select Committee—On Salmon Fisheries (Scotland), *nominated*

Public Bills — *First Reading* — Ecclesiastical Commission * (52).

Committee—Mutiny.*

Report—Mutiny.*

HENRY DUFFIELD— LAW OF IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

PETITION.

The Earl of STRADBROKE *presented* a Petition from Henry Duffield, complaining of imprisonment for damages and costs in certain actions, and praying for relief. The petitioner had been defendant in certain actions for breach of promise of marriage and for seduction, and had been cast in damages and costs: he had subsequently become bankrupt. In consequence of his inability to pay these debts he had been unable to obtain his release under the present Bankruptcy law; and he now complained that under the existing state of the law he was virtually condemned to imprisonment for life.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, the law had been correctly stated by the petitioner. The Act of the late Lord Chancellor respecting bankruptcy excepted the two cases of breach of promise of marriage and seduction, and consequently there were no means by which one who was in custody for non-payment of costs recovered against him in the case referred to could get out of prison. There was no power of releasing him during the term of his natural life unless the costs were paid. That was, no doubt, a defect in the Act passed by his noble and learned Friend the late Lord Chancellor with respect to insolvents, and he should think it his duty to see whether some alteration could not be made in the law in a case which appeared to involve great hardship, however much the conduct of the guilty individual might deserve to be condemned.

THE DAY OF HUMILIATION.

Earl RUSSELL said, that to-morrow having been named by the Bishop of London as a day of fasting and humiliation on account of the Cattle Plague, the Committees in the Commons would not meet until one o'clock. He begged to propose that their Lordships' Committees should not meet until half past one o'clock.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, the judicial business of the House would go on at the usual hour. But it would be proper that the proceedings of the two Houses of Parliament should coincide as nearly as possible in the business of legislation, and, therefore, half past one would be a very suitable hour for the Committees of that House to meet.

Motion *agreed to.*

SALMON FISHERIES (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

Select Committee *nominated:* The Lords following were named of the Committee: The Committee to appoint their own Chairman:

Ld. Privy Seal
D. Richmond
D. Sutherland
E. Doncaster
E. Airlie
E. Strange
E. Ducie
E. Innes
L. Colville of Culross
L. Panmure
L. Abinger
L. Lovat
L. Stanley of Alderley
L. Llanover

House adjourned at a quarter past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 19, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Select Committee—On Shannon River *appointed,* and *nominated.*

Supply—*considered in Committee* — Navy Estimates.

Resolutions [March 16] *reported.*

Public Bills—*Resolution in Committee* [March 16] *reported* — Exchequer and Audit Departments [Salaries, &c.]

Ordered—Militia Pay*; Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man).*

First Reading—Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man) [80].*

Second Reading — Court of Chancery (Ireland) [19], Adjourned Debate *resumed,* and *adjourned;* East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* [75]; Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment* [77.]

Committee—Consolidated Fund (£19,000,000)*; County Courts* [47]; Public Offices (Site) (*re-comm.*)* [62]; Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Act (1860) Amendment* [56].

Report — Consolidated Fund (£19,000,000)*; County Courts* [47]; Public Offices (Site) (*re-comm.*)* [62]; Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Act (1860) Amendment* [56].

Considered as amended — Exchequer Bills and Bonds* [46].

Third Reading—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment [13], and *passed.*

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

QUESTIONS.

Sir HENRY HOARE said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose answer many hon. Members awaited with intense anxiety—["Order, order!"]—Whether, in the event of the Bill for the Representation of the People passing into Law, it is his intention to bring forward a measure for the Redistribution of Seats and the settlement of Borough Boundaries early in the ensuing Session?

Mr. HENRY SEYMOUR said, that before the right hon. Gentleman answered that inquiry, he wished also to put a Question to him on the same subject. ["Order, order!"] His Question was, Whether, in the event of the Franchise Bill passing this House, it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government immediately to issue a Royal Commission composed fairly of men of all political opinions to report on the Boundaries of Boroughs, and a fair Redistribution of Seats, so that Parliament may be able to legislate upon the subject early in the ensuing Session?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I am obliged to my hon. Friend the Member for Poole (Mr. Henry Seymour) for putting his Question, because although the two questions are not identical, yet they are so far clearly of the same kind as to be more conveniently answered together. What I have to say is simply this: that we should certainly not hold that we had freed ourselves of the obligation which we undertook with regard to the representation of the people until we had brought under review the question of the present distribution of the seats. At the same time I must state, as I have stated before, that we must reserve our own freedom—to be exercised as our sense of duty may suggest—as to the choice of the opportunity. And, Sir, with respect to the question of boundaries, what I would say is this: that we can do nothing upon that subject or on any other until we can in some degree see our way with regard to the important proposals which we have submitted to the House. But, after a settlement of the question of the franchise has been attained, I certainly think it would perhaps be our first duty to issue a Commission for the purpose of examining whether in any cases the towns which are now in possession of the franchise are still of the same extent as they were when their boundaries were fixed, or whether in any instances they require revision.

MR. DARBY GRIFFITH, who had also given notice of his intention to put a Question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of the redistribution of seats, said, that as the right hon. Gentleman had given no definite answer to the inquiries which had just been put to him, it was quite unnecessary to trouble him with the further Question of which he had given notice.

ARMY AND NAVY—MEDICAL OFFICERS.

QUESTION.

COLONEL NORTH said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the intention of Government to carry out the recommendations, as regarded increased pay, &c., of the Committee which was appointed to inquire into and report upon the grievances of Medical Officers of the Army and Navy?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, in reply, that the Report of the Committee had only been received a very short time. He was not even aware of what view his noble Friend at the head of the Admiralty took of the recommendations of that Committee, and it was impossible therefore to say at present to what extent the recommendations could be adopted either as respected the army or navy.

DRILLING OF TENANTS (IRELAND).

QUESTION.

MR. O'REILLY said, he rose to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a statement reported to have been made by a Mr. W. S. Gwynn at a meeting of members of the Established Church held at Antrim on the 12th, "that one of the principal landlords in that part of the country had embodied a large number of his own tenantry, whom he had supplied with arms; and the same gentleman had employed drill-sergeants to instruct these tenants;" whether such conduct is legal, or is contrary to the Illegal Drilling Act, and what steps, if any, the Government propose to take on the subject?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) said, he begged to state, in reply, that his attention had been called to the report in the newspapers of a speech purporting to have been delivered by Mr. Gwynn at a meeting of Protestants held at Antrim on the 12th instant, and certainly there were some extraordinary statements in that speech. Some expressions were there employed with reference to the Lord Lieutenant having stated that he expected an immediate invasion of the country, which he had his noble Friend's authority for stating were entirely destitute of foundation. With regard to the hon. and gallant Gentleman's question as to landlords proposing to enrol their tenantry, he had no hesitation in stating that such a proceeding would be illegal. The hon. and gallant Member asked what course it was proposed to take on the subject. Until the case arose the Government could not take any steps in the matter; but similar representations and applications had been made by very loyal gentlemen in that part of Ireland to the Irish Government, proposing and suggesting that they should enrol and drill their tenants and place them at the call of the Government; and they had all received the same answer—namely, that the Government were perfectly competent and ready to defend all Her Majesty's subjects; that they declined to give any sanction to such a proposition as that which had been made to them; and they warned the persons making them that they would incur a serious responsibility if they carried out their proposals.

CLERKS OF ROADS.—QUESTION.

Mr. BIDDULPH said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in pursuance of a recent letter addressed to the Clerks of Roads out of debt, or nearly so, the appointments held under such Trusts are to be abolished without any provision being made for compensation, or whether the same course will be pursued as was adopted in the case of the Metropolis Trusts, disturnpiked by the Act 26 & 27 *Vict.* c. 78?

Mr. BARING said, in reply, that the case of the officers who received compensation under the Act relating to Metropolitan Turnpike Trusts was a special one, and that that Act had no effect upon the position of the clerks of turnpike trusts generally. The clerks of roads only held office under Continuation Acts, and he was not aware that any of them had ever received compensation.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—RIFLED ORDNANCE.—QUESTION.

Mr. O'BEIRNE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether, considering the very unsatisfactory trials of the heavy guns rifled on the Woolwich and Whitworth systems, both in cast and in wrought-iron, he thinks it is desirable to proceed further with the manufacture of guns upon either of these systems; whether he is not in possession of full information, showing that by the use of the oval bore principle much greater endurance can be obtained; and, whether he will place upon the table that information, with the cost of the recent competitive trial between the Armstrong and Whitworth guns?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, in reply to the first part of the Question of the hon. Member, that he was not aware that the trial of the wrought-iron guns upon the Woolwich system had proved unsatisfactory; no trial had been made, that he was aware of, of heavy cast-iron guns, rifled either on the Woolwich or the Whitworth system. The oval bore system of rifling might possibly impart somewhat greater endurance to the guns than some of the proved systems, but he did not think it desirable to undergo the expense and delay that the trial would occasion. The Report of the Armstrong and Whitworth Committee had been laid on the table of the House; the cost of the competitive trial would be given.

NAVY—CAPTAINS' PENSIONS.

QUESTION.

Admiral ERSKINE said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, If it is intended that the Captains placed on the Reserved List (F.G.) by the Orders in Council of 1851, 1856, and 1860, who do not now acquire an increase of half-pay by seniority, and to some of whom only Commanders' General Hospital Pensions have been awarded, although they hold Captains' Commissions, shall benefit by the additional Pay or Pensions which the Admiralty will now have to bestow?

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, in reply, that the provisions of the Orders in Council only empowered the granting of a pension to officers of the rank which they held while in active service. The officers referred to were commanders on the active service list, and only commanders' pensions were applicable to them. There was no intention of altering their rate of pay.

NAVY—THE "BELLEROPHON."

QUESTION.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether it is true that a temporary addition has been made to the length of the funnel of the *Bellerophon* or any other of Her Majesty's ships, with the object of forcing her to greater speed during her trial at the measured mile than she could attain under ordinary circumstances? He desired, he said, to make a few explanatory remarks. He would be extremely sorry to ask any question which implied a suspicion of anything like unfair conduct without good reason for so doing. Since he gave notice of this Question, however, he felt bound to state that he had been satisfied that it was customary to make an addition to the length of the funnels of ships in order to ascertain at what speed they could be propelled. Under these circumstances, he should leave his noble Friend to give what explanation he desired.

LORD CLARENCE PAGET said, in reply, that the lengthening of the funnels of vessels was a common practice while under trials, and that it had nothing whatever to do with their structure. Messrs. Penn, the makers of the engines of the *Bellerophon*, made the addition to her funnel without asking the permission of the Admiralty; and on being asked their reason for so doing they replied that they thought it would be interesting to know whether they could obtain a better draught by adding to the length of the funnel. He might tell his right hon. Friend that the *Warrior*, the right hon. Baronet's own ship, was treated in the same way.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—RATING OF TENEMENTS.

QUESTION.

MR. WARNER said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether in estimating for the purposes of the Reform Bill the clear annual value of tenements any deduction is to be made on account of Rates; and, if so, whether it is to be calculated on the rates paid to the Landlord or on the Rates which would be paid if there were no composition?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, in reply, that he could only state what was the intention of the Bill, and not the particular legal effect of the wording of the clause. The clear annual value was governed by the same standard, whether the immediate subject of inquiry were compound houses or houses where the occupier paid the rates. The intention was that the real value should be judged by the same test in the case of compound householders and ratepaying householders, and that compound householders should neither inhabit better nor worse houses than ratepaying householders. That was the law at present, and it was not intended to introduce any alteration in it.

FIRE INSURANCE.—QUESTION.

In reply to a Question by Sir FITZROY KELLY,

MR. H. B. SHERIDAN said, that it was his intention to postpone his Motion for the reduction of the duty on fire insurances until after Easter.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE.—QUESTION.

MR. HUNT said, he rose to move the adjournment of the House that he might have an opportunity of asking for an explanation in reference to an Order in Council made on Saturday last in regard to the cattle plague. The House would remember that all railway traffic in cattle was prohibited up to the 25th of March, and that all trucks that had been used for the conveyance of cattle were to be properly cleansed and disinfected before being again used. The Order to which he referred ran thus—

> "Every railway or other company or person carrying animals for hire within any part of Great Britain shall forthwith thoroughly cleanse and disinfect all pens, carriages, trucks, and boats used by such company or person for holding or carrying animals by a washing of lime water, or, with the approval of the Board of Trade, by some other process, and until such pen, carriage, truck, or boat has been thoroughly cleansed and disinfected as aforesaid, no animal nor any article shall be placed or carried in any such pen, carriage, truck, or boat; and when such pen, carriage, truck, or boat has been thoroughly cleansed and disinfected as aforesaid, such company or person, as aforesaid, using the same, on every occasion after any animal has been taken out of such pen, carriage, truck, or boat, and before any other animal or article is placed therein, shall thoroughly cleanse and disinfect every such pen, carriage, truck, or boat in such manner as the Board of Trade shall from time to time direct, and if any pen, carriage, truck, or boat shall at any time be used in contravention of this order, the company or person by whom it is so used shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £5 for every time that such pen, carriage, truck, or boat is so used."

He wished to point out to the House that the various companies conveying cattle from place to place were by this order required to cleanse and disinfect the trucks and boats used in this service. When the Cattle Plague Bill was before the House it expressed an opinion that the process of disinfecting the trucks should be conducted under the superintendence of officers appointed by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department, however, for a considerable time opposed this course; but, so strong was the opinion of the House on the subject, that he (Sir George Grey) brought up the following clause:—

> "Every railway company that carries animals for hire within any part of Great Britain shall, before the 25th day of March next, thoroughly cleanse and disinfect all cattle pens, trucks, and

boats belonging to such company, and used for holding or carrying animals in the manner which shall be directed by an order made by the Board of Trade, which order they are hereby empowered from time to time to make, vary, or revoke; or, in case of no such order being made or being in force, by a washing of lime water, or some other efficient means; and every such pen, truck, or boat shall, on or before the said 25th day of March, be inspected by an officer duly appointed in that behalf in writing, under the hand of the President or Vice President of the said Board of Trade, or by an inspector duly authorized in that behalf by the local authority having jurisdiction in the place where such pen, truck, or boat is; and such officer or inspector shall, if satisfied that such pen, truck, or boat has been properly cleansed and disinfected, certify to that effect in writing under his hand; and until such certificate has been given no animal shall be placed in any such pen, truck, or boat; and when such certificate has been given in respect of any pen, truck, or boat, such company, on every occasion after when any animals have been taken out of any such pen, truck, or boat, and before any other animals are placed therein, shall thoroughly cleanse and disinfect as aforesaid every such pen, truck, or boat; and if any pen, truck, or boat shall at any time be used in contravention of this Act, the company to which such pen, truck, or boat belongs, or by or on whose behalf it is so used, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds for every time which such pen, truck, or boat is so used."

That was the clause of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir George Grey), and he (Mr. Hunt) accepted it in lieu of his own; but, according to the Order in Council issued on Saturday, he understood that no provision would be made for official superintendence in the cleansing of trucks that had been used for the conveyance of cattle. He believed this to be a matter of vital importance. The railway companies, as admitted by one of their superintendents, employed the lowest class of the servants in their service to cleanse the trucks, which were shunted into a siding without any responsible person to look after them. There was, therefore, not the slightest security that when the trucks should be again used —as they could be by law on Sunday next —they would be properly cleansed and disinfected. When he undertook to withdraw his Bill on Wednesday last, it was on the assurance that the Government would accept the responsibility of the whole matter, and that the Orders in Council would be dictated very much in the spirit of that Bill. The first Order in Council, however, was a direct departure from its principle, and Government had attempted to throw off the responsibility which they had accepted and which had devolved upon them. He desired to know, Whether the Order he had read was an authentic Order, and why the right hon. Gentleman had departed from the principles of his own clause?

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Hunt.*)

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he could not tell whether the Order the hon. Gentleman had read was authentic or not, because he had only read a portion of it. The Bill of the hon. Gentleman imposed upon the Government the obligation of cleansing all railway trucks throughout the country, while the expense of the process was to fall upon the public. He, therefore, objected to the clause containing this provision, thinking that the responsibility of properly cleansing and disinfecting the trucks should rest with the railway companies, who ought also to bear the expense. He undertook to bring up a clause to that effect, and it was inserted. Another objection which he made to the clause of the hon. Member was this—that it would be of little use to secure cleansing the trucks before the 24th of March, if after that time no precautions were to be taken for the continued cleansing of trucks, and he, therefore, proposed that the obligation should be thrown on the companies of cleansing and disinfecting on every occasion on which they carried cattle. The obligation of disinfecting the trucks was now imposed upon the railway companies, who would have to pay the whole of the expense incurred by the proceeding, and the order of Saturday not only provided for the cleansing and disinfecting of cattle trucks during the present week, but that they should be thoroughly purified every time they were used. When the Bill came down from the House of Lords the Government had come to the conclusion that it would be impossible to provide the machinery by means of which the railway trucks throughout the country could be inspected by the officers of the Board of Trade before the 25th of March. It had been suggested that the only mode of inspecting those trucks would be to order them to be brought to some central station, but to take that course would, he thought, be to interfere materially with ordinary railway traffic. It had been thought right, under the circumstances, to place the immediate and the future cleansing of the trucks upon the same footing, giving powers of inspection so that it could be ascertained whether the Order had been carried out, the railway companies being rendered liable to prosecution unless they complied with the regulations which had been laid down. The hon. Gentleman, however, complained that the duty of cleansing the trucks was to be left to the lowest class of officers in the employment of these companies, when it should rather have been committed to the station-master and others holding more responsible positions, through whom he contended it would be more effectually discharged. The Government, however, had nothing to do with the railway officers, and thought it better to impose the responsibility on the companies themselves, who, if they should practically neglect their duty in the matter, by appointing subordinate and inefficient officers for this purpose, would run the risk of rendering themselves liable to a penalty of £5 for every truck not properly disinfected.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE said, he regretted that the right hon. Gentleman should have taken the view he had as to the inspection of the railway trucks. When the subject was lately before the House the almost universal opinion appeared to be that, in order that those trucks should be thoroughly and effectually cleansed, it was necessary that the work should be done under the superintendence of some authority external to the railway companies themselves. We had already some experience as to what Orders in Council could do in the proposed direction. An Order had been issued last autumn for the purpose of enforcing the disinfection of their trucks on those companies, but that Order had been disobeyed. He hoped, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman might be induced to reconsider his determination in the matter, and that we should have no more of that *laissez-faire* system with respect to the cattle plague, of which we had already so much. To the neglect of their duty on the part of the Government, and to the delegation of important functions to be performed by persons over whom they had no control, it was that the continuance of that frightful disaster, and the consequent loss which so many counties had sustained, was to be attributed. Unless, therefore, the Government were content to pay nothing more than a mere perfunctory attention to the question, and to forego the supervision of the precautions necessary to prevent the further progress, and, perhaps, absolute naturalization of the disease in this country, they must undertake themselves, or else give the local authorities full power to see that the railway trucks were properly inspected. Some agency was required in the matter on which greater dependence could be placed than on the conscience and care of the lowest class of officers in the service of railway companies. He trusted as it was only issued on Saturday the Order was not to be regarded as the final decision of the Government in the matter, and that before long a most essential precaution would be carried out under a satisfactory system of inspection.

SIR JOHN PAKINGTON said, he concurred with his noble Friend in thinking that the country had had enough, and more than enough, of the trifling and temporizing of the Government on the question of the cattle plague. On a former occasion, when his hon. Friend the Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. Hunt) withdrew his Bill, a promise was made by the Under Secretary for the Home Department that a Bill would be brought in by the Government on the subject, and he should like to know whether they proposed to act upon that promise.

SIR GEORGE GREY said, that no promise had been given that a Bill would be introduced. It was stated that, if the powers conferred on the Privy Council under the existing law were not found to be sufficient, the Government would deem it to be their duty to ask Parliament for further powers. It might be necessary to do so, and the question was now under the consideration of the Government.

MR. OWEN STANLEY said, he wished to know if it were the intention of the Government to continue the prohibitions with reference to the railway traffic after the 25th instant. As far as he understood, the Order by the Privy Council gave power to the local authorities to fine a railway company £5 if their trucks were not disinfected; but would that answer the purpose they had in view without adopting means to obtain the necessary information? [Sir GEORGE GREY: Anybody might inform against the infraction of the Order.] He had no great faith in Government inspectors being sent over the country; and besides, that would be almost an impossibility. Hitherto, the difficulty which they had laboured under was, that when the local inspectors complained of the condition of the trucks they had no power to inflict a fine; but now that under the Order in Council a fine could be imposed and levied, it would answer all purposes.

Mr. MILNER GIBSON said, he thought it would be more likely that all the railway trucks throughout the country would be disinfected if the task of disinfection were committed to the railway companies themselves under a penalty, and with a power to anybody to inform against them if they did not discharge their duty properly, than if reliance were to be placed on the certificates of a staff of inspectors who must, under all the circumstances of the case, be quite unable within the given time to do that which would be required of them. It would be quite impossible to collect all those trucks together and have them inspected within a few days, so as to have reliable certificates that every railway truck in the kingdom had been disinfected. The Board of Trade could not undertake such a duty unless they had a perfect army of inspectors; and before the necessary appointments were made and the inspectors received their instructions the time would have arrived when the trucks might come into use.

Lord JOHN MANNERS said, that it was a very old saying that that which was everybody's business was nobody's business. To whom was the information to be given in the event of anybody informing against the railway companies for neglect of the duty imposed on them, and to whom was the authority to levy the fine invested?

Mr. HUNT said, he wished the Government was as ingenious in finding out means to do their duty as in finding out reasons for not doing it. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Milner Gibson) said it would be impossible to find an army of persons to carry out this duty; but he (Mr. Hunt) would say it was perfectly possible if the Government would only nominate the chief local inspectors in the different counties for that purpose. It was easy to say that it was sufficient to lay on a penalty, but how were they to obtain the proof whether a truck were disinfected or not unless it was done by official authority?

Sir JOHN OGILVY said, he wished to ask, whether the traffic of live cattle by rail would be resumed after the 25th of March?

Colonel DOUGLAS PENNANT said, he wished to know, whether the inspectors of the local authorities had the power of entering into railway stations to ascertain whether the trucks were disinfected or not? There was considerable difficulty, as he knew from his own experience during the winter, in laying informations and in finding the parties. The magistrates were now to have the power of fining; but he believed there was no power which enabled the local inspectors to go into the railway stations in order to obtain information.

Mr. READ said, he wished to know when the new Orders in Council permanently regulating the cattle traffic would be issued?

Mr. BARING said, that the substance of the proposed Orders had been agreed to on Saturday last, but that it would take some little time to place them in proper shape. As to the other point, it was a question as to what could be done and what could not be done. It would be impossible to organize before the 25th of March a system under which all the railway trucks throughout the country should be inspected by Government officers. The only practical way of proceeding in the matter was to impose the duty of cleansing on the railway companies, rendering them liable to a heavy penalty if they failed to do so. That penalty would come under the operation of the 11 & 12 *Vict.*, and might be recovered by summary process, half to go to the informer. In respect to the question as to the continuation of railway cattle traffic, the House must recollect that the prohibition extended only to the 25th of March, unless continued by any Order of the Privy Council, and the Government were not prepared at the present moment to say that it was their intention to continue that prohibition.

Mr. GATHORNE HARDY said, that as regarded inspection they should throw the onus of proof upon the railway companies, and make it compulsory upon them, when informed against, to prove that they had disinfected and cleansed their trucks.

Sir RAINALD KNIGHTLEY said, he wished an answer to be given to the question, whether the local authorities had power to inspect trucks in railway stations?

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

DAY OF HUMILIATION.—COMMITTEES.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER moved "that no Select Committee do meet to-morrow before one o'clock."

Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE said, the proposal now made established altogether a new precedent, and he trusted the House would consider before adopting it. It was contrary to the constitutional and to the ancient practice of the House. It was imposing a heavy tax upon parties who were interested in the cases before the Committee, by robbing them of an hour or two hours of their time. But that was not so material as the principle of the thing. The ancient practice of the House on occasions of public fast formally proclaimed by the public and civil authorities was to meet at eleven o'clock in the morning, go to St. Margaret's Church with the Speaker, hear a sermon delivered by a rev. gentleman appointed by the House, and if the House was gratified by the discourse it expressed its thanks to the preacher, and then in some cases adjourned, and in others proceeded with its ordinary business. A practice had grown up for Committees not to sit on Ascension Day until one o'clock, and now the House was called upon to take another step in the same direction. To-morrow was to be a Day of Fast and Humiliation for the Cattle Plague. On the propriety of that arrangement he would express no opinion; that was not the proper place to express one; but this Day of Humiliation having been announced by the Bishop of London for his diocese, to his surprise, the noble Lord the Member for Leicestershire (Lord John Manners) a few nights ago proposed to the leader of the House (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) that Committees should not sit until one o'clock to-morrow; and the leader of the House incautiously and without reflection assented as he (Mr. Bouverie) understood him to say in conformity with the practice of the House. The practice of the House did not justify such a proceeding. The House knew nothing of the proclamations of the Bishop of London. Of a fast proclaimed by the civil authorities—by the Queen in virtue of her Supremacy, the House had some knowledge; but of this fast the House had no knowledge whatever. There was a minor objection to the present Motion on a point of form; but often substance was involved in form. How was this Motion to be entered on the Journals of the House? On Ascension Day the form was "That on such a day, being Ascension Day, Committees shall not have leave to sit until one of the clock." Were they to say that "the Bishop of London having issued notice of a fast in his diocese, the Committees shall not have leave to sit until one of the clock?" And upon all future occasions on which the Bishop invited his congregations to join in humiliation and fasting, was the House to prohibit the sittings of Committees? When he was sworn on the Totnes Election Committee, instead of being asked as usual at what hour they would sit, he was told the Committee was not to sit to-morrow until one o'clock. He objected, on the ground that the parties concerned had, at great expense, engaged counsel and brought up their witnesses, and because by Act of Parliament the Committee was bound to meet as early as possible. Justice ought to be attended to before fasting. The Speaker had no authority to fix the hour of the meeting of the Committee; it was the House which had to order it. By Act of Parliament it was settled that Election Committees should meet within twenty-four hours after being sworn, unless Sunday, Christmas Day, or Good Friday intervened, so that the intention of the Legislature that the business of Election Committees might be despatched as speedily as possible was clearly expressed, no exception being made with respect to fast days or holidays, except such as he had already mentioned. He thought it the duty of the Totnes Election Committee to meet to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and when the present Motion was disposed of he should feel bound to move that the Totnes Election Committee meet at that hour, for this was a question of expense to the parties, on whom a heavy fine would be imposed by delay. If the noble Lord the Member for Leicestershire and the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought that the House of Commons as such ought to observe the Day of Fast and Humiliation, the proper course would have been, not to move that Select Committees should not meet before one o'clock, but to move that the House should meet at eleven o'clock, and proceed in a body to St. Margaret's Church to hear an appropriate sermon. He would divide against the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: In the first place, allow me to say, with regard to Election Committees, that when this matter was mentioned on a former day I stated that it remained for consideration whether Election Committees ought to be included in the Motion. The case of Election Committees is altogether a peculiar case. I was not aware that more than one Election Committee had been appointed, nor did I suppose that any question would arise with respect to Election

Committees. As, however, such a question has arisen, I am quite willing, in conformity with what I intimated on a former day, to propose that no Select Committee other than Election Committees should meet before one o'clock. I am merely stating the view of the Government. If Gentlemen object to that Amendment, of course it is in their power to enforce their objection. I do not think my right hon. Friend was entirely accurate when he said that it was only within a very few years that a practice had arisen within this House of ordering that Committees should not meet until one o'clock on a single day in the year. Now, I believe that there are two days in the year upon which this House has regularly for a great many years—certainly for ten or twenty years—made that order, and not for one but for two o'clock. Then the question comes whether it is right that in a case where the authority of the Crown has not been put into exercise that this House should take any notice of an act done by the Bishop of London. But though the authority of the Crown is not put in exercise the practice has grown up in the House of directing its Committees on Ascension Day and Ash Wednesday not to meet till two o'clock. I remembered very well the practice originated during the first Ministry of Lord Russell. A discussion took place, and an objection having been taken then as now by my right hon. Friend, an appeal was made to the feelings of the House with regard to the coercion by Parliamentary attendance on Committees on those whose desire it was to make use of those occasions for the purpose of attending public worship. I quite agree that this is a case distinguishable from those, and I wish the House to notice what has taken place. There is a strong feeling in the country that there ought to be a Day of Humiliation appointed by the authority of the Crown with reference to the ravages of the cattle plague. Application was made in the usual course by the Archbishop of Canterbury to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in order that effect might be given in the usual manner to that desire. The Government considered that application, and they came to the conclusion that taking into view the extreme inequality of the cattle plague—taking into view that if one day were appointed it must be appointed for the whole country, whereas the degree in which the cattle plague was felt in many parts of the country was infinitely various—and taking into view that the day, if appointed by the authority of the Crown, would become a day of universal cessation from labour, they did think it their duty to reject the recommendation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. But when the question was raised in this House, and my right hon. Friend (Sir George Grey) was interrogated on the subject, he did reply that, in the opinion of the Government, the proper course to be followed was the course actually being followed in different dioceses—namely, that the bishops, after communicating with their clergy and the principal persons for the purpose of ascertaining the state of public feeling, should not enjoin—for they had no power to enjoin—but invite the community to enter into these special services. Undoubtedly it is not a matter of coercion at all. It is altogether a matter of goodwill and right feeling on the part of those who think proper to respond to the Episcopal invitation; and I must say that in my opinion those who do respond are quite right in so doing. It is under these circumstances that the Bishop of London issued the invitation which he has issued to the people of his diocese. I had had no opportunity of thinking over the matter before the suggestion was made from the Opposition side of the House, but when it was made, and we considered the purport of it, we did believe the House would be anxious, without giving any specific recognition to the act as an act of authority, to enable those of their Members who were desirous of availing themselves of it the opportunity of attending public worship upon a very sad and solemn occasion. That is the simple nature of the proceedings so far as I am concerned. I am extremely sorry—I cannot say how sorry I am—that a matter of this kind should become a subject of contention in the House. It is eminently desirable that whatever we do should be done with general goodwill; but, always excepting that peculiar case of Election Committees as to which I must say that I am not at all convinced, and which the House will dispose of as it thinks fit, I cannot think that we are wrong in the course we have taken.

Mr. BRIGHT: From what the right hon. Gentleman has said it is quite clear that Government did not think it desirable to advise the Queen to order a general fast throughout the country. He says that the calamity is partial; that it is not known in many counties, and that it is barely known in others; and I think the view of the Government was probably the right one. But then comes the question whether the House of Commons, which does not represent half-a-dozen distressed counties, but represents the whole of the United Kingdom, or professes to do so—whether it should, except on action of the Crown, under the advice of the responsible Ministers of the Crown, depart from its ancient practice and establish a new precedent, because the Bishop of London has thought proper to advise a fast in his diocese on a particular day. The fast was ordered for a day last week, I believe, but for some reason or other it was changed. Well, one bishop is ordering the fast for one day and another bishop for another day. Now, only look at the difficulty in which the House will find itself placed if it adopts the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman. It will be a precedent for all time—at least until it be reversed by some direct vote of the House—that if the bishop of this diocese shall, under a strong feeling of the weight of any local or general calamity—[The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: And on the indication of the Government.] I presume the Bishop of London may order a fast in his diocese without any indication on the part of the Government. If the Government thought it essential to indicate to the Bishop of London that he should order a fast, surely they might have ordered the fast for the whole country through the direct action of the Crown, and then it would have been perfectly reasonable to ask Parliament to take the course that is now proposed. I say the House of Commons will be doing that which is not consistent with its position and its dignity if it take this course merely because a single bishop—the bishop of this diocese—has fixed upon a particular day for a fast. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has referred to Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day. Well, there was a good deal of difference of opinion about these days, or one of them at least, when it was discussed. I find that Members are generally rather in favour of having a holiday, as they are, for example, when the adjournment for the Derby Day is proposed. The House is so hard worked that there is no objection to a holiday on any particular day that anybody will name, but this is not a question of the House having a holiday to-morrow. It is a question whether certain persons whose interests are greatly concerned in the Committee business of the House, shall upon the fiat, not of the Queen, but of the Bishop of London, have their expenses largely increased. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has a great deal more regard, I have no doubt, for Church regulations than I have, but I ask him on this occasion to regard himself as a Member of the House, and not only as a Member, but at this moment as its most important Member, who by the weight of his influence may make law hereafter for the guidance of the affairs of this House. If he will look into Mr. May's book, which I have been studying since the House met this evening, he will find that there is nothing whatsoever in it of the kind he is now proposing; and I should be very sorry indeed if, when there is another edition of the work published, there should be a paragraph in it to say the House felt itself bound to take the same course at the intimation of the Bishop of London which it finds it decorous and proper to take on the action of the Crown and its responsible advisers. I think the right hon. Gentleman hastily, and without due consideration, accepted the proposal of the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Manners). I am not without hopes that the noble Lord himself, after the discussion that has taken place, may think it not necessary to press this matter, and will allow the subject to pass over by general consent.

LORD STANLEY said, he did not think it necessary to argue the general question whether the arrangement was good or bad, but he thought it desirable that the Government should explain the distinction they took between Election Committees and Committees sitting on Private Bills. In both cases counsel attended; in both cases parties were put to considerable expense; and in both cases the inconvenience of an adjournment was very and equally great.

LORD JOHN MANNERS said, he did not see why any exception should be made in favour of Election Committees. The hon. Member (Mr. Bright) entirely overlooked what was at the bottom of a proposition of this kind. It was a Motion to permit a limited number of Members, for a limited period during the day, to perform what they believed to be their religious duties. It was, in fact, a case of the rights of conscience. [*A laugh from the Benches below the gangway.*] Notwithstanding the apparent incredulity of hon. Gentlemen opposite, there was a large number of Gentlemen in that House who believed it to be their duty to attend Divine service in the various churches in the metropolis on this solemn occasion; and if his Motion were not carried, it would compel hon. Gentlemen to be in their places in the Committee-rooms when they felt they ought to be elsewhere. It was really, therefore, a Motion in favour of the rights of conscience.

SIR GEORGE GREY said, his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had correctly stated the purport of the letter which he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Government adhered to the opinion therein expressed; but, a day having been set apart in many dioceses where the plague had been severely felt for special services, in order to implore the Divine blessing on the means that were adopted to arrest its ravages, and the Bishop of London having appointed to-morrow for the same purpose in his diocese, he (Sir George Grey) thought it was only right that Members of the House who desired to do so should have the opportunity of attending morning service to-morrow. Election Committees, however, were regulated by statute, and the House had only power on their being sworn to fix the hour at which they should meet on the first day of the inquiry. If, therefore, these Committees had been appointed a day earlier and were actually sitting, the House would have no power to interfere with the ordinary course of procedure.

ADMIRAL DUNCOMBE said, that the Committee of which he was Chairman, had agreed, in deference to the notice given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not to meet to-morrow till one o'clock, though they felt that many witnesses would be detained who had probably humiliated themselves in their own dioceses, whose expenses would have to be borne by somebody or other. He was afraid, too, that the arrangement proposed would be of very little avail for the object in view, for it being his duty to attend his Committee at one o'clock, he could not possibly attend church, as sermons were unfortunately nowadays of such great length.

MR. HUNT said, that referring to the question of his noble Friend (Lord Stanley) in the case of Election Committees every Member was bound to attend within one hour of the meeting of the Committee, and if then absent the Chairman was bound to report the fact to the House; and unless the House should be satisfied with the excuse, it had the power to commit the absentee to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. Members of an Election Committee, therefore, had not the same facility for being absent as Members of other Committees.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must ask the leave of the House to make a short explanation in reference to the direction given from this Chair at the time the Election Committees were being sworn. I believe that it is the usual practice that such a direction is given to Election Committees as to the hour at which they shall sit on the first day. Seeing the notice of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the paper, as to all Committees not meeting until one o'clock, and not conceiving that any objection was about to be raised to it, I thought it my duty to inform the Committees that they should meet at the hour about to be proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. I never conceived in doing so that I had myself the authority to direct the hour. I merely thought that I was calling attention to what I believed would become an order of the House, and any intimation which I have given must of course be, as I always supposed it would be, subject to, and conditional upon, the order of the House.

MR. WALPOLE said, that if, after what had taken place, it was considered advisable to except Election Committees, there could be very few Committees, indeed, on which the Motion could take effect. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had urged the desirability of unanimity in such a matter, and, after the feeling which had been expressed in opposition to the Motion, he thought it was hardly worth while to persevere with it.

MR. ELLICE said, that nearly two hours had elapsed since the Committee, of which he was a Member, had received the direction to meet at one, and some of his colleagues had left the House under the impression that it was a definite arrangement. It was not unlikely, therefore, if they met at eleven that some would be absent, and would have to be reported to the House. He hoped, under these circumstances, that the arrangement would be adhered to in the case of those Committees to whom the instructions had been given.

MR. E. C. EGERTON said, he concurred with the hon. Member for St. Andrew's

(Mr. Ellice), adding that in several cases intimation had been given to counsel, witnesses, &c., to meet at one, and if the Committees assembled at eleven, they would simply lose the opportunity of the sermons and waste two hours in doing nothing.

Mr. ADAIR said, that until there was an actual vote of the House no one was in a position to desire a Committee to meet at one o'clock. What was suggested was a most unusual course. He accordingly proposed that the Nottingham Committee should meet at half past eleven. If all the Members were not present within an hour of that time, it would be his duty to report the circumstance to the House, which would, he was sure, show its accustomed consideration in such a case.

Mr. MOWBRAY said, that as the only Chairman of a Committee to sit to-morrow who had not yet spoken, he might observe that he acquiesced at the time of being sworn in the Chairman's suggestion; but he looked on that direction as conditional on the decision of the House on the present Motion, and he did not think with the hon. Members for Macclesfield and St. Andrew's that any one would be misled by what had taken place. It was still perfectly competent for the Election Committees to meet at eleven, and if the House so decided, he would follow their instructions. It should be remembered, he would remark, with reference to the Question of his noble Friend (Lord Stanley), that there was a difference between these and other Committees, for Election Committees were bound to sit through the Easter holydays if their labours were not previously concluded, and it was therefore desirable that their proceedings should commence as early as possible.

Motion made, and Question put, "That no Select Committees do meet To-morrow before One of the clock."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House *divided*:—Ayes 259; Noes 112: Majority 147.

DAY OF HUMILIATION.
TOTNES ELECTION COMMITTEE.

Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE said, he had intended to move that this Committee, which was appointed to sit to-morrow, should meet at eleven o'clock; but after the decision at which the House had just arrived, he felt it to be his duty to move that it be ordered to meet at one o'clock. He found, on referring to the Act regulating these matters, that Election Committees were included under the head of Select Committees, and as the House had just determined that Select Committees should not sit until one o'clock, he could not now ask them to appoint that the Totnes Election Committee should sit at eleven o'clock in contradiction to that decision. He therefore moved that the Totnes Election Committee be appointed to meet at one o'clock to-morrow, although he was sorry to be compelled to do so on account of the expense which the parties interested would be put to by the alteration.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, he had already informed the Totnes Election Committee that it should meet at the same hour as the other Select Committees.

Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE said, the Speaker had no power to direct when an Election Committee was to meet—the Act of Parliament required the House to appoint the hour, and when a Committee was sworn it was usual for the Speaker to ask the Chairman when the Committee would meet; the Chairman named an hour, and then the Speaker put the Question to the House that the Committee should meet at the hour named by the Chairman. The hour of meeting, therefore, was fixed by Resolution of the House. His Motion was therefore necessary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER put the Question, that the Totnes Election Committee should meet at one o'clock.

Motion *agreed to*.

Ordered, That the Committee do meet To-morrow, in one of the Committee Rooms of the House, at One of the clock.

Mr. E. C. EGERTON said, he moved that the Boston Election Committee should meet at one o'clock. He agreed with the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie) as to the practice of the House. On the appointment of an Election Committee the Speaker invariably asked the Chairman of the Committee at what hour the Committee should meet, and on ascertaining the time put the Question to the House, by whom the Motion was decided. After the first day the Committee always commenced their proceedings at eleven.

Ordered, That the Committee do meet To-morrow, in one of the Committee Rooms of the House, at One of the clock.

Same Orders with respect to the Great Yarmouth, Nottingham, and Bridgnorth Election Committees.

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Sir G. Grey, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

[BILL 13.] THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Sir George Grey.*)

MR. NEWDEGATE *: I feel, Sir, that I ought to crave the indulgence of the House, and to make every apology for again alluding to this subject. But I am anxious to point out that the question now stands in a very different position from that in which it stood on the second reading of the Bill. Had I had the opportunity afforded me, I should have been glad to have submitted the Notice which appears in my name upon the paper to the Committee on the Bill, or else for consideration upon the Report. These opportunities, however, not having been available to me, I therefore propose to take the following course. Unless I find that hon. Members are inclined to support the re-committal of the Bill with a view to the re-consideration of the oath as it now stands in the Bill, I shall not make the Motion of which I have given notice. But I desire to call the attention of the House to the fact that this very important Bill, abrogating the oath of supremacy, has been passed without anything like a general discussion. In the course of my experience as a Member of Parliament I have known the question of the oath of supremacy raised more than once in this House; but I have always heard it gravely and fully discussed, as a question which touches not only the supremacy of the Crown but the supremacy of the law—a supremacy in which this House shares by its legislative capacity as one element of the Imperial Parliament. I wish now particularly to call attention to what occurred in the debate of the 22nd March, 1858, when this subject was before the House. On that occasion doubts were expressed by some hon. Members of this House, and amongst them by Mr. Stewart, then Member for Cambridge, and by the hon. Member for Sheffield, whether the terms of the oath of supremacy, as taken by the Protestant Members of the House, who form the vast majority of the House, affirming the ecclesiastical and spiritual supremacy of the Crown were truthful; and whether the words contained in the oath taken by Roman Catholic Members, in which they affirm that the temporal and civil authority of Her Majesty shall be maintained as supreme, not only as being supreme, but that this authority should be continued as supreme, might not be so modified as to meet the objections which were at that time stated to the House by some hon. Members. On that occasion, Sir, Mr. Stewart, then Member for Cambridge, moved the insertion of the word "rightfully" in the oath, implying that no foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate rightfully hath or ought to have any jurisdiction within this realm. And I beg to read the words which were used by Lord John Russell on that occasion. Lord John Russell said that—

> "He thought the word 'lawfully' might be intelligible, because it would refer to the state of the law here; but 'rightfully' was a vague word which every one might construe according to his own ideas."

Well, the discussion continued, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer proceeded to express his opinion in the following words:—

> "They (the House) were certainly in a great difficulty, because the hon. Member who proposed the word 'rightfully' gave it one meaning, while his noble Friend (Lord John Russell) gave to the word 'lawfully,' which he seemed disposed to accept, another meaning. He (Mr. Gladstone) confessed he greatly preferred the meaning which he supposed was to be attached to the word 'rightfully,' as proposed by the Mover of the Amendment. But he did strongly feel that it was hardly consistent with the respect in which they held the very nature of an oath, and the fair claims of individuals, to allow the matter to rest without bringing it to some authoritative solution. It was not a matter for private discussion or opinion, but one upon which the views of Parliament ought to be clearly and unmistakably expressed. For his own part, he hoped the House would be disposed to accept the Amendment of his hon. Friend."

It is scarcely possible to convey in words a stronger opinion than this, which was expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I may say that on another occasion Lord John Russell, who is now Prime Minister, expressed his opinion in favour of the word "lawfully." In the suggestion which I have ventured to make, the House will observe that I have thus placed the words—

> "And I do declare that no Foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath by law, or ought to have, any rightful jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority within this realm."

The only words I have added to those of the present oath are the words "by law" and the word "rightful." As these words stand, the words "by law" govern the word "rightful." Perhaps the House will allow me to mention the interpretation of the word "rightful" given in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. I find that in Committee on the Oaths Bill of 1858, the Chancellor of the Exchequer adopted that which Dr. Johnson considered to be the secondary meaning of the word "rightful," that is, "just." Dr. Johnson defines the word "rightful" to mean "having a right, having a just claim," and, by way of illustration, he gives this passage from Shakespeare—

> "As in this haughty great attempt,
> They laboured to supplant the rightful heir,
> I lost my liberty, and they their lives."

In referring to this subject, I wish to show the House that I do not presume to act upon my own conceits, but that, in favour of the additions, which I suggest in the existing words of the oath, I have, as nearly as may be, borrowed the suggestions first of Earl Russell, and of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I may be fairly asked why were those suggestions not adopted when made in 1858? My answer is the answer which was given by Lord Westbury. The words were not in 1858 adopted, because, as Lord Westbury, who was then a Member of this House, explained, so long as the oaths stood in the form given them by the 1st of Elizabeth and by the Relief Act of 1829, the construction of them was perfectly clear; in other words, taking the preamble and the context of the Act of Elizabeth in which the supremacy was first declared, and taking the circumstances under which the Relief Act of 1829 was passed, and considering the fact that the supremacy is affirmed under the provisions of that Act by Roman Catholics so far only as the temporal and civil supremacy of the law is concerned, it is evident that the interpretation was clear in the sense of my notice; therefore, there was at that time no need for any additional words. This question as to the propriety of inserting either the words "by law" or "of right," or the word "rightfully," before the words jurisdiction, pre-eminence, power, or authority, in denial of the claim by any foreign Prince, Prelate, &c., arose in the House of Lords on the 27th of April, 1858, subsequently to the debate, and in which they were suggested in this House. On that occasion the Earl of Wicklow moved that, because these words had not been inserted with reference to the supremacy, the existing oath taken by Protestants, which stands—

> "And I do declare that no Foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm,"

should be abrogated. Lord Lyndhurst spoke upon this Motion for the last time on the subject of the oaths. I will not quote his speech. It is such a condensed argument in favour of the view held by Lord Westbury, that I should only waste the time of the House and impair the force of the argument by reading only part of it. But I wish particularly to call the attention of the House to this fact, that Lord Lyndhurst was supported in the view which he took by the late Lord Campbell, who urged that as the law stood the meaning of the oaths was perfectly clear, and that he was also supported by Earl Granville; and such was the effect produced, that the Motion for expunging this declaration of the supremacy from the oath was negatived by the House of Lords without a division. But now the circumstances are changed, and so far as the decision of this House, the oath of supremacy, under the Act of Elizabeth, which is still taken by the Protestant Members of the House, modified as it stands by the exclusion of the affirmation of the supremacy, but retaining the negative portion of that oath against any foreign usurpation, has been condemned and expunged, whilst the oath taken by the Roman Catholic Members under the Act of 1829, which excludes the words "ecclesiastical or spiritual," and yet affirms the temporal and civil supremacy, has also been condemned. So that the present position of the Bill is this—that the House of Commons has condemned the assertion of the supremacy in matters ecclesiastical and spiritual as it stands in the oath taken by Protestant Members, and has likewise condemned the recognition of the supremacy of the Crown in matters temporal and civil as it stands in the Roman Catholic oath. This completely changes the circumstances; they are, so far as this Bill evinces the decision of this House, no longer those under which Lord Westbury, Lord Lyndhurst, and the late Lord Campbell besought Parliament not to interfere with the oath of supremacy; and it seems to me that the occasion has now arisen when it will be well that the House should consider whether the alteration suggested by Earl Russell when he was a Member of this House, and the alteration suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, may not enable the House to adopt a uniform oath, which shall include some declaration of supremacy, that may be acceptable by all the Members of the House. I admit that I may be told my Amendment does not meet the real difficulty, because the real difficulty is that the existing terms of the oath of supremacy, which I suggest that you should retain, imply the ecclesiastical and spiritual supremacy that the Roman Catholics will not admit, and which in the year 1829 led to the adoption of a different oath for the Roman Catholics from that which the Members of the House had uniformly, for 300 years, up to that period accepted. Yet if it should be the pleasure of the House to adopt the purport of the notice which I have given, so far as re-committing the Bill, I think that in Committee terms might be devised for a uniform oath, by which the supremacy of the law might still be recognized. I cannot help feeling that the position is a very serious one. For the first time for more than 300 years the Legislature, so far as the decision of this House is concerned, is about to abandon the recognition of the fact that the Crown, as the exponent of the law, is and ought to be supreme, and solely supreme, within this realm, and this not in matters ecclesiastical and spiritual only, but also in matters temporal and civil. I must say, Sir, that it appears to me that we are in a fair way to renew the old strife, which was the result of the existence of two supremacies, and to verify the old adage as to two kings of Brentford, and that the country is not likely to escape the confusion, which such a state of things has heretofore occasioned and proverbially creates, because the present state of things is not as though there were no assertion of another supremacy than that of the Crown in this country. Why, only last year, at thirteen different meetings of Roman Catholics, at which Dr. Manning or some other distinguished Roman Catholic ecclesiastic either presided or were present, the recognition of Her Majesty, the recognition of the Crown, the recognition of the authority of the Crown was postponed to that of His Holiness the Pope, or else the Pope was recognized as the ruler of the Roman Catholics alone, and no mention whatever was made of the Crown or of its authority. I may be told that this is a mere matter of courtesy; but, at the same time, it is an indication of a feeling which is known to exist among these Roman Catholic ecclesiastics; and I cannot think it prudent that the House should leave the existence of that feeling uncontrolled by any declaration in the oaths, taken by Members of Parliament, as is now proposed by the Government, and that Members of the Legislature known to entertain a difference of opinion as to the supremacy should take an oath in common, from which all declaration of the supremacy is omitted. I beg the House to consider that the effect of that omission and of the abrogation of the terms of the oaths, recognizing the supremacy of the Crown in matters ecclesiastical and spiritual, and even in matters temporal and civil, comes to this; that Parliament will no longer declare collectively that it will resist any attempt to intercept or usurp the supremacy of the Crown and of the law in this country; and further, that it will become competent to any Member of the House to propose in this House to discuss and to debate measures impugning the authority of the Crown and the law; and this, not in respect of one particular only, but in every matter, whether ecclesiastical or temporal, to which the authority of the Crown and the law extends. I know it will be said that the object of the adoption of this uniform oath is to get rid of invidious religious distinctions, and put an end to the expression of religious differences; but I ask the House and the Government whether, by opening for the first time after 300 years, to debate these questions of ecclesiastical and temporal supremacy, and inviting discussions upon them in Parliament, knowing the feelings which exist upon this subject out of doors, feelings which have been expressed by Roman Catholic ecclesiastics on the part of the Papal See and their Church on the one side, and the feelings, which have found expression in the numerous petitions which have been presented against this Bill in behalf of Protestants on the other side—I ask whether there is any prospect of future peace from thus opening the door to the discussion of those elements of controversy which in years now long past have torn this country, and which have been quieted only by the decision of the Legislature that there shall be but one authority supreme in this country, and that shall be the authority of the law, the authority of the Crown, the authority of the decrees of Parliament in its legislative capacity, the authority of the Crown in its Executive capacity as the fountain and exponent of justice and of the law? It is evident to me that we are opening the door for a renewal of those discussions which formerly led to divisions and strifes which have been witnessed in later times on very rare occasions, and then in a very mitigated form. It is for these reasons that I venture to suggest to the House, as a means of obviating the difficulty that seems to interpose in the construction of an oath of supremacy which may be accepted by all the Members of the House, that this is an occasion on which the House has a right to the advice and assistance of the Law Officers and Ministers of the Crown, and we independent Members of the House may fairly expect that the ominous silence which has hitherto been observed by the leading Members of the Opposition will be broken. It is not fair or right that we should be required to abandon this important declaration without some further effort being made to arrive at a solution of the difficulty in this House. I do not wish to intrude for any length of time on the attention of the House, and I shall not speak one word that is calculated to cause irritation, which it is my object, both now and for the future, to avoid. I have stated fairly the object with which I have made this suggestion; and if it is deemed worthy the consideration of the House, and hon. Members think fit to support it, I will move as I have given notice. But in deference to the House, I at present content myself with pointing to the suggestion I have made. If that suggestion is refused, I can only regret that my objections on principle to this Bill will remain unabated, although I am still actuated by the hope that, as the House has thought fit to listen to the prayers of the petitioners, so far as continuing in our future oaths to recognize the succession to the Throne, it may yet be thought fit to consider whether the supremacy of the Crown and of the law is not a matter so important that an effort should be made to retain the declaration of Parliament in favour of its existence and continuance. I trust, Sir, that this subject may not be allowed to pass from the House without some practical solution being given to it; because I am certain of this, that if you wish to promote discord upon this subject in this country, with the existing agencies that are engaged in promoting hostile feelings upon it amongst Roman Catholics, aye, and even forcing many Roman Catholics, that the House cannot do worse than to leave questions touching the supremacy to be fought out, first in public meetings, and then in the Courts of Law; and to the encouragement of such mischievous proceedings the House is at present committed, nor can they be avoided, unless we continue in this House to declare, as the representatives of the people of this country, that it is their will that in all matters the law as it exists in principle—the law as it shall hereafter be framed by Parliament—the law as it is intrusted for execution to the servants of the Crown, shall be supreme universally, and solely supreme within this realm.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Out of respect to the hon. Member I propose to offer a few words on the notice of Motion placed on the Paper, although the hon. Member has not moved it. The speech of the hon. Member involves the old fallacy that the supremacy of the Crown depends on the oath taken. I think the more the hon. Member's propositions are considered the more entirely the House will be confirmed in the opinion that we had much better get rid of the form which he supports altogether. The hon. Member seems to desire that we should at this table swear obedience to one particular law, but we are not required to swear that we will obey any other, though equally binding. The forms which are superseded by this Bill, as the hon. Member says, merely go to establish the supremacy of the law. But the law rests upon its own authority, not upon the oath taken here. With reference to the Amendment the hon. Member has upon the Paper, I think it is the worst of all suggestions that have been made in reference to the matter under discussion. In truth, it would be going back to the old form before the time of Roman Catholic Emancipation. As far as the proposed wording of the oath declares that no foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath by law any rightful jurisdiction or authority in this realm—it affirms a mere truism which nobody would seek to deny; but it goes on further to affirm that no such Prince or Prelate ought to have any jurisdiction or authority within this realm, whereas Roman Catholics, in a certain sense, think such jurisdiction ought to exist. By putting such words into the oath you would, therefore, be making them deliberately, and according to their convictions falsely, say that this jurisdiction was not a rightful one and ought not to exist. Or, on the other hand, this consequence would follow—that the meaning of the words was not to be taken according to their true and natural interpretation, but merely as relating to the legal, external, and temporal jurisdiction. Questions such as these and the possibility of suspicions being cast upon the honour and honesty of a respectable body of Members of this House were the very things we desired to avoid when devising a liberal form of oath for Roman Catholics, obliging them only to disclaim the temporal jurisdiction. If the words proposed to be introduced by the hon. Member are adopted, the whole force and efficacy of that concession will be lost. It is our desire to abandon idle and useless, and worse than idle and useless, declarations. The law is able to vindicate itself. I hope, therefore, the Bill will pass this House and become law in the course of the present Session. If it does, I venture to say we shall never again hear of those painful discussions in which Members of one religious persuasion threw out taunts against the Members of another persuasion, the sole foundation for these taunts being the oath which it is now sought, to abolish, and about which, when once it is abolished, I believe we shall never hear anything again.

MR. LONG said, he must protest against the obvious fallacy involved in attributing to his hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) the opinion that the supremacy depended upon the oath. The hon. and learned Gentleman must know well that it was the recognition of the supremacy, and not the supremacy itself, which depended upon the oath. This his hon. Friend sought, and rightly sought, to keep upon the statute-book as a protest against assumptions made in times long gone by, and never yet openly abandoned. He (Mr. Long) most unwillingly accepted the conclusion to which the House had arrived, and thought the oath should stand so long as the pretensions of Rome remained.

MR. KER said, that unless the oath of supremacy as well as that of allegiance were retained there might at some future period be a difficulty in defining the meaning of the words "being Protestant," by which the succession to the Crown was limited. If, therefore, the hon. Member (Mr. Newdegate) had moved his Amendment, he should have supported him.

Motion put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

ARMY—INDIAN RELIEFS.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. O'REILLY said, he rose to call attention to the present mode of conducting the relief of Troops stationed in India. Formerly, when the two armies were distinct, twenty years was fixed as the limit of service for the Indian army, and was afterwards adopted in the case of Her Majesty's troops serving in India. When the Indian army was abolished, and an increased number of Her Majesty's troops serving in India were substituted, it became necessary to make a change; for, twenty years being the full period of a soldier's life, regiments which remained out there for that length of time would be entirely cut off from the rest of the army. It was therefore arranged that ten years abroad and five years at home should be the rotation, and that the period of ten years' foreign service might be completed either in India or any of the colonies. This decision halted between the two systems. Notoriously, when regiments either went to India or were on the point of returning home a very great change took place in their internal constitution, and it required a full year after the journey was completed to enable them to settle down again. Regiments which remained abroad for twenty years had at least eighteen years' steady work in them. But under the ten years' limit the evils were as great, and the compensating advantages much smaller. The memorandum of the Commander-in-Chief with regard to the Enniskillen Dragoons expressly stated that before their embarkation for India the regiment was all that could be desired in *esprit de corps* and unanimity among the officers, and drill and discipline among the men; but that great changes had taken place when the regiment was about to leave England. It was easy to send draughts to regiments stationed in any part of the United Kingdom, because draughts reached those regiments after a short journey; but sending draughts to India was quite a different matter, for at present their journey occupied six months, and even after the contemplated improvements in the overland route were carried out it would still occupy a very considerable time. On the passage to India the draughts were mixed up, and consequently discipline could not be maintained as well as it was in a regiment under the command and supervision of its own officers. He now came to another important inquiry—namely, what was the length of time during which Europeans served with the greatest immunity from disease, in hot climates such as India. It had often been asserted that men improved in such climates as they became "seasoned or acclimatized;" but it had been successfully pointed out that such was not the case. On the contrary, fresh men escaped better. He did not mean men who had just landed, because great care was necessary immediately after the arrival of men to prevent them from catching disease. What he meant by fresh men was men doing the first few years of service in India. That these were more healthy and possessed more of native vigour than men who had spent many years in that country, was shown by the Returns which appeared in the Report of the Sanitary Commissioners. The average continuance service was not much more than five years. During the first five years' service the casualties were 8·60, or about 8½ per cent of Europeans in India. After five years they began to increase. Between five and ten years they were nearly 10 per cent, and between ten and fifteen they increased to very nearly 14 per cent, showing conclusively that the first five years of a soldier's life in India were much more healthy than those which followed. He ventured to recommend the reduction of the length of service in India to a period of five years. The proposition was a startling one, and involved a financial question, but with this he would endeavour to deal. The Transport Committee, over which the late Sir James Graham presided, called the attention of Parliament to the fact that it had been proposed to substitute for the system existing at the time they took evidence one of reliefs by battalion every five years. The Committee reported that they were not prepared to pass an opinion as to the practicability of the proposed change, but it was clear that they thought it desirable. Sir James Graham expressed his own opinion, which was entitled to great weight, that as regarded the *morale* and efficiency of the British army it was most desirable the reliefs should be frequent. The long service of our army in such climates had a very unfavourable influence as regarded recruiting. Much of the popular prejudice against joining the army arose from the impression that soldiers were expatriated for a great portion of their lives. The number of battalions at present maintained for India was fifty-five. The number was to be reduced. [The Marquess of HARTINGTON : To fifty-two.] His calculations were based upon fifty-five being the number, but the results would only change *pari passu* with the change from fifty-five to fifty-two. Fifty-five battalions of 960 men gave a total of 48,000 men, the average strength in India being 45,000 men. The present system of relieving the whole in ten years gave a relief of five battalions each year, certain contingencies being provided for. To reduce the length of service to five years would involve the sending out of eleven battalions each year, if the men were sent out in accordance with the existing system. He proposed to send out the battalions much stronger, and not send out draughts. He would have the battalions consist of 1,100, instead of 960 men ; and taking the casualties from all causes to be, as at present, 10 per cent per annum, there would be ready for embarkation at the end of the fifth year 650 men. The average strength of fifty-five battalions would be 48,752, and the total effective strength at any one time 48,125. To this number, which was exclusive of any draughts, must be added volunteers from eleven regiments under orders for home, and men would naturally be more ready to volunteer for five years than for ten. This would diminish the expense. Experience proved that the proportion of volunteers would be at least 10 per cent, so that, putting together the five-year volunteers, and making deductions for casualties, there would be 53,000 men. The total strength in India, therefore, without draughts, would be 51,000 men. Again, under the new system the number of women and children would be considerably diminished. Many of them might be left in England with advantage, which would be an additional saving of expense. The number of women and children, instead of being 10 per cent, as at present, would not be more than 5 per cent. Under the scheme it would, however, be necessary to provide for 2,567 additional passages, which would involve an outlay of £41,000, the cost of transport being £16 per head. The most economical Member of the House would not shrink from so small an increase of expense in order to obtain such advantages as he had pointed out. The heaviest mortality in India and the greatest amount of suffering always fell upon the women and children. In case of any real service they must be separated from their husbands and collected in one place, and the Sanitary Commission stated that the annual rates of mortality among the women was 276 per 1,000, and among children 516 per 1,000. Many soldiers who had a large number of young children would prefer to leave them behind rather than expose them to the effects of so dangerous a climate. But, another question arose. What would become of the women and children who were left behind? There was a ready solution of this difficulty, for at the present moment there was an Indian allowance for the wives and children of non-commissioned officers and privates. Eight rupees, or 16*s.* was allowed to every woman per month, and four rupees, or 8*s.* to every child. The lowest class of private soldiers in India had more than 1*s.* a day after paying for their rations, and, therefore, no soldier in that country could have any difficulty in putting aside 6*d.* a day, or 15*s.* a month, for his wife and children. At present women and children left at home could not claim the Indian allowance; but there was no reason why the arrangements should not be altered in this respect. He had now gone through all he had to say upon this subject, which he would leave to the attention of the House and the country. Great advantages would be gained by a reduction of the term of service, and there was a strong opinion in the army upon this point. There were, however, two or three objections which might be urged, and he would briefly allude to them. The first was, that we could not always supply the number of battalions required for the five years' relief. He admitted there might in some instances be a difficulty in obtaining the requisite number; but then the troops would make fewer complaints at being kept an additional year in India if the ordinary tour of service was five years instead of ten. Military men might also ask what was to be done in case of unprecedented casualties. In reply to that he might express his opinion that if a battalion in India were so reduced, either by the effects of climate, or by service in the field, as to be quite ineffective, nothing could be better than to send out a fresh battalion from home to replace it. It might also be objected that we might experience great difficulty in constantly changing troops, in consequence of the great distance between India and England; but our transport service was much more systematically conducted than formerly, and it would continue to improve. At present it was the practice of the War Department to send out troops to India chiefly from Ireland. Remembering that all the troops were to be sent overland, it would seem that they would arrive at or near Kurrachee. They would diverge in two lines from that point—one going on to Bombay, and thence to the uplands, and across the peninsula to Madras, and the other to Lahore and up the country and down the line of the Ganges to Calcutta. The natural flow of the troops would be gradually such, when the arrangements were fully made, that they would have the advantage of beginning the tour in a healthy climate, instead of beginning with the worst at Calcutta. The more completely that plan of moving troops was adopted the more effectively the five years' system would be carried out. The question arose, first, whether it was possible to provide battalions for the exchange; and next, whether the advantages were commensurate with the increased cost, which he estimated at £40,000. He believed that both these questions could be answered in the affirmative. He did not imagine that the change could be carried out immediately, but he trusted he had said enough to show that the question was deserving of the consideration of the House.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, that the hon. Member who had brought forward the subject with great care, and in a very proper spirit, had shown the question to be well worthy of the consideration of the Government and of the House; but as he was not aware of the calculations and figures by which he proposed to make out his case, the hon. Gentleman would not, he trusted, think him wanting in respect for him if he felt himself unable at the moment to follow him. He admitted that there were strong reasons why a quicker relief of Indian troops would be of great advantage to the army. It seemed to him, however, that the hon. Gentleman's calculations of the expense were somewhat below the mark.

He assumed that the cost of sending a battalion four voyages instead of two in ten years would be almost entirely met in the manner he had pointed out. The question had been inquired into by Committees of the House. [Mr. O'Reilly: I do not believe this particular subject has been brought before any Committee.] It was quite evident that these calculations could only be tested by very careful study. The hon. Member appeared to think that regiments were now kept in India longer than ten years. He believed that the regiments coming home this year had none of them been in India more than ten years; and, unless exceptional circumstances arose, he did not believe that any regiments would be called upon in future to serve in India more than that time. The subject should receive the careful attention of the Government.

ANNUAL FINANCE ACCOUNTS.

OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. HUBBARD said, he wished to call the attention of the Secretary of the Treasury to the fact that the Annual Finance Accounts state neither the Total Capital Amount of the National Debt, nor the Total Annual Interest of the entire Debt, nor the Total Amount of Debt discharged under the heads of Exchequer Bills, Exchequer Bonds, and Terminable Annuities, and to ask him whether he would direct the preparation of such information and its publication with the future Annual Finance Accounts? The fact was that the Annual Finance Accounts as they were at present kept were neither ample nor clear. The House might fairly expect to find clearly stated in them the amount of the National Debt and the interest of that debt, and to be told at the end of every year how much of the debt had been discharged or by how much it had been increased. Every one, however, was obliged to make his own calculations on these points. In one paper the amount of the funded debt was given, and in a subsequent paper the unfunded debt, and these two added together made a total of £785,000,000. This amount, however, did not accurately represent the entire debt, which was £808,000,000. The reason why the residue was not stated was that the accounts did not make a computation of the amount of capital debt owing in respect of terminable annuities amounting to £22,500,000. On the other hand, the interest of the National Debt was unduly overcharged, for the whole amount of the terminable annuities was included. The amount of the debt was therefore, in fact, understated in the Annual Finance Accounts by £22,500,000, and the amount of the annual charge in respect of the debt was overstated by £1,500,000. These were discrepancies that ought not to appear, and he was sure that the Secretary to the Treasury would take care that they were rectified. He was not asking for anything impracticable, for in the savings banks accounts the analysis was accurately made, and all that had to be done was to interpolate these figures into the papers in question.

Mr. CHILDERS said, that as the mode of keeping the Finance Accounts was of very long standing, the Treasury had naturally hesitated to tamper with them. They dated as long ago as the year 1822, and the form in which they were kept was fixed by a Committee of the House. It would, however, be necessary to make considerable alterations in the form of these accounts if the Exchequer Audit Bill should pass during the present Session. Matters of account would then be placed on a different footing, and when the accounts next year came under revision it would be proper to make several alterations. The present accounts, ancient and valuable as they were, might, he admitted, be improved in respect to some of the particulars to which his hon. Friend had called the attention of the House.

LOSS OF THE "LONDON."

OBSERVATIONS.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON: I rise, Sir, pursuant to the notice I have given, to call attention to that melancholy event, the loss of the *London*, and to the nature of the inquiry into that loss. The subject is as far removed as any subject can be from anything like party considerations; but it involves to a very great extent the welfare and the safety of a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects. I bring it forward without the least intention to attack or censure any of the parties concerned. I am not aware that I ever saw Mr. Traill, the magistrate who tried the case, or the Messrs. Money Wigram, the owners of the ship. I had no relation or connection on board the *London*; and I have not been requested by any of the friends of those who were lost to call attention to the matter. I am influenced by but one motive—namely, to appeal to this House, to the Government, and, above all, to the President of the Board of Trade. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will not shrink from the responsibility which devolves upon him and his office in connection with this melancholy event, but that he will be ready to say that he feels—as I do—that this dreadful occurrence forces upon us the question whether the present state of our law for the protection of that portion of the public who are compelled by their business to pass to and fro between the colonies and the mother country does not require amendment. The sea-going public who have to travel between this kingdom and the colonies are specially exposed to two sources of danger. The one the desire of profit which prompts the shipowners to overload their vessels, the other the eagerness with which rival companies compete in conveying their passengers with the utmost possible speed. If the House will permit me, I may briefly remind it of the facts of this deplorable case:—Early in January last two of the finest ships that ever sailed from England—ships with respect to which the public were invited to pay extra fares for the superior accommodation and security against accident which they held out as far as human skill could go—left our ports almost at the same time. One of them was a steamship, called the *Amalia*, of no less than 3,000 tons, which left the port of Liverpool; while the other was the *London*, which, including her engines, measured no less than 1,700 or 1,800 tons, and she sailed from the port of London. Within a very few days from their departure they were both overtaken in the Bay of Biscay by that tremendous storm which we must all well recollect. They were overwhelmed by the sea. Within a very few hours, if not minutes, of each other, within a few miles of each other, these two magnificent vessels sunk to the bottom like stones. In the case of the *Amalia* providentially another ship was at hand, and the passengers were saved. In the case of the *London* no fewer than 233 human beings in full health and strength were suddenly called together by that gallant man, the captain (Captain Martin), and told in the early hours of the morning that their time was come—that human help was beyond their reach; and before that day closed they were no more. The mind, Sir, can hardly imagine a scene more awful or more touching than that which must have occurred on board the ill-fated *London*. But while these two vessels, supposed to be the finest of their class, were unable to contend with what we read of as a wild and raging sea, all the passengers and the crew of the *Amalia* were conveyed in her small boats in perfect safety to the vessel which was near at hand for their rescue. As regards the *London*, within a few moments of her going down, nineteen persons intrusted themselves to a boat—a common gig—calculated to carry only twelve persons in smooth water. Notwithstanding the fury of the storm, those nineteen persons, after remaining in that frail boat for somewhere about twenty-four hours, were safely placed on board a small Italian bark! During those twenty-four hours that little boat fell in with no fewer than four or five ordinary sailing ships, one of which heard the cries of those in the boat during the night. So far were they from being overwhelmed by the fury of the waves—if I remember aright, that vessel was only a cutter—that this cutter actually tacked about during the hours of the night, trying, but trying in vain, to pick up the boat, which she could not see, though she was able to hear the cries of those who were in it. When, therefore, these two splendid ships were overwhelmed and lost, while ships of an ordinary character and even little boats were able to float in safety, can it be matter of surprise that the inquiry ordered under the Merchant Shipping Act by the Board of Trade into the causes of these extraordinary catastrophes was regarded with unusual interest by the public? Sir, I do not stand here unnecessarily to attack anybody in discharging the duty which I have undertaken; but I stand here as one of the public, and as such I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion that inquiry was a mockery and a delusion as far as it regarded the great question of the public safety. Sir, my object is to guard the public for the future. We cannot recall to life the unhappy persons who were lost; but we must, if we can, guard the public for the future; and looking at the matter from that point of view, I say that that investigation was utterly futile for any purpose of discovering what were the real causes of the unfortunate calamity to which I am referring. Sir, the first fact which excited a feeling of dissatisfaction in the public mind was the astonishing announcement in the newspapers that the magistrate who conducted the inquiry had prohibited a counsel retained by the relatives of some of the lost passengers, who attended not with any vindictive feeling, but for their own satisfaction—their natural satisfaction—to endeavour to ascertain what were the true causes of this melancholy event from cross-examining a witness. In consequence of that refusal of the right to cross-examine on the part of the magistrate, I put a Question in this House to my right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Milner Gibson) asking him whether it was really the fact that counsel had been prohibited from cross-examining the witnesses; and I confess I heard the answer which my right hon. Friend gave me with very considerable surprise and regret. My right hon. Friend used these words—

> "Mr. Traill, therefore, thought that the inquiry into the loss of the *London* should be conducted strictly in conformity with the law; but in the exercise of his discretion, had he allowed counsel to appear on behalf of the relatives of persons who had perished, he would have caused long delay, and might have unnecessarily prejudiced rights and liability which were proper to be determined in a Court of Law."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxxi. 507.]

The construction which I put upon this language is, and I do not see what other construction it is open to. [Mr. MILNER GIBSON made a remark.] I am very glad that my right hon. Friend takes some exception to my interpretation of his answer, because I was about to say that I hope he has reconsidered it, and that he does not think that in the conduct of that inquiry it was the duty of those who presided over it so to shape their proceedings as not to compromise—whom? Why, the owners of the ship, who of course were the persons with regard to whom, although not actually under any charge or accusation, the important question deeply interesting to the public mind was whether or not this dreadful event had been caused by any default or neglect of any sort in the building or the finding of the ship. Therefore, it was that when my right hon. Friend made me that answer I immediately gave notice that I could not allow the matter to rest there, that I must raise the question in this House. And I do so now with the anxious hope that he will meet me in the spirit in which I am bringing it forward. Sir, I hold in my hand the Report signed by Mr. Traill and the nautical assessors. In the early part of that Report Mr. Traill refers to this question, whether or not he, as a magistrate presiding over the inquiry, was empowered or was in duty bound to allow counsel to cross-examine the witnesses. He states that at the commencement of the proceedings an application was made that counsel on behalf of the friends of passengers might cross-examine the witnesses; but as permission to do so was not granted by the Act of Parliament, it could not be given. Now, I wish first to draw the attention of my right hon. Friend to the question whether Mr. Traill was right or wrong in the opinion he expressed with regard to the cross-examination of witnesses in the case to which I refer. This is a matter upon which, of course, I am bound to speak with deference to the opinion of legal Gentlemen around me; but it does appear to me from the section of the Act which regulates such inquiries as that upon which I am speaking, that Mr. Traill arrived at an erroneous conclusion. The clause in the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, bearing upon this point, is as follows:—

> "If the Board of Trade so directs, he shall apply to any two justices, or to a stipendiary magistrate, to hear the case; and such justices or magistrate shall thereupon proceed to hear and try the same, and shall for that purpose, as far as relates to the summoning of parties, compelling the attendance of witnesses, and the regulation of the proceedings, have the same powers as if the same were a proceeding relating to an offence or cause of complaint upon which they or he have power to make a summary conviction or order, or as near thereto as circumstances permit; and it shall be the duty of such officer or person as aforesaid to superintend the management of the case, and to render such assistance to the said justices or magistrate as is in his power, &c. . . . Such justices or magistrate may require any master whose conduct is called in question, or appears likely to be called in question, to deliver the certificate, and he shall hold the certificate so delivered until the conclusion."

The Law Officers of the Crown are better able to judge of the force of the words in the above clause than I am; but they appear to me to bestow full power upon the magistrate to conduct the inquiry in such a way as shall elicit the whole truth of the matter. I am perfectly convinced—and I think nobody experienced in Courts of Law will differ from me—that when any party has established a particular view of a certain question, the only way to obtain the whole truth of the matter is to subject the witnesses to a searching cross-examination. Now, I have good reason for believing that some individuals who took part in the inquiry respecting the loss of the *London* do not think the opinion of Mr. Traill a sound one; but I will leave this point for the decision of the Law Officers of the Crown. I now come to another paragraph in the Report which I read with a great deal of surprise, if not with indignation. Mr. Traill proceeds to draw a distinction between two points involved in the inquiry. The first had nothing to do with the case in hand, as it related to the trial of a master or mate of a vessel for dereliction of duty, by which their vessel was either seriously damaged or it became necessary to abandon it. The second point, however, very materially affected the inquiry. The 432nd section, part 8, runs thus—

> "Whenever any loss, abandonment of, or serious damage to a ship, or any casualty causing loss of life, shall have happened as therein mentioned, to inquire into the cause of such loss, &c."

Mr. Traill then remarks that—

> "In the former of these two investigations there is something to be determined—namely, 'the cancelling or suspending the certificate;' and in this case, therefore, the Act has provided for an appearance by counsel, by directing that the master or mate 'shall have full opportunity of making his defence in person or otherwise.' In the latter investigation, on the other hand, there being nothing to determine, and no person on his defence, no such provision is made."

Such a statement, that there was "nothing to determine and no person on his defence," is exceedingly strange, for Mr. Traill in a previous sentence plainly showed that his duty was to inquire into the cause of the loss of the vessel and the passengers. It is hardly possible, I think, to imagine a case more seriously affecting the public interests than that which Mr. Traill was called upon to examine, and which he himself stated—namely, the cause of the disaster to the ship *London*. Mr. Traill has stated that there was no person on his defence. I say that in every sense of the word the owners of the ship were morally on their defence. It was imperatively necessary that that inquiry should be conducted with the most jealous regard to the public interests, and the public interests only; and that it should not assume the character—which I am sorry to say beyond all doubt it did assume—of an inquiry the object of which was to protect the owners of the vessel from blame. I hope the House will kindly permit me to read some short extracts from two letters bearing upon the subject, because it is my wish to show the spirit and the manner in which the inquiry was conducted. The first is from Mr. Thomas, a gentleman who had the misfortune to lose a brother and a sister-in-law in the ill-fated vessel, and who retained Mr. Talfourd Salter as counsel to watch the inquiry. I should, however, have before stated—what is well known to the public—that after applying again and again in vain for permission to cross-examine the witnesses, Mr. Talfourd Salter retired from the inquiry in disgust. Mr. Thomas thus writes—

> "We were most anxious to obtain every information, and secured the services of able counsel and a shorthand writer to report *verbatim* whatever might transpire in the Court of Inquiry. These steps were rendered useless by the course pursued. Not even the simplest question was permitted to be put direct to any witness, and no cross-examination of the evidence was allowed. The presence of our counsel was even misrepresented by the press; the public were informed that he had not seen fit to ask any questions. We were compelled, therefore, to decline being represented, and to withdraw from an inquiry where, from whatever cause, nothing but one-sided testimony appeared to be sought. To those who watched the proceedings they appeared to be mainly an examination of officials by a tribunal of their own. The fact that private persons like ourselves, who come forward at some cost and inconvenience, were not permitted, even by counsel, to try to elicit anything, lest it should be adverse to the owners of the ship, or the administration of the Board of Trade, speaks for itself, and I venture to hope that you may see fit to press for a more full and impartial inquiry into the circumstances attending a calamity which is the cause of mourning to thousands at home and abroad."

The next letter I will read, with the permission of the House, is written by a gentleman known, I have no doubt, to many hon. Members—Mr. Ralph Benson. A short time ago Mr. Benson, who is an able young man, was in active practice as a barrister; and, having lost a brother in the *London*, he took a deep interest in the inquiry, and was present during the greater part of the proceedings. He thus writes to me—

> "I think that we, the relatives of the lost, regarded collectively in the eyes of the Court as we are one in the sorrow of our bereavement, should be allowed the privilege of cross-examining such a succession of witnesses as have been adduced in the present case, who for days together consisted of either crew and dependents of the owners, or persons directly interested in proving that no fault could attach to the ship or her fittings. See how the aspect of things changed when the only independent testimony was adduced—namely, the three surviving passengers; they were strong in denunciation of the behaviour of the vessel, and all were men accustomed to the sea; one had been by profession a sailor. I never heard anything so unsatisfactory as the way their evidence was taken; it was removed from the hands of Mr. O'Dowd to those of Mr. Traill, and if I had not myself pressed, after the examination was concluded, that certain questions should be put, they would not have been asked, though the magistrate had the brief under his own eyes containing statements derogatory to the vessel."

I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will not deny that it is unfortunate that any gentleman placed in the position of Mr. Benson should be under the necessity of writing such a letter as that I have just read. He, and the other gentlemen who have communicated with me on the subject, have done full justice to the personal kindness and courtesy of Mr. Traill. I am bound to make this admission; but courtesy and kindness were not the great objects sought in such a serious case. What was required was a *bonâ fide* searching inquiry into the whole of the circumstances of the dreadful catastrophe, and the fullest scope should have been given to all parties for the purpose of eliciting the truth. I submit to my right hon. Friend that there should have been no attempt for a moment to suppress legitimate efforts to arrive at the real facts of the case. This morning a gentleman who understands the subject on which he speaks, and who happened to be at Dover when the *London* passed through the Straits, told me that the alarming depth of the vessel in the water was the subject of general conversation among the observers on the pier. I will also read to the House a letter to which I attach great importance. It comes from Captain Stewart, of the Royal Navy, who happened to be at Plymouth when the *London* passed that port. He says—

> "A sailor's eye can always detect whether a ship looks too deep in the water or not; and, notwithstanding the evidence adduced, and the endeavour to prove that everything was done for the safety of the passengers that human foresight could suggest, I maintain that the attention of spectators on the Hoe was called to the ship from her deepness of immersion while she lay at anchor in the Sound, and comments were freely passed upon the circumstance; and yet, anticipating bad weather, she is permitted to depart with fifty tons of coal on her upper deck, with her topgallant and royal masts on end, and topgallant yards across; the imprudence of which was subsequently shown in evidence by the coals choking the scuppers and the spars being carried away."

In another place he writes—

> "The shortcomings of some and the cupidity of others had far more to do with the loss of the ship than the elements."

And again—

> "The truth is, that the interests of the owners are paramount to every other consideration, and to this, and making a swift passage, the efforts of the captain are directed. It must be now obvious to all that such ships as the *London*, whose length is more than seven times their breadth, and fine at both ends, are not adapted for carrying heavy cargoes and passengers at the same time."

Sir John Pakington

That is the letter of Captain Stewart, a perfectly impartial witness, who saw the *London* only by accident, and who tells us that her unfitness to go to sea in heavy weather became the subject of general observation on the public wharf at Plymouth. The next letter which I wish to read to the House is one which was written at the request of some of the survivors by Mr. Talfourd Salter. He says—

> "Mr. Thomas called at chambers yesterday to ask me to send you in writing an exact account of what occurred at Greenwich when I proposed any question in cross-examination of the witnesses in the *London* inquiry. It was this—The question was written down by me and handed to the magistrate; the substance of it—never, I believe, the words—was put either by Mr. Traill himself, or it was handed by him to Mr. O'Dowd, and put in that way by him. To a number of questions, however, the magistrate demurred altogether, suggesting to me either that they were irrelevant, or not such as the witness under examination could well be expected to answer. I could not agree with him, and gave him my reasons for still desiring that the questions should be put; still he demurred, and ultimately the matter dropped. The obvious disinclination of the magistrate prevented my persisting; had I done so, the questions might or might not have been put. The reason for not persisting was a thorough conviction of the utter futility of the method adopted to the end for which I was instructed to appear, and this is the reason which caused me subsequently to advise you that my further presence on the inquiry was worse than useless."

That statement from a gentleman of Mr. Salter's position must, I think, convince everyone that the inquiry was not conducted as it ought to have been. Who were the principal witnesses? They consisted of persons who were either directly connected with the owners of the vessel, such as sailors and shipbuilders, or of officers connected with the Board of Trade as emigration officers and surveyors—gentlemen, in short, who were already to some extent committed in the matter, as having passed the vessel and allowed her to go to sea. They declared that she was in a state to make a safe voyage, and they, therefore, could not be expected to come forward afterwards to falsify the statements they had previously made. I may give an idea of the carelessness with which this evidence was taken when I say that Captain Lean, the emigration officer at the port of London, gave evidence that he had passed the ship as all right. In Mr. Traill's Report the words were put in inverted commas that "the ship was perfect in every way." During the inquiry Captain Lean handed in a report of her sails to show how perfectly equipped she was.

There was something in the manner of putting in the list that appeared to excite Mr. Salter's suspicion—he had not then retired from the inquiry—and he expressed a wish to ask Captain Lean how long he had had it in his possession. The question having been put, the answer was that the list had been given him two days before the inquiry by the proprietors of the ship. This fact will, I think, serve to show the House how little dependence ought to be placed on the evidence of persons who were themselves already in some degree committed in the matter. When a further question was suggested with the view of pressing Captain Lean upon this point, the magistrate, I understand, refused to put it, or hesitated to do so. Again Captain Stoll, the emigration officer at Plymouth, was examined, and I must say that the evidence given by him and others was such as to suggest very strongly the inquiry in what the real value of the inspection of vessels at our outports by emigration officers consists. That is a question, in my opinion, not only well worthy, but demanding the serious consideration of my right hon. Friend. The British public are led to place confidence in those inspections. They are led to believe that they may go to sea in safety in vessels which have been passed by the emigration officers. They never suspect—that which I believe to be the truth—that, whether from long habit or the want of adequate instructions, the visits of these officers have, in point of fact, become mere matters of form. This is a subject to which I would most earnestly invite my right hon. Friend's attention. There is one fact connected with the case of the *London* which strongly impresses on my mind the justice of the view which I entertain on this point. While that ship lay at Plymouth fifty tons of coal were added to her stock. Those fifty tons were stowed on her deck in bags round the sides of her bulwarks, and there left entirely unsecured. The natural result was, that as soon as she experienced the action of a heavy sea those bags of coal broke adrift and burst. The coal covered the deck and stopped the scuppers. Captain Stoll himself stated in evidence that when he inspected and passed the ship at Plymouth the coal was stowed away in the manner I have described. Since I gave notice of my intention to bring forward this question I have received letters from various persons, chiefly seafaring men, all condemning in the strongest manner the way in which the coal was stowed on board the ship. This very morning I had a communication from a naval officer strongly impressing on me the impropriety of the emigration officer having allowed the ship to go to sea in that condition. The evidence on one side having been such as I have stated, what was the evidence on the other? It was most important, and I am sorry to say that it was very reluctantly received. It could not, however, be altogether excluded. A well-known gentleman, Speaker of the House of Assembly in Australia, Sir D. Cooper, who had sailed in the *London* in a former voyage, declared it to be his opinion that she was then so bad that she ought never to have gone to sea. Again, Mr. Wilson, the shipbuilder of Liverpool, spoke of the ship as being so badly constructed that he would not allow his son to go to sea in her. This evidence was so important that it could not be altogether suppressed, and Mr. Traill was obliged to admit that such was the opinion of Mr. Wilson, the shipbuilder. There was also the evidence of Mr. Monro, one of the passengers by the *London;* and last, but not least, that of the unfortunate Mr. Dennis, one of those who were lost, and who, within half an hour of his death, wrote a record which I have seen. His brother-in-law called upon me a few days ago and showed me an interesting memorandum, written in pencil, enclosed in a bottle which was washed on shore, and which his relative had written. Mr. Dennis was an experienced man, had been much at sea, and his words bearing on this subject contained in this painful memorandum are—

> "Ship too heavily laden for its size and too crank; windows stove in, water coming in everywhere; storm not too violent for a ship in good condition."

I have here also a memorandum from a gallant and distinguished friend of mine, an admiral in the navy, who at one time commanded Her Majesty's ship *Rodney*, and who draws the following comparison between that vessel and the *London:*—

> "Dimensions of the *Rodney.*—Tons, 2,626; length, 205 feet 6 inches; breadth, 54 feet 5½ inches. The *London.*—Tonnage, 1,428; length, 267 feet; breadth, 35 feet."

That is to say, that the length of the *London* was seven times her breadth instead of only about four times, as in the case of the

Rodney. Here arises the question, and I am speaking in the presence of shipbuilders of experience, whether or not the time has come when, for the public protection, this style of shipbuilding, evidently calculated, owing to the rivalry of different companies, to attain a high rate of speed without a due regard to safety, should be allowed to continue, so that such vessels should be trusted to carry a large number of passengers and at the same time a heavy cargo of merchandise. I am sorry to detain the House, but there is other evidence which I think is most important connected with the composition of the crew. The evidence upon this point was, I am sorry to say, checked by the magistrate, and was not gone into. I believe, however, that it is most reasonable to suppose that the unsatisfactory nature of the crew was in no inconsiderable degree the cause of the calamity which befel the ship. There was, no doubt, a large number of able-bodied seamen on board; but I am told there were many quite unfit to be intrusted with the management of a large and important ship, and also a considerable proportion of Dutch sailors, who were entirely unable to understand any English word of command that might be given. I speak here without any knowledge on my own part, but I should like to know how far it is or is not the duty of the emigration officers and those surveyors who are called on to examine a ship of this class to see that she is not only properly fitted out and equipped, but also properly manned. I venture to submit to the House that the safety of our fellow subjects ought not to be intrusted to a vessel which is manned to a considerable degree by men who not only are not efficient sailors, but are not able from their ignorance of the language to understand the directions they receive with respect to the duties they have to perform, when, as in this case, a storm should arise. I will not detain the House by dwelling any longer upon this most painful case. I have stated the grounds of complaint which exist with regard to the manner in which the inquiry was conducted. I again state it broadly and distinctly as my opinion that, with the sort of Report to the Board of Trade which I have now lying before me, instead of the result of the inquiry filling my mind with the conviction that all was right, it has filled it with the suspicion that all was wrong. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman again, and I entreat him to accept the responsibility which his office throws upon him in this grave matter. I am sure he will agree with me that it is time that we should take precautions that our fellow-countrymen shall not be exposed to these dangers to suit either the interests of shipowners or the crotchets of magistrates. Inquiries of this nature should be *bonâ fide*, if they are not so conducted as to elicit the truth there had better be no inquiries at all — they are mere delusions; you are deceiving the public, you are throwing dust in their eyes. If an inquiry of this sort is to be conducted by a great Government Department, and for an object so important, as admitted by Mr. Traill himself, as to ascertain the cause of the loss of a ship, let it be conducted in such a way that, although we cannot rescue the poor creatures from the doom which has overtaken them, we shall nevertheless lay the foundation of such alteration in our system as shall afford reasonable grounds of safety to the public. I therefore wish to ask my right hon. Friend a few questions. I have already expressed my doubts whether Mr. Traill was justified in refusing to allow a cross-examination of the witnesses, although my opinion may not be worth much on that point. I wish first, therefore, to ask whether the real power of those courts of inquiry are, as at present constituted, sufficient for eliciting the only object worth attaining — namely, the whole truth in these cases? Secondly, if the power is held, after full consideration, to be sufficient, will he now tell the House, as a Minister of the Crown at the head of the Board of Trade, that he wishes that the law shall be effectually carried out for the future? or if the law be unsatisfactory, will he undertake, now that he has a Bill before the House relating to the Merchant Shipping Act, to amend the law by introducing a clause for this purpose? Thirdly, will my right hon. Friend direct his attention to the manner in which the inspection of vessels is carried out by the Emigration Office? Will he take care that these inspections shall be *bonâ fide*, and that the inspectors shall have full authority to stop any ship going to sea that may not have complied with the necessary requirements? I have no hesitation, in spite of this Report, in expressing my opinion that the *London* was an ill-constructed and over-loaded ship, and neither Captain Lean, in London, nor Captain Stoll, at Plymouth, ought to have allowed that ship to go to sea.

Fourthly, will my right hon. Friend cause to be enacted that an effective control shall be established over emigrant ships and the cargoes they are to carry, and further will he adopt some system of licence with respect to cargo and passengers, so that no ship shall be allowed to go to sea with a larger amount or number than specified in her licence, these being limited upon the authority of officers who shall be responsible, and upon whose report the public may place implicit reliance? Lastly, I desire to ask whether he adheres to the answer which he gave the other night to a right hon. Friend of mine, who asked whether he would not consent to make it necessary that the deep load-line should be marked on passenger ships? I do not know what objection there may be to that. I find none. There is one solitary passage in the Report to which I am able to give my concurrence; it is where Mr. Traill, at the conclusion, says that it would be most desirable that the deep load-line should be marked on our passenger ships, and I hope my right hon. Friend will give serious consideration to that suggestion, for if adopted it would have the most important effect in giving security to our countrymen who are bound to cross the seas to a distant colony. I have nothing more to say. I thank the House for the attention with which it has listened to the remarks which I have thought it my duty to make. I end as I begun, by saying that I have brought the subject forward only from a sense of duty, and from a strong conviction that we ought to draw from the sad event which has taken place a ground for obtaining greater security for the public. I hope to obtain such an answer as may be satisfactory as coming from a Minister of the Crown.

MR. MILNER GIBSON: There can be no doubt, Sir, that the fate of the *London*, accompanied as it was by such a great loss of life, was a most awful and deplorable event. Considering the precautions which appear to have been taken before the departure of the vessel to insure her being seaworthy, and the experience and skill of her commander, the occurrence is one which is calculated to make us believe that there exist certain unforeseen perils of the ocean against which human prudence cannot provide. My right hon. Friend opposite has felt it his duty, and very properly I think has acted in discharge of it, to call the attention of the House to the circumstances of this melancholy event. I cannot agree with him, however, in one portion of his statement—that those inspectors who passed the ship did their duty merely as a matter of form, and that they did not exercise their judgment as they were bound to do. It appears to me rather that the necessary inference is that you cannot place such great reliance upon a system of Government inspection being capable of providing you with all that you require. For what was the case of the *London?* In the first place, with respect to her construction, you have the Government surveyor—a Board of Trade surveyor—and he passed the ship. He passed her also with regard to her engines, and testified that they were in good order. Then, you had Lloyd's surveyors, in the interest of the underwriters, who obviously would suffer great loss if the ship foundered at sea. They passed the ship as seaworthy. Then, last of all, you had the emigration surveyors, who had not only to look at the ship generally and see whether she was seaworthy, but also to take into consideration whether she was overloaded, and whether she was about to go to sea in a condition which might jeopardize the safety of her passengers. Well, they also passed her. They are in the habit of inspecting ships, and if they had seen anything wrong in the *London* it is not probable that it would have escaped their observation. I think these men did their duty. But, after all, what is the effect of this inspection? I am afraid that it is to relieve the shipowner to some extent from that responsibility which is the best security for the public. Supposing that an action had been brought against the owners of this ship for default in having sent to sea a bad vessel, what an answer it would have been to place before a jury to say that two sets of Government inspectors had examined the ship and passed her as seaworthy, that Messrs. Wigram had complied with all the Government requirements, and how then could they be required to compensate those who had suffered loss? I am afraid, then, that remarks on previous inspection made by the right hon. Gentleman are not very favourable to its principle. I do not think that the inspectors failed in the discharge of their duty, but I doubt whether by Government supervision you can secure those provisions which may be necessary for the safety of the public or effectually prevent these awful calamities. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the inquiry with respect to these accidents, to be worth anything, should be searching, impartial, and conducted without fear or favour. But was this inquiry other than an impartial inquiry? It was an inquiry nominally directed by the Board of Trade, but really instituted in fulfilment of the direct requirements of a statute; and all that rested with the Board of Trade was to see that the inquiry should be conducted in accordance with the Act of Parliament. We appointed a gentleman to superintend the inquiry, who had no leaning either to Messrs. Wigram, or to the persons connected with the navigation of the ship, or to the relatives of those passengers who were unfortunately lost. Our superintendent guided the case, and had only the object in view which the right hon. Gentleman justly said should be the sole object — to arrive at a conclusion as to what was really the cause of the loss of this ship. It is often supposed that these inquiries are in the nature of prosecutions; but that is not so. Their primary object is to ascertain the cause of the loss of the vessel. The late Mr. Hume first suggested these inquiries. The great number of wrecks and loss of life, therefore, excited attention, and there was a general belief that the cause of those wrecks was imperfectly understood. They had generally been accounted for by stress of weather, ignorance of masters, and in other ways. Mr. Hume suggested that there should be a sort of inquest when any wrecks of an important character took place, to ascertain the cause. The right hon. Gentleman has therefore correctly described what was the real primary cause of these inquiries, but it has been supposed that they are mainly instituted for the prosecution of the master or mate—for the cancelling or suspension of the certificates of those officers. [Sir JOHN PAKINGTON: That does not apply in this case.] No, the cancelling or suspension of those certificates might be an incident of an inquiry of the kind, for if a ship were lost by the culpable negligence of the master, it would be impossible for the Government, who had given him a certificate of competence and fitness, to allow him to retain it, but it would not be the main object of the inquiry. When Mr. Traill said that "there was nothing else to determine," he did not as I understand him mean what the right hon. Baronet supposes. What he meant was that there was nothing to determine in a legal sense. The Court of Inquiry was for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the wreck, and as no question relating to the master's or mate's certificate was under consideration, there was not in any legal sense any question to determine respecting the rights or liabilities of any person. That was perfectly true, and therefore he did not think that the right hon. Gentleman had quite correctly represented the meaning of Mr. Traill's remark. If the question as to the propriety of the master retaining or forfeiting his certificate were under investigation, and if any person deputed by him to protect his interest were present, that person would be entitled to cross-examine witnesses, and to be heard; but in this case there was nothing but an inquiry into the cause of the wreck, no persons were strictly on their defence, and there were no rights or liabilities to be decided on. That I understand to be the meaning of Mr. Traill's remark. Now, the Act of Parliament is entirely silent as to whether counsel for any of the persons interested, directly or indirectly, have a right to be heard. My own opinion, and that of those I have consulted, is that that was a matter entirely within the discretion of the presiding magistrate of the court. All I can say is that if Mr. Traill, who was the presiding magistrate, had thought fit to allow the counsel on behalf of the relatives of passengers who perished to cross-examine witnesses, Mr. O'Dowd would have made no objection. Mr. O'Dowd himself called every witness that was mentioned to him, and put every question suggested by any interested party at all relevant to the case.

SIR JOHN PAKINGTON said, that a great many questions which were suggested were never put, and others were greatly altered.

MR. MILNER GIBSON: It would have been our wish that Mr. O'Dowd should have taken the course I have mentioned, and, as I am informed, he did take it. Having the management of the case it was his duty to call every witness suggested to him as likely to give useful information, and put every question, from whatever side it proceeded, calculated to lead to a correct conclusion. Mr. O'Dowd informs me that he took that course.

SIR JOHN PAKINGTON said, that he did not mean to make any complaint of Mr. O'Dowd. What he had said was that questions which were suggested were never put, and that others were completely altered, but he made no imputation on that head against Mr. O'Dowd.

MR. MILNER GIBSON: The right hon. Gentleman referred to the character of the witnesses, and observed that persons were called who had previously committed themselves by opinions on the ship. That is true; but whom can you call, if you want to know anything of the character and equipment of a ship, but those who have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the vessel? It was impossible to avoid calling the witnesses who were examined, but we felt so strongly that some other persons should be called who might give useful evidence that we had certain witnesses examined who might be called "experts," and who were without any interest in the matter. We did our utmost, as far as the case permitted, to call independent witnesses, and I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that it was an unsatisfactory thing that we could not by any means get that amount of valuable independent testimony which we could have desired to obtain. We got some, however, and Mr. Wilson was called by the direct suggestion of the Board of Trade. I do not demur to the opinion expressed by the right hon. Gentleman as to the necessity of calling witnesses uninterested and independent, but in cases of this kind there is a difficulty in finding persons who can give useful information, and who, at the same time, have not known beforehand anything of the ships respecting which an inquiry is instituted. The right hon. Gentleman has asked whether I am satisfied with the law as it stands in respect to the mode in which these inquiries are conducted. I say that I am not quite satisfied. The system is susceptible of improvements, but I will not pledge myself hastily to bring in a measure for effecting a change. The desirability of making a change in the mode in which these inquiries are conducted has been under the consideration of the Government, and I have no doubt that before long we shall be able to suggest to Parliament some improvement in the system. Generally speaking, we have been attacked for conducting those inquiries with too much stringency. It has been complained that we have inculpated persons improperly, and that we have not sufficiently allowed for what are called the unavoidable dangers of the sea. The right hon. Gentleman now takes up the matter in a totally different spirit, and he wishes the inquiries to be more searching than they have been. My honest opinion is that the inquiry into the loss of the *London* was a very searching inquiry, and I believe there was no failure of justice, although I admit there were some unpleasant circumstances connected with the inquiry. I believe that Mr. Traill endeavoured, to the best of his ability, to arrive at a just conclusion. While admitting that these inquiries as at present conducted may be improved, I must observe that they have produced great benefits to the navigation of the country. There have been cases—as the right hon. Gentleman opposite Mr. (Henley) will recollect — inquiry into which has called attention to the absence of necessary lights, has shown the imperfection of past surveys, and the necessity for new surveys, which have been made. A remarkable case was that of the *Alma*, lost in the Red Sea. Inquiry was followed by communication with the Government of Egypt, which placed no fewer than three valuable lights on the coast of the Red Sea, and thereby greatly facilitated navigation. Inquiry into the stranding of a ship on the coast of Newfoundland led the Admiralty to direct a survey, which is now being prosecuted. In the case of the *Duncan Dunbar*, lost in the Atlantic, it was endeavoured to be shown that she had been lost through some unknown currents and dangers that surveyors and navigators had not formerly discovered; but all the notions about unknown currents and dangers were exploded, and it appeared that the vessel had been lost through an error on the part of her navigator. These are useful results, independently of the bringing of charges against shipowners for faulty construction, and the direction of public attention to matters connected with steam-engines, and to scientific matters connected with navigation. These inquiries have been useful, on the one hand, in dispelling rumours of dangers that did not exist; and, on the other, in calling attention to the absence of lights and the necessity for new surveys improvement in the construction, and in these ways navigation has been materially facilitated. Instead of confirming charges against shipowners of bad construction of ships, they pointed out the true causes of danger and of loss. I can assure the right hon. Baronet that no one is more impressed than I am with the dreadful character of the wreck of the *London*, but any one who has turned his mind to these subjects will feel, after reading the evidence with regard to the loss of the *London*, that it is exceedingly difficult to decide what the cause of that loss really was. It may have been injury which no inquiry could disclose; it may have been water going down the hatchways; it may have been that her form did not adapt her to cope with the gale she encountered. I believe that no evidence that could be of use was refused. We were only anxious to have the most full and searching inquiry that was possible; our only desire was to arrive at the real cause of the wreck. I believe the Report is not satisfactory as to the real cause of the wreck; and I imagine that it could not be otherwise than unsatisfactory, because the evidence leaves the real cause doubtful.

MR. HENLEY said, he had heard with great satisfaction the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, that he was not satisfied with the present state of the law on this subject. That was an important statement, coming from him in his situation. The right hon. Gentleman also stated that it was under his consideration and that of others, whether it was possible and how to amend the law. He believed others concerned, especially those who came under the operation of the law—masters and commanders in the merchant service—regarded it with universal dissatisfaction. It was not possible that it should be otherwise, and the very circumstance that had brought about that dissatisfaction was the original vice by which such inquiries were marked. They could not have a court of inquiry and trial at the same moment conducted on principles either satisfactory to those concerned or doing justice. The spirit of inquiry was one thing; trial was distinctly another; and if they attempted to mix the two together they rarely arrived at a satisfactory conclusion on either. How had the system acted in the case of the *London?* The loss of life was unfortunately so great, and the public mind was so shocked, that a degree of attention was roused which under ordinary circumstances would not have occurred. The right hon. Gentleman said with great truth that he felt many of the witnesses were not of a kind to give satisfaction. What happened? Surely if they had a witness who, from any circumstance, however honest he might be, was in a certain sense either prejudiced or committed, the only mode of testing the value of his statement and putting him right with the public, for whom he was giving his testimony, was to subject him to the most searching cross-examination. In this way they would ascertain the real value of his testimony; if he was a sound witness, he would stand well before the public and his testimony was worth having. But, if he had been previously committed to the question, and they screened the witness from cross-examination, no one would value his testimony; it was not worth a farthing. Many of these inquiries which had happened within the last three years had attracted great public attention and had been the subject of much animadversion. He thought the right hon. Gentleman might have spared what he said about the finding in the case of the *Duncan Dunbar*. That was still a *vexata quæstio*. The court he (Mr. Milner Gibson) had himself constituted came to a distinct opinion on a fact resting upon testimony on oath. But the Department over which he presided chose to wholly ignore that testimony on oath. Witnesses had sworn in the most distinct manner that not only at the time they were on the rock, but afterwards on the island, they saw numerous objects floating by in a particular direction. The right hon. Gentleman had affirmed that this was all moonshine. With equal consistency it might be said that all testimony on oath was moonshine; but certainly this was a most remarkable fact; and when there were people whose future well-being depended on such courts, it was not right that they should be subject to such animadversion afterwards. He did not think that any one objected to inquiry. But that inquiry should be searching, and it should be inquiry solely. If the result of the inquiry indicated culpable conduct in any quarter, let the matter be tried by a competent tribunal. Let a charge be framed; let the man inculpated answer guilty or not guilty, and let a competent tribunal or jury decide on the fact. He saw a right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Cardwell), who had a great deal to do in framing the existing law. It was tentative. When he (Mr. Henley) had the honour of holding the office of President of the Board of Trade, it was a new law, and there had been very little experience regarding it. His right hon. Friend would correct him if he was wrong; but he believed it was thought when that law was framed that these inquiries might be much more numerous than they had turned out to be, and there was some apprehension as to arranging a proper tribunal. Experience had shown there were very few. Out of from 1,300 to 1,600 casualties in the course of a year, not above thirty required inquiries of this kind to be instituted, and of these, perhaps, in one-third of them no blame was attached to any one. If this proportion was anything like the number to be tried, it must be very limited, and, therefore, there was no reason why greater care should not be taken by those who conducted these inquiries. No inquiry was of any value unless it carried the confidence of that part of the public who were connected with it. The object was to correct mischief, to prevent casualties or wrecks if possible, by pointing out errors which might and ought to be avoided; but to do this there must be a competent tribunal. They must not be dependent on the crotchets of this or that man. He did not pretend to say how the police magistrates had tried these cases; but, after reading many of the reports, and much of the evidence, he confessed it often seemed to him that they had come to a conclusion on that evidence to which he was satisfied no jury would have come. He thought when men were frequently to be ruined by the decision of these courts, the charge which was brought against them should be fairly stated in the first instance; that they should have an opportunity of pleading to that charge, that evidence should be given, and that a competent tribunal should pronounce upon it. Much had been said upon the question of surveyors and the surveying of these ships. He very much doubted whether these things did not run in a sort of groove, the effect of which was to relieve the parties concerned from all responsibility. He was sorry the House had these discussions before the evidence was officially before them; but on reading the evidence in detached portions in the newspapers from time to time, he was bound honestly to state his impression that it struck him that, so far as the testimony of the surveyors and officers of that kind was concerned, this was what was called a white-washing inquiry. He had not seen the official Report, but he accounts in the public press left that impression on his mind. He would just refer to one point. A question arose about the number of storm-sails, and the emigration officer was asked whether he saw them, to which the reply was, "No, I did not see them; there were responsible owners, and, therefore, I took them for granted." Now, that was surely a very loose system, for, as far as the sails were concerned, the officer might just as well have been smoking his pipe at home. What was the use of an inspector who did not see the things which he certified? Another great evil was that some of these officials inspected one thing and some another, nobody being responsible for the whole vessel, so that the inspection was apt to drop between two stools. These surveys relieved the owners of much responsibility, and yet did not conduce to safety. During the last sixteen or seventeen years the whole mercantile marine had gradually been taken into the tender keeping of the Government; but, in spite of all this paternal care, the disasters that happened in proportion to the number of voyages had been steadily increasing. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Milner Gibson) shook his head, but this was certainly the fact up to 1862, the date of the last Return that had yet been issued. He should be glad to see the Returns up to a more recent date, and could not, of course, tell what they might show, but he did not imagine that the wrecks during the last two or three years had been so few as to give a more favourable result. The proportion of wrecks and casualties had been increasing year by year; on the casualties he laid no stress, as no doubt vessels came oftener in collision owing to the crowded state of the sea, but any one who would take the trouble to consult the wreck table from 1852 to 1862 would see that the average of disasters was increasing. If they were to take carpenters, masons, farmers, or any other industrial class in the country, and undertake to teach them how to carry on their trades, they would encounter the same inconveniences and perplexities which were becoming increasingly troublesome with regard to seamen. For the last forty years the Government had been meddling with seamen, and the result had been that that class were steadily deteriorating, and that complaints resounded on every hand. He believed that the touch of the Government hand in these matters acted like a blight, and that in nine cases out of ten, instead of effecting any good, it only did mischief, relieving those who were properly responsible of the blame to which they would otherwise be liable.

MR. SAMUDA said, he wished to deprecate the increased severity in legislation which some right hon. Gentlemen would found upon the disasters which befell the

London. Whereas the right hon. Gentleman (Sir John Pakington) had endeavoured to draw from the loss of the *London* a reason for more stringent Government inspection, the conclusion to which it conducted him was precisely the reverse. It had been remarked to the disadvantage of that vessel that its proportion of length to breadth was excessive, that it had seven lengths for one breadth; but this was the proportion used in large steamers at the present day; and the large companies had adopted it very successfully. It was said that the principal witnesses in favour of the vessel were interested parties, because on previous occasions they had expressed opinions in favour of the vessel; but in such inquiries it would be difficult to find witnesses of any weight who had not previously been conversant with the matter. When the slight amount of interest which they had in the result, and the diversity of opinion they expressed upon some matters were taken into account, he thought they were entitled to general credit. Besides, the two leading witnesses upon the inquiry were surveyors of Lloyd's. Lloyd's surveyors could not be said to have any interest in the vessel. Their function was to survey the vessel when building, to ascertain the "strength" of her various parts, and to give a certificate accordingly. He did not think this committed them at all, as there was no difficulty in their saying, if the fact required it, that the vessel had not been fitted as they intended. Again, Lloyd's surveyors would be the first to say if they thought so, "You have overloaded the ship, and thus destroyed a ship that otherwise would have been good and sound." But in the case in question Lloyd's surveyor went out of his way to say that if the vessel had been a foot deeper in the water he should not have considered that she was too deep to go to sea. Instead of believing that a more rigid system would prevent disasters, he came to an entirely opposite conclusion. He believed that, in reference to the poorer class of passengers, who were unable to protect themselves, there should be a full supervision to secure to them sufficient room and a sufficient quantity of water and provisions; but first-class passengers exercised a large amount of careful scrutiny as to the character of the different lines of ships they travelled by, and guided themselves by the result of these observations. It was thus that they saw that the best found lines, like Cunard's and the Peninsular and Oriental, invariably commanded a very large number of passengers, even although there were vessels running upon the same lines at very considerably lower rates. This being so, he thought that the less the Government interfered under such circumstances the better. He was not sure that the Government inspection already was not too minute. It would be pernicious if the Government went into detail, and said what should be done and what left undone; and he thought that the Government should confine their operations within the limits of inspection, instead of giving directions. He certainly was in favour of having an inquiry when an accident happened; and he would go further, and say that he thought it most unjust that the relatives of the deceased should be prevented from cross-examining the witnesses with the view of ascertaining whether they had any claim against the owners. The Act of Parliament contemplated that if there was fault on the part of the owners the parties who suffered from the death of relatives should have redress to the extent of £15 a ton of measurement of the vessel. On this calculation the owners of the *London* would have been answerable, assuming the accident to have occurred through their default, to the extent of £25,000. It was at the same time only just to the owners that they should be enabled to elicit facts by which they might be exculpated. The tendency of the inquiry which had taken place could not be other than to prejudice the owners of the vessel to some extent, and he wished to say a few words to prevent them from falling under censure without having been heard. He was informed that the firm to which this ship belonged never insured, and that this was the first loss which they had sustained since 1809. Such a state of things showed an amount of care which entitled them to a large amount of credit until something to the contrary was proved. These facts might, perhaps, explain why the emigration commissioner had not looked so carefully into some matters as he would have done had the owners been of a less high character.

Mr. MAGUIRE said, that if the firm had been damaged it was from the mode in which the inquiry had been carried on. He was of opinion that some material alteration should be made in the present mode of conducting inquiries of this description. The tribunal by which such

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MR. MAGUIRE said, that if the firm had been damaged it was from the mode in which the inquiry had been carried on. He was of opinion that some material alteration should be made in the present mode of conducting inquiries of this description. The tribunal by which such necessities of the case, and would willingly support any well-considered measure to remedy the defects which were admitted to exist.

Mr. AYRTON said, he wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether he had informed the Messrs. Wigram of the nature of the attack which he had intended making on them, so as to give those gentlemen an opportunity of defending themselves?

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON rose to reply to the question.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that, as he (Sir John Pakington) had already addressed the House, his doing so was out of order.

Mr. AYRTON said, that, as this was a matter of great importance, he must claim the indulgence of the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that the rule was that no Member could address the House twice in the course of the same debate, and unless the House consented that the right hon. Gentleman should be allowed to speak he must conform to the rules.

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, that he was entirely in the hands of the House. With reference to the question of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Tower Hamlets, he was not aware that a statement of the facts connected with the loss of this vessel constituted such an attack as was suggested by the hon. and learned Gentleman. He had given the usual notice required, and having in that notice stated his intention of calling the attention of the House to the manner in which the inquiry into the loss of the *London* was conducted he believed he had done all that was usual or necessary.

Mr. AYRTON said, he did not believe that any one would suppose from the terms of the Motion given by the right hon. Gentleman that he had intended to read letters and impugn the conduct of the owners in the way he had done. As regarded the mode of inquiry itself, he need hardly remind the House that he had urged the necessity of legislative interference; but he believed that the Messrs. Wigram had not been treated with fairness by the right hon. Gentleman. The object of his Motion merely appeared to be to call the attention of the House to the manner in which the inquiry was conducted, and to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he proposed to amend the Merchant Shipping Act. That notice did not suggest that he was about to impugn the conduct of Messrs. Wigram, but merely related to the mode of conducting the inquiry. It should be remembered that the inquiry of which the right hon. Gentleman complained was not intended to enable relatives of the sufferers to claim damages against shipowners, but was instituted solely for such purposes as ascertaining the course pursued with regard to the navigation of the ship. Whether it might be right or wrong to establish a tribunal for the purpose of investigation, by relatives, by shipowners, or by the freighters of goods, was a question open to discussion; but that was not the sort of inquiry contemplated by the Act. He could not therefore see that the magistrate was to blame because he declined to allow an inquiry of one kind to be converted into an inquiry of another description, and because he had preferred conforming to the law as it was to acting upon a law which must necessarily have been of his own framing. He quite concurred with the right hon. Gentleman in believing that an amendment of the Merchant Shipping Act was required, but he could not help deprecating the course which had been pursued that evening by the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. GRANT said, he must protest against the interpretation which had been put on the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Droitwich (Sir John Pakington) by the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets, and thought the House was highly indebted to the right hon. Gentleman for having brought the subject before the House. If a calamity involving a large number of lives was not a sufficient matter for inquiry it was difficult to say what would justify an investigation. When a large loss of life occurred there ought to be a full inquiry whether the master of the vessel was competent to navigate it or not. He did not concur in some of the remarks of the hon. Member for Tavistock, who seemed to think that no supervision on the part of the Government was necessary. His own personal experience brought him to a totally different conclusion. The interests of no class demanded the exercise of more Government vigilance and protection than did those of the emigrant or third-class passengers.

Mr. SAMUDA said, that the hon. Member had misunderstood him. He had expressed on this subject the same opinion as that which the hon. Member himself entertained.

Mr. GRANT said, he had understood the hon. Gentleman to say that wherever there was Government inspection there was a deterioration of accommodation. If any one required protection it was passengers who went on long voyages. Those who observed the condition of vessels sent abroad must be aware that not only was the present supervision needed, but that a more stringent one was requisite. There ought to be a larger number of officers, an inquiry into the kind of provisions, and a close inspection as to whether the vessel was overladen or not. The cupidity of the owner of a vessel frequently knew no limit but the actual safety of his vessel. So far from the owners of the vessel in question having sustained no losses for so many years being an argument that the vessel was not overladen, he thought it was rather an argument the other way. The owners of the vessel appeared not to have suffered from losses of this description since 1809, and to have been their own insurers; but a lengthened immunity from loss should not, in his opinion, have engendered increased boldness, but should have had just the contrary tendency. In his opinion, the Courts of Inquiry as at present constituted were perfectly incompetent; and as for Government supervision of vessels, he would recommend that it be increased rather than relaxed.

NAVY—EAST INDIAN SQUADRON.

QUESTION.

Mr. MOFFATT said, he wished to ask, Why a portion of the expense incurred by keeping up a naval force on the coast of India was not borne by the Indian Government? It was quite true the fleet of seven ships stationed there might not be exclusively employed for purposes connected with India; but it was mainly so, and for that reason he thought some portion at least of its cost should be charged against the revenues of the Indian Government as was done in the case of the Army Estimates instead of being wholly borne by the Imperial Government.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that, although the fleet of seven ships referred to undoubtedly did duty in behalf of India, they also performed Imperial duties. Sir Charles Wood had expressed the opinion that the requirements of the Indian Government would be satisfied by an occasional ship in the Persian Gulf, and another to visit the Red Sea. The fleet required for the protection of the Indian coast would not be large; three of the vessels composing the East Indian squadron were employed in the suppression of the slave-trade in the Mozambique, where such trade was carried on extensively, by means of small vessels. The Government had not overlooked the matter, but, upon consideration, thought it inadvisable that any charge on the account referred to should be thrown upon the Indian Government.

ARMY—NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS IN INDIA.—OBSERVATIONS.

Sir HARRY VERNEY said, he had to complain of what he felt to be a hardship endured by certain non-commissioned officers when serving in India. The House might not be aware that when a soldier in India was appointed a non-commissioned officer he did not begin to receive the pay which his rank entitled him to until the official return of his predecessor's discharge had reached India from England. He was thus for three or four months, or sometimes longer, doing the duty of sergeant without receiving the pay. This could not be the intention of the House, and he therefore asked the noble Lord the Minister for War to give the matter his attention. No class of men in the army were more entitled to the consideration of the House than the non-commissioned officers, and he thought their case one of peculiar hardship.

Motion *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES.

Supply *considered* in Committee—Navy Estimates.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £12,656, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the additional Charge for Half-Pay, Reserved Half-Pay, and Retired Pay, consequent upon altering the system of Retirement of Officers of the Royal Navy, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1867."

Mr. MOFFATT said, that considering the Supplementary Estimate under consideration had only been presented to hon. Members on Saturday, some few words of explanation were required from the Secretary of the Admiralty respecting it. Without such an explanation it was incumbent upon them to read it in their own way. It appeared that the noble lord asked the country to pay £12,000 in order to accelerate promotion in the navy. The House would, in his opinion, be guilty of what might be deemed an absurdity if it recognized the principle of retirement involved in the Motion before the Committee. It was proposed that admirals of seventy years of age, vice admirals of sixty-eight years old, and rear admirals of sixty-five years old, should be placed on the retired list. Why, an admiral with greater responsibility should remain on active service until he was seventy, while a rear admiral with less responsibility should have to retire at sixty-five, he could not understand, and he should like to have some explanation upon that point. There were about 102 admirals altogether; but it appeared that all who had hoisted their flag or been employed in the Admiralty should have a right of exemption, and should not be called on to retire at all, so that out of the 102 about eighty-four would be exempted from this provision, the exemption would, therefore, be the rule instead of the exception. The plan proposed some years ago by the right hon. Baronet who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, that all admirals of seventy should be called on to retire, whether admirals, vice admirals, or rear admirals, was much more reasonable than this complex scheme of three ages of retirement with the further complexity of all these exemptions.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, he was glad that his hon. Friend approved generally of the scheme, with the exception he had stated. They were all likely to make mistakes sometimes, but he had not often heard errors more egregious than those contained in the figures of his hon. Friend. Instead of amounting to eighty-four the exemptions amounted to three admirals of the fleet, seventeen admirals, eighteen vice admirals, and fifteen rear admirals, making fifty-three in all, a little more than half the number stated by his hon. Friend. The proposition that all admirals should be superannuated or compulsorily retire at the age of seventy had never been put before the House officially, though it had often been discussed, and he had no hesitation in stating that it could never be carried out. The country would not be satisfied to force into retirement the few distinguished officers now surviving who had had the opportunity of serving in our great wars. He need not mention names, but there were gallant and distinguished officers of great age at the head of the list who in the course of nature could not be long among us, and to place them compulsorily in retirement would be a great affront and a most uncalled for and unfair proceeding. The only able officers exempted were those who had served at the Admiralty or discharged duties in connection with the government of the navy, and of these the number affected was very few, for nearly all had hoisted or would hoist their flags. As regarded the Controller of the Navy, nobody could say that the duties which he discharged were not equal in importance to those of any officer with his flag hoisted. What became, therefore, of the objections to this scheme, which at small cost provided a self-acting system for accelerating promotion in the navy? The stagnation, as he had stated on a former evening, was at present so great as to call for the adoption of some such measure. For the last ten years twenty-four commanders on an average had been promoted to be captains; according to the present state of the list not more than half that number could expect promotion during the next few years. There were first lieutenants still on the list who had served faithfully ten to thirteen years in that grade; and everybody acquainted with the navy must know that no officer ought to remain in that station for anything like such a period of time. As a matter of necessity, then, the Admiralty were driven to propose a scheme. Many gallant officers, no doubt, would be retired under its provisions who, given the opportunity, would have distinguished themselves equally with others; but having arrived at a time of life when they had no longer the prospect of becoming active, useful flag officers, they were placed in no worse position by retirement, having their pay and rank secured to them. There was no greater injustice in fixing the limit for rear admirals at sixty five and for full admirals at seventy, than there was at present in putting the limit for captains at sixty and for rear admirals at sixty-five. If rear admirals were continued on the list till seventy, what prospect was there of having useful and energetic vice and full admirals? The matter was a very difficult one, the Admiralty had given it their best consideration, and he implored hon. Members, because they disapproved merely of a certain limit of age, not to reject a scheme calculated greatly to benefit the navy.

SIR JOHN PAKINGTON said, that just before his retirement from office he had drawn up a plan based on the principle of retirement by age, and he had never changed his opinion that the good of the service required the adoption of that principle. Extremely unwilling, therefore, to offer opposition to any plan brought forward with that end in view, he yet saw serious objections to the scheme proposed by the Government. He felt it was open to serious objection on account of its requiring vice and rear admirals to retire at an earlier age than seventy, which was the lowest he had proposed. How was it to be ascertained, and who was to be the judge, whether an admiral was physically unfit for service? By his plan all flag officers were to retire at seventy, and he could not understand why a rear admiral should retire at sixty-five and a full admiral at seventy. He would refer to a case with which the noble Lord must be familiar—that of Rear Admiral Hall, of the *Nemesis*, who had served his country in all parts of the world, and had been wounded twice. That gallant officer was now a rear admiral, and if he did not hoist his flag before he was sixty-five years of age, he would have to retire at that early age. If the system was to be carried out, it should be carried out fairly and impartially; there should be no exemptions of any kind. Approving generally the principle of retirement by age, he therefore disapproved the proposal to retire vice admirals at sixty, and rear admirals at sixty-five years of age. He had no wish to enter into a comparison of the plan which he himself had proposed, and that which was now introduced by his noble Friend; but he thought if hon. Members referred to the former they would find that the noble Lord had not accurately represented its provisions. He did not propose that these gallant gentlemen should go on the retired list, but that there should be two lists, on to one of which they should go, the other being for retired officers. He could not understand on what principle his noble Friend proposed an exception in favour of the officers who had had the good fortune to be in the Admiralty and connected with the Government. The rule of retirement ought to be carried out with impartiality, and he objected to its being complicated with fifty-three exceptions.

ADMIRAL ERSKINE said, that the first question to be considered before discussing the propriety of spending £12,600, was whether the principle of compulsory retirement by age should be first applied to officers in the navy. In the navy the physical powers of the officers were less taxed than in the other branch of the war service. If this principle was to be introduced into one branch, it ought to be carried out in the army also. Again, why was an exception to be made in favour of officers who had held positions in the Admiralty? If a man was to be taken as incapacitated for the public service because he had reached a certain age, why should the rule not be applied even to the First Lord of the Admiralty? He presumed, however, that, notwithstanding a very long tenure of office, a First Lord, on retiring with a Government, would look forward to again serving his country in the same capacity. The fact was a man aged seventy, with a good constitution and moderate habits, was a younger man than one aged fifty with a bad constitution and of indifferent habits. He objected to the plan as merely a deception, by which the country got nothing. If an officer was merely to be transferred from one list to another, while he still received honours and emoluments as if he had not been changed, nothing would be saved to the nation. The notion of reducing the flag list to eighty-five, as proposed, was the merest delusion, because the old officers removed were only placed upon another list, and went to swellthe numbers of the navy before the public.

ADMIRAL WALCOTT remarked that he would in the first instance place himself in a fair position on the attention of the House, by saying that he was not personally concerned, nor could be benefited by the present vote; in fact, every successive Board of Admiralty having for long years past precluded him from following up his profession. He could not, therefore, be misunderstood when rising on the present occasion to raise his voice against any compulsory retirement of officers proposed. He denounced the proposal as being in character most unfair and unjust, discreditable to the Admiralty in proposition, and one which it would be in his opinion unworthy of the House of Commons to sanction, inasmuch as it was to the prejudice of men who had risen to high distinction by meritorious and gallant exploits, and who would have their hearts broken by being placed on a compulsory retired list. On the other hand, the country would gain nothing by the measure—

their seniority in rank and pay being to remain the same as it would have been had they remained on the active list; consequently, he felt compelled thus most decidedly to object to the naval service being made an exception by the application to it of an invidious rule which it was not proposed to apply to the army or to the Civil Service. He, however, should be glad to support, and that with all his heart, a scheme which would have the effect of promoting lieutenants who had been long in active service to the rank of commander, and, similarly, commanders to the rank of captain.

MR. HANBURY-TRACY said, he agreed with the gallant Admiral who had just sat down that this scheme would inflict great hardships upon many brave and excellent officers, who had not only the will but the ability to continue their services to the country—men who were fully capable of active service, and who, therefore, naturally disliked to be placed on a retired list. The measure would bear very hard upon many old admirals who naturally looked forward to hoisting their flag, or obtaining a seat at the Admiralty Board. The noble Lord had stated that there would be fifty-three exceptions to the general rule, but he had forgotten to mention that there were other admirals, some of whom had served their country well, but who would be compelled to retire if this scheme were adopted. He sincerely hoped that the noble Lord would either omit the seventh clause, which made the exceptions, or give some satisfactory explanation on the subject.

MR. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, that the proposal to place rear admirals on the retired list at the age of sixty-five was a most monstrous proposition. It was simply ridiculous to say that an active, able, clever officer, who was sixty-five years of age, should be turned out of the navy (for that was the real meaning of the retired list) because he arrived at the rank of rear admiral. The past history of the achievements of the navy showed that men had commanded fleets with the most consummate ability, and with the greatest success, at seventy-five and eighty years of age. The 12th of April was approaching, and that was the anniversary of a great naval battle, which was fought by an admiral aged eighty-two. And yet they were told that a rear admiral must be compelled to retire from the service at sixty-five. This was a question, not of sentiment and sympathy, but of common sense. How lately was it that a statesman had passed from among them who had, at eighty years of age, directed the affairs of the country with unrivalled genius, who possessed the regard and esteem of the House, and the confidence of the country? And why should a rule be applied to the navy which was not applied to the House of Commons? This, too, was a most cruel proposition, because it was retrospective. If it were passed it would commit the country to conduct neither just nor generous, and which he was sure the people neither desired nor approved.

MR. AYRTON said, he wished to call attention to the Select Committee in 1863, on which he and several other Members of the House sat, and which pursued its inquiries during the whole of the Session. The Report of the Committee was discussed word by word, and on almost every paragraph a division took place. The conclusion arrived at was a very satisfactory one, but it was entirely adverse to the scheme now submitted for the consideration of the Committee of Supply. The Committee upstairs had had the advice of several First Lords of the Admiralty, and other officers of distinction. They had examined a large number of the most competent professional witnesses, and had discussed the question in all its bearings. It was, therefore, necessary before the conclusion come to by that Committee was departed from, that the Committee of Supply should have a very clear explanation from his noble Friend of the grounds which induced him to bring forward the present scheme. His noble Friend ought to dispose *seriatim* of the reasons assigned by the Select Committee for the conclusion at which they arrived. The Committee of Supply ought not to deal hurriedly with this question, which involved the system of promotion and retirement in the navy and would give rise to a great many considerations. It was an extraordinary thing that the navy was organized in a manner calculated to startle the mind of any person of ordinary intelligence. In the first place, promotion in all the lower grades of the navy was largely influenced by favour, and any person who had good connections and friends, rapidly attained the rank of captain. When any one had attained that rank he was further promoted according to seniority till he attained the rank of admiral. It had happened that persons having great connections were brought upon the list of captains at an early age, and they then got the benefit of seniority, while other persons who had not the advantage of family connections were not advanced to the rank of captain, and consequently did not get the benefit of seniority till much later in life. The first effect, therefore, of a system of compulsory retirement by age, would be that those who had family connections would be quite secure from its operation, while those who, having no family connections, had come on the list of captains later in life, would be forced out of the service to make room for the others. The present state of things was greatly to be deplored. He, and a late Member of that House, Sir John Hay, were the only Members of the Select Committee who brought forward or supported any scheme by which merit should be recognized in the higher ranks of the navy, but they had found themselves in the most humble majority. In his opinion, the Committee of Supply ought not to enter upon the particular proposal now before it without going fully into the whole system of promotion and retirement, which was a scandal and a disgrace to the country. He believed that the system in the French navy was exactly the reverse of ours, no opportunity being given for promotion in the junior ranks by favour. Indeed, as the officers of subordinate rank were withdrawn from public notice, it was thought right in the French navy that they should be promoted according to merit. What, again, would be the general effect of the scheme just submitted to the Committee? He did not think it was at all satisfactory to have the estimate framed for one year only, for it was important to know what would be the accruing and accumulative effect of the scheme during a series of years. The noble Lord ought to have appended such a calculation to the Vote itself, as merely verbal explanations were far from satisfactory. Any scheme of the kind would not be practically useful. They all knew that, whenever an emergency arose, the First Lord of the Admiralty must take the list and go down it until he came to an efficient man, and what the service required was, when they had got him, to give him the rank necessary for the discharge of his duty. He protested against this hurried mode of dealing with so large a question. The Select Committee held that it was undesirable, in the interest alike of the service and the public, that a scheme of compulsory retirement like this should be carried out, but their opinion had been overruled by the Admiralty.

Admiral SEYMOUR said, that very few men would consent voluntarily to be placed on the shelf, and he, for one, was opposed to the scheme of compulsory retirement, particularly when the principle was not applied to other professions. It was not applied to generals in the army, or bishops in the church, or Judges in the law, nor did he see why the naval profession should be singled out by being retired at a certain age. If, however, it were thought necessary that compulsory retirement should take place the proposal of the Government was, he thought, far better than that of the right hon. Baronet (Sir John Pakington).

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, that one would think from the remarks of hon. Members that this was the first time compulsory retirement had been heard of for the navy. The fact was, however, that there were a great number of other officers who were subject to retirement, and all the Government proposed was to extend the principle of age retirement to flag officers. If it were fair for one it was fair for all. The difference between the scheme of the present Government and that of the right hon. Baronet (Sir John Pakington) was that the latter was extremely distasteful to those officers who had served in the great wars, and the present Government came to the conclusion that it was not necessary to make such a proposition then. Objections had been taken to one detail of the present scheme and another, but the question was whether the House was prepared to go to a very large expense for the purpose of keeping up the flow of promotion in the navy. The hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton) knew nothing about the navy. Of course he said this in a friendly sense, but it was difficult to get non-professional men to enter into the details of these questions. They must promote officers while they were young if they wanted an effective service. No doubt in former days men of family were too much preferred, but there was no one who knew anything of the navy who would not admit that the present system of promotion was exceedingly fair, or who would assert that officers were promoted now merely because they belonged to influential families. During the last ten years the Admiralty had promoted on an average twenty-four commanders a year to be captains, and the state of the list was that there was a prospect of only having eleven instead of twenty-four. Of lieutenants they had promoted thirty-seven a year, and the prospect now was of being able to promote seventeen a year. If the Committee wished to know how incompatible this state of things was with the welfare of the service let them turn to the *Navy List*, where they would find lieutenants of ten, twelve, fourteen, and fifteen years' constant service, and yet the Admiralty were unable to promote them to be commanders. The Admiralty had an opportunity of doing something now and at a small cost. What they proposed was simply to extend the scheme of compulsory retirement now existing in other branches of the service to flag officers. They proposed certain exemptions, which had been objected to, but he was certain that, if he had proposed to include officers like Admirals Sir William Parker, Sir George Seymour, Sir Thomas Cochrane, and Lord Fitzhardinge, and other old and distinguished officers, the House would not have been satisfied with the scheme. That was the reason why the right hon. Gentleman (Sir John Pakington) had not carried his plan. The present Government had steered clear of this rock, and proposed to exempt those who had hoisted their flags, while all future flag officers would be put on this retired list when they came to the specified age. Let the enforced retirement be for those who had not served in the great wars, but while these great men were alive do not let them be forced into retirement.

MR. AYRTON said, he wished to know whether the practice of selecting officers below the rank of captain for promotion still existed; and whether admirals, on hoisting their flags, had still the right of appointing an officer?

LORD CLARENCE PAGET: Yes. The practice was to promote by selection until they came to the rank of captain. That was the converse of the French system. The French admirals were selected by choice, and the juniors partly by chance and partly by seniority. He did not say that if we had to form the navy afresh the present practice would be established.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 88; Noes 70: Majority 18.

House *resumed*.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow;*

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

COURT OF CHANCERY (IRELAND) BILL.

[BILL 19.]

(*Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [16th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed.*

SIR FITZROY KELLY said, he must object to their proceeding at that late hour (quarter to twelve) with a measure of so important a character.

MR. WHITESIDE said, he concurred in the objection, and moved the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Whiteside.*)

The House *divided:*—Ayes 55; Noes 99: Majority 44.

Question again proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

LORD CLAUD HAMILTON said, he moved the adjournment of the House. He complained of the way in which it was unfortunately the usage to bring Irish questions on for discussion. The Bill which the Government now proposed to read a second time at ten minutes to twelve o'clock contained 193 clauses, and he would ask the House, as a deliberative assembly, whether it was possible for them at so late an hour to do justice to the measure. He must further state that the Bill, under the mask of a great arrangement, would, in reality, perpetrate a great Government job, inasmuch as its operation would be to create a Vice Chancellor a place worth £4,000 a year, thus adding to the legal establishment in Ireland, which was notoriously already overmanned. He knew he should have the support of the senior Member for Brighton (Mr. White) in resisting a proposal in which a question of such importance as a matter of economic arrangement was involved at so late an hour of the night. It should be introduced at a time when it would have deliberate discussion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Lord Claud Hamilton.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) said, he thought the House would be surprised to learn that a measure which had been stigmatized by the noble Lord as a Government job had been framed with the view of carrying out the recommendation of a Royal Commission, consisting of some of the most distinguished men both in Ireland and in this country. The noble Lord had, doubtless, great experience in Chancery reform; but the names of the Commissioners and the fact that they had unanimously reported in favour of such a proposal as that under discussion would, he thought, relieve the Government in the opinion of every impartial man from the charge which he had made. The Report was signed by, among others, the present Master of the Rolls, Lord Romilly, by the right hon. Francis Blackburne, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland, Mr. Brewster, the right hon. Joseph Napier, who, if he were sitting on the Benches opposite, would naturally be surprised to hear that Bill characterized as a job, by Mr. Justice Willes, Mr. Baron Hughes, the late Sir William Atherton, Sir Roundell Palmer, and Sir Hugh Cairns. It was hardly credible that such men would have lent the sanction of their names to a job. As to the allegation that it was unreasonable to ask the House to proceed with the discussion of the Bill consisting of 193 clauses at that hour, he could only say that the vast majority of those clauses involved merely matters of detail. The principle of the Bill—which had on two previous occasions been fully discussed—which had last Session passed the second reading, and only been lost in Committee through the species of obstruction offered by hon. Gentlemen opposite—was simply whether the office of Master in Chancery should be continued in Ireland or a Judge substituted instead, whose duty it would be to manage the whole of a case coming before him from beginning to end, and the law be thus assimilated as far as possible to that which prevailed in England.

MR. WHITESIDE said, that while entirely acquitting his right hon. Friend of any intention to mislead the House with respect to the real facts of the case, he must point out that a noble Marquess in another place (the Marquess of Clanricarde) who had taken it into his head to become a Chancery Reformer—had moved for a Commission, which was appointed in 1854, and on which he (Mr. Whiteside) had declined to sit, as he disapproved of a Commission consisting of fifteen or seventeen Members. It had reported that the business of the Incumbered Estates Court should be put into Chancery. A Committee was subsequently nominated to investigate the validity of that recommendation, and he found on that Committee the names of Sir James Graham, the right hon. Edward Ellice—one of the keenest men of his day—Mr. Walpole, Mr. Henley, Sir Erskine Perry, and other men of first-rate capacity. Many years ago the House of Commons determined not to be cheated by the lawyers, and selected two laymen to be Members of the Committee to insure the thorough reform of the Court of Chancery. That Committee investigated the question, the Attorney General of the Government of the day in the chair, who, although he acted most fairly, was overruled. The Commission afterwards instituted sought to overthrow the decision of the Committee. He had the highest respect for the names of the Gentlemen composing that Commission, but his judgment was not to be influenced by mere names. In the last Session there were one or two divisions in the House of Commons on the subject, showing very clearly that the House was of opinion that it was not necessary to create new Judges in Ireland. There were three Judges in the Landed Estates Court, who were also Judges in Equity, but he was not sure that one would not be able to discharge the duty now devolving upon them. Hon. Members were now told that they were obstructives if at twelve o'clock at night they stated their opinions upon the costs of the suitor, concerning which not one question had been asked of any witness by the Commission. The costs of the suitor according to the procedure proposed by the Commission would be one-half greater than those now entailed upon him. The Lord Chancellor of the present Ministry had declared in the other House that the costs of an action in which but £500 was involved, absorbed nearly the whole of the money. Much had been said upon the subject in England; but the representatives of Ireland were not even to be heard in reference to it. His hope was that the same fate which had overtaken the Bills introduced in the two previous Sessions of Parliament would overtake that now before the House.

MR. SULLIVAN said, that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) had made statements in regard to the Bill which were not borne out by its provisions. He had stated that fifteen new places were to be created; but that was a most egregious mistake, seeing that four only were to be created by the Bill, while it abolished several. It was not a Bill, too, founded simply upon the opinions of the Commissioners, whose names had been mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman, but it rested on the approval of the whole equity profession in Ireland. It was of the greatest importance that the law of Ireland should be assimilated to that of England; and the conclusion he had arrived at from his own experience was, that the present administration of equity law was most disastrous. His right hon. Friend had not met the Bill on its merits. Some time ago the proposal was made to abolish the office of Master. For some years the equity jurisdiction in Ireland had given rise to many abuses, and most of these sprung from the jurisdiction of the Masters, and the number of appellate tribunals by which their decisions in small suits could be corrected. In Ireland there was but one opinion in the legal profession, and that was that the Master in Chancery ought to be abolished; yet the right hon. Gentleman set himself up against all the other authorities, and said he would not have the Bill. Up to the year 1850 the Chancery practice in England and Ireland was identical. After that time a new system was introduced for Ireland which had ever since given the greatest dissatisfaction. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman himself proposed to abolish the office of Master, and to create three Vice Chancellors, and yet he objected to this Bill as expensive, while it only proposed to create one Vice Chancellor. Even last year the right hon. and learned Gentleman proposed a Bill to appoint two Vice Chancellors. [Mr. WHITESIDE: I proposed to appoint two of the Masters.] That explanation only made the matter worse, because Mr. Napier and the right hon. Gentleman himself brought in a Bill to abolish the office of Master on the ground that it was pernicious.

MR. GEORGE said, he rose, not for the purpose of prolonging the discussion, but to correct his right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Lawson) on a matter of fact. From what his right hon. Friend had stated, he should be disposed to infer that he had not read his own Bill. From the very clauses of the Bill it would be seen that it was proposed to appoint a Vice Chancellor with one chief clerk and two junior clerks; in addition to that, the Master of the Rolls was to have power to appoint a chief clerk and two junior clerks, and there was further power given for the appointment of a chief clerk and two junior clerks for the Lord Chancellor. [Mr. LAWSON: If the Treasury consents.] He most sincerely hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's attention would be called fully and fairly to the Bill, which would make an additional charge upon the public funds of £12,700, while it preserved in full as long as they lived the salaries of the Masters who were to be discontinued. It was quite true that his right hon. Friend (Mr. Whiteside) by the Bill of last year proposed to create two Vice Chancellors, but one of them was to be an existing Master, and the other a Judge of the Landed Estates Court, as it was considered that two Judges would be quite sufficient for a long time to discharge the duties of that court.

MR. S. B. MILLER said, he had referred to the Report of the Commission upon which the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Lawson) had relied as conclusive, and he there found that it was appointed in the first place to inquire into certain matters "with a view to reduce the cost of suitors and the expenditure of public money." The second branch of the inquiry was with a view "to assimilate as far as practicable the administration of justice in England and Ireland." Now, he could state without fear of contradiction that the Commission overlooked altogether the first branch—namely, the question with reference to the cost of suitors and the expenditure of the public money, and confined themselves merely to the second branch—namely, the assimilation of the practice and procedure in both countries, because the Commissioners themselves stated that when they had inquired into the latter point they thought it right to make their Report. The Report, then, on which the Attorney General for Ireland so much relied was utterly valueless as regarded the important points of the cost to the suitors and the expenditure of the public money.

THE O'DONOGHUE said, that he objected to the discussion of Irish Bills at such a late hour.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he thought it useless to prolong the discussion, and he would agree that the Order of the Day should be postponed till Wednesday.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question again proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Debate arising; Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday.*

MILITIA PAY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Dodson, Bill to defray the Charge of the Pay, Clothing, and contingent and other Expenses of the Disembodied Militia in Great Britain and Ireland; to grant allowances in certain cases to Subaltern Officers, Adjutants, Paymasters, Quartermasters, Surgeons, Assistant Surgeons, and Surgeons Mates of the Militia; and to authorize the employment of the Non-commissioned Officers, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Dodson, The Marquess of Hartington, and The Judge Advocate General.

ECCLESIASTICAL LEASES (ISLE OF MAN).

On Motion of Mr. Baring, Bill to amend the Law respecting Leases by Ecclesiastical Corporations as far as relates to the Isle of Man, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Baring and Mr. Bruce.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 80.]

SHANNON RIVER.

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire into the manner in which the Drainage and Navigation of the River Shannon has been carried out under the direction of Her Majesty's Government, and to report what steps should be taken to complete the works for which a compulsory levy of £300,000 has been made on the adjoining counties:"—Colonel French, Mr. Childers, Mr. William Ormsby Gore, Mr. Acland, Lord Dunkellin, Colonel Vandeleur, Sir Edward Dering, Sir William Jolliffe, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Laird, Mr. Pollard-Urquhart, Mr. Dudley Fortescue, Mr. Agar-Ellis, Mr. Cave, and Lord Burghley:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 20, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Took the Oath*—The Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

Select Committee—On Salmon Fisheries (Scotland), The Earl of Mansfield and The Lord Polwarth *added.*

Public Bills — *First Reading* — Consolidated Fund (£19,000,000) *; Parliamentary Oaths Amendment * (54).

Third Reading—Mutiny,* and *passed.*

CATTLE DISEASES ACT—EXTENSION OF TIME.—QUESTION.

The Duke of MONTROSE asked the intentions of the Government in respect of the Transport of Cattle by Railway after the 25th of March. The noble Duke said, that by the Act recently passed the prohibition of railway transport extended only to the day named, but the Government had power to continue it by an Order in Council. As the time was so near it really was incumbent on the Government to give some notice to the public of the course it was intended to pursue. Incidentally the question was raised last night in the other House of Parliament, and it appeared that the Government had not then made up their minds with respect to the continuance of the prohibition. To-night, however, he had heard that the question had been again raised, and the Government had announced their determination to continue the prohibition until they were able to issue Orders in Council, which would also regulate many other points connected with restrictions on the movement of cattle. It was most important that the prohibitive Order should be continued. When the prohibition was first proposed it was objected that there would be many difficulties attending the prohibition of the transport of cattle, and that it would be impossible to supply large towns with meat. However, it had been found in practice that there were no difficulties in carrying on the trade under the enforced prohibition. The meat trade had been carried on without interruption, the towns had been well supplied, and in reality no inconvenience had been occasioned. In fact, although prices rose in some places for a week or two after the prohibition took effect, since then they had been falling, and last week the return of prices in London showed that they were absolutely not only lower than they were a week or two ago, but that they were lower than they had been since the 1st of January. That showed that no harm had resulted from prohibition. He believed, moreover, that the prohibition had had a most salutary influence in checking the disease, and that if it were removed we should at once lose whatever benefit it had conferred. The Return showed that the numbers of cattle attacked in the last four weeks respectively had been 10,300, 8,000, 6,300, and 5,800, the last number showing a diminution upon the first of nearly one-half. He thought that it was the restriction upon removal that had caused this reduction, and that slaughtering, although it might have had some effect, had not been in operation sufficiently long to affect the Returns appreciably. He wished also to know what were the intentions of the Government with respect to foreign cattle? According to the Act, foreign cattle must be slaughtered at the port of landing; but the operation of that provision would cease on the 15th of April, a day or two after the termination of the Easter recess; and if this restriction, as well as that on railway transport, ceased to operate, the disease would be disseminated throughout the country. He desired that the prohibitions should be continued until the Government could issue further Orders in Council; but uncertainty as to what was going to be done would cause great inconvenience and injury to the public.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH said, he desired to call the attention of the Government to a practice said to be resorted to, and which was an evasion of the law. He was informed that a considerable number of cows had been imported weekly into London; they were landed on the river bank, and thence they were conducted to metropolitan dairies and shippons, without being exhibited in any fair or market. In all probability many of the cows would shortly calve, and the calves would be dispersed through the country, unless the prohibition of railway transport were renewed. Independently of that, they might be sent over the large area of the metropolitan district, and in this way great danger would be incurred. He believed that the practice, if not actually illegal, was an evasion of the law, and was fraught with much danger.

EARL GRANVILLE was understood to reply that it was perfectly legal to remove cattle with a licence to any part of the metropolitan district under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Board of Works, but he had no information as to the number of licences which had been given. He could not agree with the statement that no inconvenience had arisen from the prohibition of the transport of cattle by railway. In the face of overwhelming complaints of inconvenience, the Government were of opinion that absolute prohibition should not be continued any length of time, and that it would be better to substitute for it a permission to remove cattle on railways under certain restrictions and precautions. It was not so easy as the noble Duke seemed to imagine to draw up Orders on this complicated question, and it might be doubtful whether one could be issued before the 25th of March; and even could one be issued it was better that it should not come into operation simultaneously with its issue, but that some time should elapse to allow the public to familiarize themselves with its provisions. In the meanwhile, the Government thought it desirable that the prohibition of the traffic on railways should continue until such Order came into effect. It was impossible to say how far the reduction in the number of animals attacked was to be attributed to the prohibition of railway transport, and how far it was due to the slaughtering of diseased cattle. It was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill in the other House tomorrow for amending the Act 11 & 12 *Vict.* c. 107, in order to give fuller powers to the Privy Council.

THE EARL OF ELLENBOROUGH should have supposed that, after all the trouble which had been taken, both by their Lordships' House and the House of Commons, with respect to the Cattle Plague Bill, the Government had by this time made up their minds on this important subject. In three days the Select Committee of their Lordships' House had made the Bill into what he considered a very good measure; but now he understood that after all the trouble that had been expended upon it, the Bill had been withdrawn in the other House. To him it was a matter of the greatest astonishment that they had not been put in possession several days ago of the measure which the Government intended to introduce. For the last seven days Her Majesty's Ministers had been employed in doing nothing. Now, the inconvenience of this was infinite, because during this particular week, and especially yesterday and to-day, most of the Quarter Sessions had met, and he apprehended that nearly all of them would be in a state of uncertainty as to what Her Majesty's Ministers intended to do. At present everything was in a state of confusion, because the Quarter Sessions and other local authorities required some guiding principle, and yet had no indication given to them of the final and permanent intentions of the Government.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON thought, that the statement of the noble Earl was rather an extraordinary one. He concurred with the noble Duke who had spoken from that side of the House (the Duke of Montrose), that absolute prohibition of cattle traffic on railways would be the best provision, at all events for the present, because it appeared that there had been already a diminution in the amount of disease, and it was much to be feared that it would revive in all its intensity unless the Government laid down some very stringent rules with respect to the removal of cattle. The essence of the whole matter, however, was, that the licences should be granted upon conditions of such a nature as to place the movement of cattle on a proper footing. If they were allowed to be issued carelessly, loosely, and without sufficient restrictions being imposed upon the parties empowered to issue them, nothing but abuse could follow. It appeared to him that effectual precautions ought to be taken for cleaning the cattle trucks on the different lines of railway; and this would be rendered all the more necessary if the removal of cattle by railway were to be again authorized. The cleansing of these cattle trucks ought, in his judgment, to be inspected by a Government official; indeed, the Home Secretary had drawn up a clause providing that this should be done under the superintendence of persons appointed by the Board of Trade, or by the local authorities. Some such provision ought to form part of any Government scheme. A week ago he complained that the Returns issued by the Veterinary Department were very inaccurate. It was stated by the noble Earl (Earl Granville) in the answer which he volunteered that some new arrangements would be made in regard to them. The last Returns, however, which had been placed in his hands on the previous day, showed that no fewer than 255 inspectors had failed to send in their Returns. Now, it was needless to point out that statistical Returns were valueless if they were incorrect, as no useful inference could in that case be drawn from them. He would suggest that if the Privy Council could not get all the Returns weekly, it would be desirable to delay their publication until the expiration of a fortnight, as they might then appear in a perfect form. His noble Friend (the Duke of Marlborough) had drawn attention to the smuggling of cattle into this country, and it was certainly desirable that such a system should be put down by a proper system of inspection.

Earl GRANVILLE said, he hardly understood what the noble Earl meant. The importation of cattle was free, and animals being landed might, under an Order in Council, be taken to the market and there branded for slaughter. It was impossible for the Government to undertake the responsibility of superintending that operation. With regard to the complaint which had been made as to the Returns, he believed that there would be cause for great dissatisfaction on the part of the public if their publication were to be delayed. The noble Earl had stated that he could draw no inference from the Returns in their present form; but certainly the noble Duke had contrived to draw some inferences from them, and it should be borne in mind that if a certain number of inspectors did omit to send in their Returns in time, they were, nevertheless, included in the next week's publication, so that the information given was sufficient to enable any one to ascertain the real progress of the disease. The inspectors who chiefly failed in sending their reports in time were those who were resident in districts where the cattle plague was raging fiercely.

The Duke of MARLBOROUGH said, it was clearly intended that no animals should be imported from abroad, except for the purpose of being exhibited in the market, where they were to be branded, to indicate that they were destined for immediate slaughter. But what was the case? Animals were imported which were not exhibited in the market, but were smuggled to the premises of the dairymen. These beasts did not come within the rule applying to animals which were permitted to be moved under a permit from the police authorities, and he was afraid that under the existing Orders there was no mode of dealing with them. The point was one deserving of the attention of the Privy Council.

The Earl of AIRLIE said, he had given notice to ask, whether the Government intend to bring in any further measure for the purpose of checking the Spread of Contagious Diseases among Cattle? An announcement just made by the President of the Council, if he understood it rightly, made that Question unnecessary. He wished, however, to know what steps were to be taken with the view of securing the due cleansing of trucks in accordance with the regulations on that head? Were railway companies to be required to produce a certificate, or was the penalty for non-compliance with the regulations to depend upon information coming from any person who might choose to become an informer?

Earl GRANVILLE said, that the noble Earl (the Earl of Airlie) had understood him correctly. It was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to-morrow to amend the 11 & 12 *Vict.* c. 107, with the view of giving much greater powers to the Privy Council. He was glad the noble Earl had put a Question on the subject of the cleansing and disinfecting of trucks. It was quite impossible for the Government to take upon themselves the whole responsibility connected with this matter. They could only do so either by employing a whole army of inspectors, who should be spread throughout the country, or by directing that all the trucks should be brought to London or some other centre. He believed it was better to leave the railway authorities to carry out the regulations, subject to the penalty imposed for non-compliance. As soon as the Privy Council passed the Order on the previous day, a communication was sent from the Privy Council Office to the railway companies; and the companies returned an assurance on the subject, which, as far as assurances went, was satisfactory. The Board of Trade would appoint an officer to go to the offices of the various companies in order to see what steps had been taken to carry out the regulations. It was open to any one to give information on the subject.

THE EARL OF LICHFIELD said, that the noble Earl had said the prohibition as to the removal of live cattle by railways would be extended until the new Order in Council was issued. From that statement he was afraid there was a probability of delay in issuing the Order; and he wished to impress on the noble Earl the President of the Council the necessity which existed for some Order in Council to be issued as soon as possible, inasmuch as the time was approaching when it would be absolutely necessary for parties who wanted to procure live stock for their farms to have permission to bring stock from other counties.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION—AUGMENTATION OF BENEFICES.

MOTION FOR RETURNS.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK *moved* for Return of all Benefices augmented and Districts and new Parishes endowed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England out of the Common Fund by Grants and Benefactions met by Grants, from the Constitution of the Commission to the 15th March 1866, including the Cases in which the Grants have been voted by the Commissioners, but have not yet been confirmed by Order in Council.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH suggested that the words "together with the amount of such Grant and of Benefactions met by Grants" be inserted.

Motion amended, and *agreed to.*

House adjourned at Six o'clock,
to Thursday next, half
past Ten o'clock.

Earl Granville

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 20, 1866.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRIT ISSUED—*For* Wigan, *v.* Major General the hon. James Lindsay, Manor of Northstead.

SELECT COMMITTEE — On Art Union Law, *appointed;* Mortality of Troops (China), *appointed;* Divorce Bills, *nominated.*

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee — Resolutions* [March 19] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolutions in Committee*—Transubstantiation, &c., Declaration Abolition.

Ordered—Commons (Metropolis); Transubstantiation, &c., Declaration Abolition; Inns of Court.*

First Reading—Railways (Guards and Passengers Communication)* [81]; Transubstantiation, &c., Declaration Abolition [82].

Second Reading—Poor Law Officers Superannuation (Scotland)* [66]; Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland* [72].

Committee—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* [75]; Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment* [77].

Report—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* [75]; Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment* [77].

Considered as amended—County Courts* [47]; Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Act (1860) Amendment* [56].

Third Reading — Exchequer Bills and Bonds* [46].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

THE PROPOSED NEW LAW COURTS.

MR. M'CULLAGH TORRENS said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Works, Whether the Board will take possession of the land required for the New Law Courts during the present year; whether it will be taken possession of gradually; and, if so, what portion will be taken during the year?

MR. COWPER said, in reply, that much would depend upon the progress of the negotiations. For a portion of the property those negotiations were nearly concluded, but possession of the land could hardly be obtained within a year from the present time. Instructions had been given to take every care to render the removal of the tenants as little inconvenient as possible.

REMOVAL OF MANURE AND OFFAL IN THE METROPOLIS.—QUESTION.

MR. THOMAS CHAMBERS said, he would beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the difficulty now existing throughout the Metropolis of getting rid of manure and offal; and whether any steps are contemplated by the Government for facilitating their removal?

MR. BARING, in reply, said, that great complaints had been made in different parts of the metropolis by the contractors for the removal of refuse that they were unable to remove it in consequence of the orders, or rather the notices, published by various local authorities. The Secretary of State for the Home Department yesterday received a letter from the Board of Works, Holborn district, containing the Report of the Medical Officer of that district, in which he stated that in consequence of the interpretation put by the contractors upon those notices they were unable to remove any of the stable manure, and that even, which was hardly credible, they declined to remove the street sweepings of the metropolis because there possibly might be some horse dung mixed with it. The difficulty appeared to have arisen principally from a misconception of the effect of the notices issued by the local authorities. He had obtained the notices of those authorities of which complaint was made, and found that their terms by no means prohibited the introduction into their district of any such articles as were not likely to propagate infection. It seemed to be impossible that any local authority could regard the introduction of all refuse from the metropolis as likely to propagate the cattle plague, when the week before last there were only fourteen cases of the cattle plague in the whole district of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and last week there were only twelve. In one instance, however—that of the county of Kent, the local authorities had issued notices which were decidedly beyond the powers given them by the Orders in Council—namely, by absolutely prohibiting the introduction of all dung from the metropolis into their county. By no construction of the Orders of Council could such a notice be, in his (Mr. Baring's) opinion, brought within the powers given to local authorities. His right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had suggested to Sir John Thwaites, the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, that the latter should communicate with the local authorities of those counties whose orders were supposed to prevent the removal of those materials from the metropolis in order to put an end to the misapprehension that existed. He believed he could answer for the county of Kent that they would be willing to cooperate with the local authority of the metropolis in arranging some system by which the accumulation of such deposits as might possibly be injurious to public health might shortly be put an end to.

ARMY—MILITARY STORE DEPARTMENT.
QUESTION.

MR. OLIPHANT said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is his intention to inquire into the present condition of the Military Store Department, with a view of insuring greater economy and efficiency in its administration; as well as of redressing the just grievances of which the Officers of that Department complain; and which arise from stagnation of promotion, inequality of rank, and inadequate representation of the War Office?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, I understand it to be the wish of my hon. Friend that I should give some explanation of the answer which I made to him the other evening in replying to some observations of his as to certain alleged grievances of the officers of the Military Store Department. I find upon reference to the report in *The Times*, that I stated—"The Commissariat Department was organized with higher grades of officers, simply because the duties were considered to be more responsible." I only wish to explain, with reference to that statement, that no doubt the opinion of those who were engaged in the reorganization of the Military Store Department was that the duties of the Commissariat were at that time of a more responsible nature than those of the Military Store Department. I did not feel called upon then, and do not feel called upon now, to enter into the consideration of the question whether that was the case or not. That was no doubt the opinion of those who organized the two departments, and I must say that in my opinion, looking only at the difference of position of the officers of the two departments, there is no necessity for re-organizing the Military Store Department, with the view of assimilating the system in that department to that of the Commissariat. With regard to the latter part of the Question of my hon. Friend, I admit, as I admitted the other evening, that there are some circumstances affecting the position of the officers at present in the Department which are deserving of inquiry. But if the Question of my hon. Friend points to any inquiry taking place outside of the War Office, I must inform him that I do not think that would be expedient. All the questions involved may be very properly inquired into in the War Office, but I cannot pledge myself as to the time when such an inquiry would take place.

LAW OF CHARITIES (IRELAND.)
QUESTION.

Mr. LEFROY said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the defects in the present Law of Charities in Ireland have been brought under the notice of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, or of the Irish Government; and, if so, whether it is the intention of Government to introduce a Bill to remedy those defects during the present Session?

Mr. CHILDERS replied that that Question had been brought by the Treasury under the notice of the Irish Government.

CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS.
QUESTION.

Sir ARTHUR BULLER said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, in the event of the Bill for the Representation of the People passing into Law, it is the intention of the Government to introduce any measure in relation to corrupt practices at Elections; and, if so, when?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I am afraid, Sir, that I can give no more definite answer to this Question than to refer to the words which I used in my opening statement on the subject of the Electoral Franchise. I then meant to state this on the part of the Government, that the state of the case was certainly very urgent, that we had no reason to believe that the present provisions of the law had been efficient for their purpose, and that consequently it was obviously a primary duty of any Government, in considering the questions connected with the representation of the people, to direct their attention to the subject of the law relating to corrupt practices at elections. But, urgent as on the one hand the question is, it is on the other hand likewise attended with greater difficulty; and I am afraid to give any pledge in respect to it, except the conditional one on the part of the Government that it will be their duty to endeavour to frame a measure upon it when the proper time comes, which certainly, if for no other reason, cannot be until we have obtained whatever additional knowledge and evidence the investigations of the present Session are likely to furnish.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.—QUESTION.

Mr. H. B. SHERIDAN said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to bring in any Bill during the present Session of Parliament to amend the Law relating to Weights and Measures so far as the same refers to the use of local and customary measures and the present mode of imposing and applying the penalties and costs under the Act 5 & 6 *Will.* IV. c. 63?

Mr. CHILDERS said, in reply, that it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce a Bill with respect to weights and measures which would deal with the standard and the proper modes of verifying the copies of the standard; but there was no intention to bring in a Bill with respect to the special points to which the hon. Gentleman has alluded.

TRANSIT OF CATTLE BY RAILWAY.
QUESTION.

Mr. READ said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If the transit of cattle by Railway will be prohibited after the 24th of March?

Sir GEORGE GREY: Sir, Her Majesty's Government do not think that it would be expedient to continue for any considerable time the prohibition of the movement of cattle by railway. They think there ought to be substituted for prohibition permission to move cattle by railway, subject to restrictions and precautions, with the view to prevent the spreading of the disease. These restrictions will form part of the general Order now in preparation, but it may not be possible to issue that Order in sufficient time to bring it into operation by the 25th instant, and it is desirable that there should be some interval between the Order being issued and its coming into operation, so that its provisions may be generally known. We think that it will be right to continue the existing prohibition until that Order takes effect.

COUNTY VOTERS.—QUESTION.

Mr. DU CANE said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reference to the Representation of the People Bill, Whether it is intended that the occupation franchise for County Voters should, in the case of non-resident claimants, be joined with premises of £6 value, as stated in the Bill itself, or of £7 as stated by him in his speech on moving for leave to introduce the measure?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, in reply, that the intention of the Government was stated with perfect accuracy in the Bill—that £6 was the sum at which the intended occupation value was to stand.

ST. PANCRAS WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY.

QUESTION.

Mr. WILBRAHAM EGERTON said, he wished to ask the President of the Poor Law Board, Whether it is true that lately, at St. Pancras Workhouse Infirmary, a child was laid out for burial some hours before its death; and, if so, whether any inquest has been held or inquiry instituted by the Poor Law Board into the circumstances of such a case?

Mr. C. P. VILLIERS said, in reply, that the metropolitan inspector had been directed to inquire into the matter referred to, and that in consequence of seeing grounds for believing the truth of the statement, the inspector had made arrangements for an inquest to-night, and would himself institute an inquiry to-morrow.

DISEASES IN SHEEP.—QUESTION.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, What are the rules to be applied in Scotland with respect to the slaughter of infected sheep? It was stated the other night that the same rule would apply to sheep as to cattle; but if that were so, he should be glad to know what course should be adopted in the event of the disease breaking out on a large hill farm?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that if the hon. Member referred to the Act of Parliament, he would see that it directed the slaughter of all infected animals.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, he wished to know whether, if on a large farm the disease should make its appearance, the inspector would have the power of ordering any number of sheep to be slaughtered?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, the hon. Gentleman ought to have put that Question when the Bill was under discussion. The interpretation of the Act is not left to the Government, but to the judicial authorities.

VOTERS (CITIES AND BOROUGHS CONTESTED ELECTIONS.)

MOTION FOR RETURNS.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he rose to move for Returns of the total number of Voters in every Borough and City in England and Wales in which there was a contest at the last Election, the number of Voters of the working classes in such Boroughs, the number of Voters of all the other classes collectively, the number of Voters who voted for any Candidate at the last Election, and of the number of Voters who did not vote at all in such Boroughs?

Mr. C. P. VILLIERS said, that he would not offer any opposition to the production of the Returns asked for, but that he did not think it would be possible to obtain the information.

FISHERY (SCOTLAND) ACT (1862.)

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. HENRY BAILLIE said, he rose to move that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Fishery (Scotland) Act (1862). He was anxious to explain to the House that this Act did not profess to make any alteration or change in the law of Scotland, but to be a declaratory Act; and so anxious was the Government to avoid even the appearance of interfering with the rights of property, that a special clause was introduced into the Bill, providing that none of the acts of the Commissioners appointed to carry out the provisions of the Bill should interfere with any of the rights existing at the time it was passed. The object he now had in view was to ascertain whether that provision in the Bill had been fairly and properly carried out, and whether the operation of the Bill had responded to the intentions of the Legislature. If the Bill was intended to declare and to interpret the law, he could not understand why the interpretation of the law should not have been intrusted to the ordinary legal tribunals of the country. The interpretation of ancient Scotch statutes had been left to the discretion of three gentlemen appointed by the Crown—one an Irishman, another an Englishman, and the other, he believed, a Scotchman; and he did not know that any one of them previous to his appointment to this office possessed any knowledge of Scotch law. This was a dangerous course, for which he did not believe any precedent was to be found except in times of revolution. It was well known that the Revolutionary Government of France appointed Commissioners to supersede the ordinary tribunals of the country, and to confiscate the property of the nobles; but this was the first occasion, in Great Britain, at least, on which Commissioners had been appointed by the Crown, vested with powers to confiscate the property of one class of Her Majesty's subjects for the benefit of another, without any appeal to a Court of Law. What was the grievance which rendered this exceptional legislation necessary? It was this—The old Scotch law prohibited the use of fixed engines for taking salmon in different parts of rivers, but it did not clearly define forbidden ground. By some persons the forbidden ground had been called an estuary, and the word frequently occurred in the new Act, but there was no such word in Scotch law, and no interpretation clause defined its meaning. An estuary was an arm of the sea, but it was never contended that fixed engines were prohibited in the arms of the sea in Scotland, and the Lord Advocate had declared before a Committee of the House of Lords that such engines in the estuaries of that country were as old as the oldest Scotch statutes. If, then, the question submitted to the Commissioners was a legal one, it became all the more necessary that men well qualified to perform the duties which they were called upon to discharge should be selected, because it was obvious that on the Commissioners everything depended. If they were men of high character and perfect impartiality, without any preconceived or predeclared opinions on the question they had to decide, and if they possessed a competent knowledge of Scotch law, then, indeed, justice might be done. But if the Commissioners possessed none of those qualifications, then, indeed, it was manifest that injustice and spoliation might be the result. What the actual result had been he should state to the House; but before he did so, he should like to say a few words with respect to the qualifications of the Commissioners. One of them, Mr. Ffennell, had been well known in Ireland, where, he believed, he had been acting as Commissioner of Fisheries, and where he was notorious for the vigorous warfare he had carried on against stake nets and fixed engines. So much was that the case that when in 1860 certain parties in Inverness introduced a Private Bill called the Ness and Beauly Fishery Bill, to put down stake nets and fixed engines on the Moray Firth, Mr. Ffennell appeared as a witness before the Committee on the Bill, and having been examined by Serjeant Bellasis, gave it as his opinion, knowing nothing whatsoever, as he himself admitted, of the locality, or of Scotch law, in the most offhand manner, while he looked at a map, that the stake nets should be removed seventeen miles down the river and placed at its mouth. Disputes with respect to property in Ireland were sometimes settled by shooting the landlord. Mr. Ffennell seemed to have as little hesitation about sweeping away the rights of proprietors, as others had in sweeping away the proprietors themselves. When it was rumoured that that gentleman was about to be appointed one of the Commissioners, he had called the attention of the Secretary for the Home Department to the fact that he had prejudged the question upon which, as a Commissioner, he would be called upon to decide, and the right hon. Gentleman stated that he had not been aware of the circumstance, and that, if true, Mr. Ffennell would not be a fit person to appoint. A few weeks afterwards, however, Mr. Ffennell was appointed, and every one interested in the inquiry at once saw that they must make up their minds to accept a foregone conclusion. It was necessary, however, that certain forms should be gone through. The Bill prescribed that the Commissioners should hold a Court at Inverness, and that they should take evidence before they came to a decision. A Court was accordingly held, and, if the statement were true which he found in a memorial addressed to the Home Secretary by the proprietors interested in the matter, and he had no reason to doubt it, it was evident that the Commissioners were not even acquainted with the ordinary mode in which legal inquiries ought to be conducted. In that memorial it was asserted that the inquiry which commenced on the 18th of July was not carried on with that care or deliberation, or with that knowledge on the part of the persons inquiring, which the interests involved demanded. Any man present was allowed to volunteer an opinion; none of the witnesses were sworn; there was no clerk or shorthand writer, and the only record of the proceedings was the hurried notes taken by the Commissioners themselves, and those had not been published. Both on the 18th and subsequently, the Commissioners refused to allow the objectors to put in further proof, although it was asked under peculiar circumstances; and although the Commissioners had professed themselves most anxious to afford all parties full opportunity of being heard, they refused all access to their notes, even for the purpose of bringing forward proper objections. Now, he would ask the House, whether that was a sort of tribunal before which the rights of property could fairly be tried, or which ought to be allowed to take upon itself the duty of reversing the decisions of the Court of Session in Scotland? What was the object of the inquiry? It was to take evidence in order to enable the Commissioners to decide according to the law, which law had been very clearly laid down by the Lord Advocate in the evidence which he had given before the Committee of the House of Lords. The Lord Advocate said that, in the law of Scotland, the line of division in the sea appointed as the limit within which fixed nets were prohibited was not a definite line, and was not necessarily at low-water mark; but it was a line to be fixed by a jury in each particular case. He did not believe that any one would be prepared to gainsay that statement. The sea-coast proprietors adopted that interpretation of the law, and accordingly raised their evidence upon it. They produced the evidence of a number of fishermen who had fished the water between Inverness and Fort George, and these men proved that they caught there in the greatest abundance every kind of sea-fish, including cod, mackerel, haddock, skate, turbot, and herring. One man stated that he had taken fourteen score of cods in one haul, within two or three miles of Inverness. The evidence of scientific men who had been called in to examine the coast was also produced. In order to prove that all the animals and vegetables were marine Dr. Gordon was examined, and his opinion was corroborated by Mr. Robertson, who was sent down from the Geological Society. In the third place, they produced the evidence of scientific witnesses, who analyzed the water taken in every part of the Firth; but all this evidence produced no impression on the Commissioners, who decided the question as Mr. Ffennell decided it two years previously when he was before a Committee, and almost in the same words. It might be said that there was a precedent for this exceptional legislation in the appointment of a Commission in regard to the Irish fisheries. But there was this important difference between the two cases—that in regard to Ireland the Bill gave an appeal from the decision of the Commissioners to the Court of Queen's Bench. The consequence was that a great number of appeals was made, and many decisions of the Commissioners were reversed by the Court, and declared contrary to law. Who were the Commissioners whose decisions were so declared to be illegal? The very same men who were now acting in Scotland without any appeal whatever. What the Scotch proprietors required, was to be placed on the same footing as their Irish fellow-subjects, and to have the right of appeal from the decision of the Commissioners to the Court of Session in Scotland. The result of the proceedings of the Commissioners had been that, in spite of the clause in the Bill, which declared that none of the proceedings of the Commissioners should interfere with any rights existing at the passing of the Act, which were enjoyed by grants or Royal charters, or which had existed from time immemorial, gentlemen had been deprived of their rights and property, which they had possessed for centuries, and which had been confirmed to them by decisions of the Court of Session. People might as well tear up their grants and title-deeds, and leave all their property to the mercy of the Commissioners appointed by the Crown; for that was what had been done in this case. If it were for the public good that the law of Scotland should be changed, by all means let it be changed; but let the change be effected by Act of Parliament, and let the persons whose rights were taken away be properly compensated. That was the law of England, where a man's property was not allowed to be taken away even for a public benefit without compensation. If he could prove that one of the upper proprietors previous to the passing of this Act had enjoyed a fishing for which he received £1,200 a year, and that the first year after the passing of this Act it produced about £3,000, would it not be just that he should be made to compensate those who had been deprived of their rights for his advantage? The Lord Advocate had taken great interest in this question. He had shown great industry, and no doubt was anxious to settle it by doing equal justice to all parties; but in this he had unhappily failed. He could not, then, be suprised if those who were injured should cry out. He only hoped that it was not the intention of the Government to stifle their cries, or to pass the Bill which had been introduced in another place for the purpose of confirming all the acts of the Commissioners, without giving to those whom the Commissioners had already doomed some opportunity of stating before a Committee the reasons why this sentence should not be carried into effect. What he asked was inquiry. If the Government would give an appeal from the decision of the Commissioners he would withdraw the Motion; if not, he should press it to a division.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Fishery (Scotland) Act (1862)."—(*Mr. Henry Baillie.*)

Mr. ELLICE said, he wished, before the Government gave any answer to the appeal of his hon. Friend, to say a very few words, The arguments which his hon. Friend had used were the same that had been urged in opposition to the passing of the present Act and the appointment of the Commissioners. They were also used to prevent legislation in the same direction in the case of Ireland. He might be allowed to say that the Commissioner whose name had been alluded to by his hon. Friend was a gentleman of very great experience on the subject of fisheries, and the manner in which he had dealt with it under several Acts had given general satisfaction. The recent Act, so far from causing dissatisfaction in Scotland, had worked exceedingly well. It was quite true that, in the case represented by his hon. Friend, in the Ness and Beauly River, certain rights that were infringements on the old public right of fishing-charters had been extended most prejudicially. The case of their fisheries was fully discussed at the time of the passing of the Act; and in that Act a special provision was inserted that chartered rights should be protected. Nothing had been done under this Act except under authority of the law of Scotland. The proprietors of engines insisted on keeping them up. They were prosecuted before the Law Courts in Scotland, and, as they had no defence, judgment was given against them. The fisheries had been gradually decreasing; it had been found necessary to legislate on the subject and to appoint Commissioners; and, so far as he knew, no complaint had been made. Of course, certain interests had been aggrieved; but the complaints had no more reference to Scotland than to England and Ireland. If anything was to be done in that direction it could only be by retrospective legislation, by undoing what had already been done for the three countries. No case had been made out for the interference of the Government. Besides, a Bill had been introduced in another place, and referred to a Select Committee, before which parties aggrieved might state their case.

Mr. CUMMING-BRUCE said, he supported the Motion. The fisheries had become more and more deteriorated. In the Findhorn, he recollected when fish were taken of 20 lb., 25 lb., and 30 lb. Now the average was 7 lb. or 8 lb. Notwithstanding that the Commissioners knew of all these allegations, they took steps which had had the effect of reducing the produce 75 per cent. Besides this, the powers of the Commissioners to do what they had done had been challenged; and, according to the Lord Advocate, not without good reason. He thought it was very desirable, before discussing the Bill which had been referred to a Select Committee in the House of Lords, to ascertain what had been the real working and operation of the law in Scotland, and he hoped, therefore, that the Motion of his hon. Friend would be agreed to.

Mr. DYCE NICOL said, that as a proprietor both of coast and river fishing in Scotland, he had had an opportunity of seeing the working of the Act, and could bear testimony to the benefit which had accrued therefrom to the salmon fishery. The proprietors were under great obligation to the Commissioners for the careful manner in which they had fixed the boundaries, and these had been generally acquiesced in by the parties concerned. He was glad to say that it had resulted in a great increase of the size and number of fish, both as regarded the upper and lower waters. He hoped the House would not agree to a proposition which would disturb a question so beneficially settled.

MR. BARING said, the real question before the House was not whether a Committee should be appointed to investigate the particular cases to which attention had been called, but to decide whether a clause should be introduced into the Bill now in progress in another place which should allow an appeal to a Court of Law against the bye-laws made by the Commissioners under the Salmon Fishery (Scotland) Act of 1862. It appeared to the Government that that was not a proper subject for a Select Committee. The hon. Gentleman opposite would have ample opportunity of raising that point when the Bill came down for consideration, and they, therefore, could not agree to the Motion. He hoped for himself that the House would not adopt the clause which the hon. Gentleman had suggested, for he believed that the legislation of the last few years on salmon fisheries had acted very beneficially, and he trusted that the principles on which it was based would not be departed from. Few persons acquainted with the subject would, he thought, agree with the remarks of the hon. Gentleman on Mr. Ffennell, who had conferred the greatest benefits on the salmon fisheries of the three kingdoms. It must be satisfactory to the House to find that out of 102 bye-laws which had been framed by the Commissioners there were only two which the hon. Member was able to challenge.

MR. ESMONDE said, that great injustice had been committed by the Salmon Commission in Ireland, where charters that had existed for centuries had been ruthlessly swept away. Indeed, the legal member of the Commission, Mr. O'Connor Maurice, gave in his resignation rather than be a party to such proceedings. The Act itself was an injustice, and had been denounced by Lord Westbury, then Lord Chancellor. He should vote for the Motion as a stepping-stone towards a similar inquiry for Ireland, and could relate several instances, if necessary, of the hardships which had been inflicted by the Commission in that country.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he thought it rather illogical for the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken to vote for an inquiry into the working of the Scotch fisheries, where vested interests had been respected, on the ground that in Ireland such interests had been violated. He was glad the Government had resisted the Motion, for it was well known that the Act was passed in consequence of an alarming diminution in the salmon fisheries, owing to practices which were altogether unknown at the time the charters were granted. The Legislature very properly interfered, and prohibited the placing of fixed engines within the limits of estuaries, respecting at the same time, as far as possible, existing rights. In fact, the legislation of which complaint was made only limited the estuaries on the principle laid down by Lord Eldon in the case of the Tay. The Government of the day had a difficulty in deciding the real rights of the various owners. The matter of which his hon. Friend chiefly complained might be remedied by clauses to be inserted in the Bill when it came down from the other House. No case had, however, been made out for the repeal of the Act, which had done great good in Scotland.

MR. BLAKE said, it had been stated by the hon. Member for the county of Waterford (Mr. Esmonde) that chartered rights which had existed for centuries in Ireland had recently been swept away, but he (Mr. Blake) affirmed that not a single chartered right had been abolished in Ireland under the operation of the existing Act. So far from the Fishery Act interfering with the chartered weirs in Ireland, it had greatly improved them; and he could name many that were extremely valuable. Numerous unjust claims to private fisheries have been set aside, and the result was that the general fishery had increased. Since he had been a Member of the House, no Bill had ever passed which was calculated to do so much good as the Irish Fisheries Act. Never had a Bill been more called for, and never a law more fairly administered. A few years ago the fisheries of Ireland did not amount to more than £300,000 a year, whereas now, before seven years were over, they would reach more than four times that amount. Formerly the fisheries afforded to 300 or 400 persons a precarious existence, but now about 2,000 persons obtained from them an exceedingly comfortable living.

MR. HENRY BAILLIE said, he had quoted the evidence of the Lord Advocate given before the House of Lords to show that stake-nets were of great antiquity. [SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: But not drag-nets.] Boethius, about the year 500, described not only a stake-net, but also what was a modern stake-net. The Under Secretary had not attempted to disprove his assertion that Scotland was at a disadvantage as compared with Ireland. He did not want to do away with the Commissioners, but only to obtain a power of appeal. If it were proper to give an appeal against their decisions in Ireland, ought not the same liberty to be enjoyed in Scotland? The hon. Gentleman had alluded to what he (Mr. H. Baillie) had said about Mr. Ffennell. He had no doubt in the world that he may have given satisfaction to some parties, and he seemed to have done so to the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Mr. Dyce Nicol). The hon. Member was a great angler, and Mr. Ffennell had given great satisfaction to all anglers by the way he decided. All he (Mr. H. Baillie) said was that, having given such evidence as he did a few years before his appointment, he ought not to have been appointed. If the Government would allow an Amendment to be inserted in the Bill, giving an appeal from the decisions of the Commissioners to a Court of Law, he would withdraw his Motion, otherwise he would go to a division.

Mr. BASS said, that so far was Mr. Ffennell from always leaning to the anglers, that he was sometimes accused of being rather too tender to the assumed rights and usurped powers of the people at the mouths of rivers. If the House gave the power of appeal there would be continual contentions. The right of appeal given by the Irish Act was very partial in its operation.

Motion made, and Question put,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Fishery (Scotland) Act (1862)."—(*Mr. Henry Baillie.*)

The House *divided*:—Ayes 58; Noes 164: Majority 106.

PUBLIC MONEY.—STANDING ORDERS.

MOTION TO AMEND.

Mr. AYRTON said, that he proposed to the House to take into consideration two of their Standing Orders, with the view of introducing certain Amendments into them. One of the Amendments of the Standing Orders would be a necessary consequence of the adoption of the other, and he should therefore direct the special attention of the House to the first of his Resolutions. He had always understood that one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution was that the House of Commons should never of itself take the initiative in granting or voting away public money, or in increasing the national burdens by levying any tax upon the people, but that it should leave the proposal of such measures to the Crown. It was the duty of the House of Commons to sit in judgment upon the measures introduced by the Crown, and, if possible, to reduce and diminish the taxation on the people rather than to attempt to increase the amount of their burdens. Were he to revert to the ancient practice of the House, it would be easy for him to show that the course of proceeding in centuries past was such as rendered it impossible for any private Member to have departed from this constitutional principle. In those times, the House was required merely to take into consideration messages from the Crown, requesting aid for some public purposes, to grant that aid by their vote, and to appropriate the sum granted to the particular objects in view, so that no opportunity was given to any private Member to introduce any plan of his own by which any addition might be made to the charges upon the people. At the beginning of the last century, however, an entirely new system was introduced, and the Exchequer was constituted to act as a trustee between the Crown on the one hand, and the House of Commons and the people on the other. The consequence of this new arrangement was, that the plan was adopted of separating the levying of taxes from their appropriation by Votes of the House. The result was that there was always a balance of public money lying in the Exchequer, which in the course of time Members began to regard as being very much at their own disposal. To prevent the mischief likely to arise from the growing disposition of private Members to establish a claim upon such balances remaining in the Exchequer a Standing Order was made in 1813 to the effect—

"That this House will receive no petition for any sum of money relating to the public service but what is recommended by the Crown."

That Order undoubtedly was short, and its language was limited, but he believed that the House had given its words a very large and general application. The practice was to allow no step to be taken which would tend to impose any public burden except on the requisition of the Crown. But in 1852 a Committee was appointed to revise the Standing Orders, and it was then thought desirable that this Order should be brought more into conformity with what had been the recognized practice, so that the authority of the Speaker might not be questioned in consequence of the words not being sufficiently comprehensive. The following Standing Order was made, in accordance with their recommendation:—

> "That this House will receive no petition for any sum of money relating to the public service or proceed upon any Motion for granting any money but what is recommended from the Crown."

The House had always upheld the principle embodied in the Standing Order, but while they had carefully locked the public gate of the Treasury they had unfortunately forgotten to guard a secret mode of access which had in reality admitted of greater inroads upon the public funds than would probably have been committed if there had been no Standing Order at all. The ingenuity of some hon. Member had led to the discovery that what could not be accomplished by direct attack might yet be obtained in another form, and Bills which contemplated demands upon the public money were brought in containing a clause which provided that the necessary expenses should be defrayed out of money hereafter to be voted by Parliament. He had consequently often found in Committee of Supply that, however objectionable some of these propositions might be, their opponents were informed that opposition was useless, because Parliament had previously agreed upon the advisability of carrying them out. It was therefore perfectly idle for Members to come down night after night to criticize and watch the Civil Service Estimates, because when any expenditure was objected to it was urged in reply that the faith and the credit of the country had been pledged to the outlay. Propositions made in a contingent form for the establishment of offices to be provided for by sums to be provided by Parliament, had led to a considerable expenditure of money, but at the same time avoided the principles and practice of the Constitution. This sort of evasion should be got rid of. Indirect attempts should be placed on the same footing as direct attempts on the public purse. It was self-stultification to recognize a Standing Order and at the same time evade it. These proposals sometimes assumed the form of humanity and benevolence, and, when humanity and benevolence failed to supply the necessary funds, applications were made to Parliament for gradually increasing Votes of money, until the demands upon the public purse really became serious. He had found from experience that the opposition of private Members to proposals involving outlays of public money were attended with great inconvenience and embarrassment, because whoever opposed applications for public money would be sure to entail upon himself much odium. The consequence was, that those who felt an inclination to be generous at the public expense had full scope afforded them for the exercise of their generous propensities. By passing such a Standing Order as he had mentioned, it would become the Speaker's duty to inform hon. Members who started such proposals that in so doing they were out of order, and Ministers and private Members would thus be relieved from the odium and unpopularity which they often drew upon themselves by their opposition. To prove that these results were not imaginary, he might state that having on one occasion opposed a demand of this kind which he regarded as impolitic and unjust, he had received an anonymous letter of a threatening character advising him not to prosecute his opposition any further. He had noticed, too, on another occasion that several Gentlemen who were professed advocates of economy when outside the walls of the House had absented themselves when a Motion of this kind was under consideration, and on inquiry he learnt that they had been induced not to attend by the arguments of an influential deputation by whom they had been waited upon, whose interest it was to obtain certain legislation at the public expense. It required a good deal of nerve to resist solicitations from interested persons outside the House. There were recent illustrations to prove how expedient it was to get rid of this sort of indirect attack upon the Public Treasury. As an instance of the measures to which he referred, he would allude to one, and the House would see that he would not be likely to deal unfairly with a measure on the back of which was his own name. He might, perhaps, as well add that—while like most sponsors he must, he supposed, be held answerable for its sins—he had had no opportunity of correcting its vices. The Bill to which he referred provided that a Commissioner should be appointed at a salary of £2,000, that numerous other officials should be constituted, and that the necessary expenses should be defrayed out of any money that should be provided by Parliament for the purpose. The measure to which he referred was on turnpike roads, and though the principle advocated by the hon. Member who had introduced it (Mr. Whalley) was undoubtedly a good one, he feared that the hon. Gentleman's discretion was not quite equal to his zeal. He might again illustrate his argument by referring to the Bill introduced by an hon. Member (Mr. Hunt) under the influence of the great calamity which at present prevailed in this country. By this Bill a sufficient number of persons were to be appointed for the purpose of seeing that all cattle trucks, slaughterhouses, and so on, should be disinfected, and the expenses of carrying out the enactment were to be defrayed out of money to be provided by Parliament for the purpose. If this great army of inspectors had been appointed, the Government, and the Committee itself, would have degenerated into mere clerks, whose only duties would have been to vote the money which was demanded. Not, however, content with the contemplated outlay, an hon. Member, while the Bill was under discussion, proposed that all the damages caused by the cattle plague should be paid out of funds hereafter to be provided by Parliament for the purpose. He thought they had reached the utmost limit of the abuse he was condemning. One private Member had by a Bill he had introduced to the House gone so far in usurping the functions of the Crown as to propose to regulate the retiring pensions which were to be paid to public servants. He could conceive of no function more peculiarly that of the Crown than determining the salaries of public servants, and afterwards asking Parliament for the wherewithal to meet the expenditure incurred. But in the case to which he referred a private Member proposed to fix the establishments of the Crown by an Act, and to leave the Crown and Parliament hereafter to go through the ceremony of asking for and providing the money, for the Bill he referred to, like all its kindred, concluded with a clause ordering that the money should be paid out of such sums as Parliament might from time to time grant for the purpose. If the system were permitted to continue, private Members might take upon themselves the control of any Department of State. Any private Member could bring in a measure to regulate and re-organize the whole of the Departments of the State, merely by putting in at the end of the Bill clauses providing that the money should be paid out of money voted by Parliament. He asked the House to look at this matter, as it affected every Member. The principle he proposed to uphold by his Motion was one of vital importance. To depart from it was unconstitutional. He had remarked a passage in one of the public journals a few days ago, where reference was made to an incident bearing upon the subject before the House. The late Sir Robert Peel was asked his opinion upon the draught of a new Constitution for Greece. On examining it he put his finger upon what appeared to him to be a blot in it. By its provisions the House of Representatives would have been allowed to propose grants of public money; and he expressed the opinion that a Constitution framed in imitation of England's could not possibly be carried out unless the House of Representatives were prevented from taking the initiative in making grants of public money or imposing taxes upon the people. Recent events had verified the soundness of his observation. A crisis had recently been brought about in consequence of an attempt to violate that principle of the Greek Constitution, and the Sovereign had succeeded in vindicating it by obtaining an ascendancy over his Parliament in an attempt to deal with the public money except on the requisition of the Crown. It might be said that it was not desirable that they should tie their hands, and every Member doubtless believed he was wise and acute enough to be trusted; but, in his opinion, nothing was more desirable than that a public assembly should tie their hands in this respect. It was useless for the House to attempt to reduce the expenses of the country after they had been increased by Acts of Parliament brought in by private Members; and it was idle to complain of the evil consequences brought upon them by the system to which he had referred. The whole responsibility of increasing public expenditure should be thrown upon Her Majesty's Ministers, and Parliament should not permit them to say they would have been more economical had it not been for the House of Commons. He trusted the House would not charge him with presumption in having brought the matter forward; the suggestion was not entirely his own, but it accorded with his ideas. It had long been the practice of the House not to interfere in providing money for the general service of the country; and they had now to deal with what they might deem the escape in the restrictions imposed, and to say whether they would stop this gap and suppress these indirect applications for money by a Standing Order. He had been led to consider the matter by a very sensible increase in the Civil Service Votes three years ago, and though he could not then bring the subject forward he had deeply studied it. He would remind the House that the Civil Service Estimates had increased of late years from £4,500,000 to £9,000,000. If they wished to keep down these Estimates they must strike at the root of the evil, and cast upon the Government the whole responsibility. In this way only could the desired end be attained of keeping down the burdens of the people. He moved—

> "That the Standing Order of the 25th of June, 1852, relating to applications for public money, be repealed, and, in lieu thereof, that this House will receive no Petition for any sum relating to Public Service, or proceed upon any Motion for a grant or charge upon the Public Revenue, whether payable out of the Consolidated Fund or out of monies to be provided by Parliament, unless recommended from the Crown; that the Standing Order of the 25th of June, 1852, relating to public aids or charge upon the people, be repealed, and, in lieu thereof, that if any Motion be made in the House for any aid, grant, or charge upon the Public Revenue, whether payable out of the Consolidated Fund or out of monies to be provided by Parliament, or for any charge upon the people, the consideration and debate thereof shall not be presently entered upon, but shall be adjourned till such further day as the House shall think fit to appoint, and then it shall be referred to a Committee of the whole House before any Resolution or Vote of the House do pass therein."

MR. MARSH seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I rise, Sir, for two reasons—first, because the Motion of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton) appears to meet with the general approval of the House; secondly, to tender my thanks to my hon. Friend for having taken upon himself the task of raising this subject. I will not say one word after what has been so fully and ably stated by my hon. Friend upon the possible mischiefs of this practice of private Members bringing forward measures affecting the public revenue. It is a very young practice, but one which is sure to grow, as all evil things do grow in this evil world. I will just point out, in case it should be apprehended that the House is parting with any portion of its valuable liberty, that that is really not the case. The House will continue to have full authority to pronounce an opinion upon every proposition made by the executive Government, whether negatively or positively. I do not deny that it may be the business of the House to point out public charges which it may think ought to be incurred. It may be done by Resolution or by an Address to the Crown. The latter is the ancient and truly constitutional method of expressing the desire of the House that some public charge shall be incurred. The effect is not ultimately to bind the House, but to throw on the Crown the responsibility of accepting or declining that Address. The House, even after the Motion of my hon. Friend may have been adopted, will be just as free to discharge its duty in recommending any public charge as it is at the present moment. No doubt that is a privilege which the House exercises with very great reserve, and I am certain that great and wise reserve will continue. In reference to what my hon. Friend mentioned respecting the Constitution of a foreign country in Sir Robert Peel's time, I believe that in all cases of legislation—certainly in the great cases of legislation we have had in this House within the last thirty years for Colonial Constitutions—we have been most careful to introduce this provision. In Canada, before the present Constitution was established, the proposals by private Members to make grants of public money became so numerous and glaring that a remedy was necessary. The remedy was to introduce this provision. I believe it has been successful, and that the practice is now becoming a recognized principle of the British Government at home and in the colonies. In assisting us to stop this leak —for such it is—my hon. Friend is only giving consistent efficacy to rules which, having undoubted authority on their side, should always be our guide.

MR. WALPOLE said, he thought no one could doubt that the object of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets was in entire conformity with the constitutional practice of the House. He agreed with the Motion of the hon. Member, and thought he deserved the thanks of the House. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had remarked upon the only point of doubt which would occur to any one's mind upon the subject. It was clear that every petition and Motion for a grant of public money should, on the ground of economy, and for the safety of the people, be initiated by the responsible Ministers of the Crown. On the other hand, there were cases where they might deem it right to initiate such a Motion. For instance, in the case of a public officer who might have a wrong done him an application might have to be made to that House for redress or compensation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that was a point which might be met in two ways—either by a Resolution or an Address. He doubted whether it could be met by a Resolution, but thought it could be by an Address. There was one very great inconvenience, however, attaching to Addresses to the Crown — namely, that they were carried upon one Motion, and one only. Strongly as he would urge on the House the propriety of retaining the opportunity of addressing the Crown, even for pecuniary grants to redress a wrong done by a Minister, he would also urge on the House the propriety of having some new Standing Order requiring Addresses to the Crown, whether involving money grants or not, to be confirmed by a second decision of the House before they were finally carried. He would also observe that the Standing Order which was about to be passed was confined to two points—namely, Petitions and Motions. It was desirable to consider whether it ought not to be extended so as to meet the greatest abuse of all—namely, that in regard to Bills.

Sir WILLIAM HEATHCOTE said, he shared entirely in the feeling of gratitude which had been expressed towards the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets for introducing that subject, and also concurred in the Motion which he had laid on the table. That Motion appeared to him to meet the case of the Bills to which his right hon. Friend (Mr. Walpole) had referred. Surely the Motion even for the second reading of a Bill would entirely cover the whole of the contents of that Bill ; and still more when they came to the Committee, and the Motion there was that a clause containing a money grant should stand part of the Bill, it was hardly possible to say that that was not a Motion within the meaning of the hon. Member's proposal. The suggestion thrown out by his right hon. Friend (Mr. Walpole) as to enabling the House more maturely to consider Addresses to the Crown, was well deserving attention. Supposing such an Address to involve a grant of public money, it would seem to come under the second Resolution requiring all grants to be considered in Committee of the whole House. Be that as it might, the point was one well worthy of attention. It would then be very desirable that such an Address involving a grant of money as its consequence, should be reported from the Committee of the Whole House to the House itself, and the consideration of such Report be postponed to a subsequent day, or some other formal stage of that character be interposed, so as to enable the House to apply a check, if it thought fit, in such cases. The hon. Member's proposal, they must all agree, was a step in the right direction. They did not seek to deprive any one of an opportunity of approaching the Crown who had a legitimate ground of claim upon the Crown. What they desired was that the answer should be given by the Minister of the Crown on his responsibility. At present these Motions were made in the House, and it was the business of nobody to resist them ; and the hon. Member had pointed out how they escaped resistance. But that would be remedied by the adoption of some such plan as that now before them.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER said, that agreeing as he did with the object which the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton) had in view, he still thought his Amendment required further consideration. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the proposed alteration of the Standing Order would not tie up the hands of the House, or in any manner prejudice its privileges or its usefulness. Let him attempt to illustrate the case by a remarkable hypothesis which might possibly be realized in our history, as it had been before. Suppose the country were involved in a war, and that during its prosecution the Ministry were engaged in the negotiation of a peace. A Motion might be brought forward by a Member of that House condemning the Ministry and expressing want of confidence in them ; but the real object and gist of the Motion and the whole debate upon it might turn upon the question whether peace should be made or not. Now, although the House had no right to decide directly on the question of peace or war, there could be no doubt that it could do so indirectly by agreeing to a Motion of Want of Confidence in the Government. But such a Motion would come within the proposed Standing Order, because, by continuing the war, a charge would, of course, be imposed on the public. If, therefore, the present Amendment were adopted, he apprehended that such a Motion of Want of Confidence in the Government, under the circumstances supposed, could not be brought forward without the consent of the Ministry of the day. That was a point of sufficient gravity to induce the House to pause before it assented to the proposal now before it. It might be possible so to modify the words of the Amendment as to meet such a difficulty if it should occur; but it was easy to conceive other cases in which the same objection would arise. Perhaps it would be said that the case which he had put, and analogous ones, might be met by Members not moving a Vote of Want of Confidence, but proposing an Address direct to the Crown. That might be so; but then Members of that House ought not to be shackled in respect to the mode in which, in the exercise of their judgment, and having regard to the interests of the country, they might deem it best to bring forward a question of great importance.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN said, that the Amendment was not confined to Motions for the grant of public money, but extended to petitions in relation to any grant from, or charge upon, the public funds. The hon. Mover said it was the present law. As he (Sir Colman O'Loghlen) thought the present law ought to be altered, he wished to call attention to it. Being a member of the Petitions' Committee he could state that there was hardly a meeting of that Committee at which petitions were not rejected on account of their praying for a grant of public money or some similar informality. Among the petitions, for example, relating to the cattle plague there were some which prayed for compensation partly out of the local rates, and partly from the Consolidated Fund; and every such petition was rejected. Again, many petitions coming from Ireland, having reference to medical charities and the like, were rejected on the same ground. Why should there be any Standing Order of that kind in regard to petitions? He believed that the practice of the House was formerly that anybody might originate a Motion upon a petition, when it might be discussed. He could see great inconvenience in allowing independent Members to move grants of public money, but there could be none in allowing constituents to petition the House in reference to such grants. This matter had been discussed in the Petitions' Committee, and it was the unanimous opinion of the members of that Committee that the Standing Order was worthless. He suggested that the words relating to petitions in the proposed Standing Order be omitted.

Mr. HENLEY said, he hoped that if this Amendment were agreed to it would have the effect the hon. Member expected in lessening the public expenditure. He could not say he was very sanguine in that matter. Its effect would, he thought, be this—that if it applied to clauses in Bills it would bring back the old system of having the clauses printed in italics. The real matter, however, was this—every one now wanted everything to be done for him, everybody wanted to be paid for what he did, and everybody said that unless he were well paid it was not to be expected that it would be well done. It was like rat hunting, as soon as one hole was covered over the rats made their way through another. He did not think, therefore, that they would stop expense, although he admitted that the attempt to reduce public expenditure was a laudable one. If this proposition was to be really effectual to prevent Members bringing in Bills to do all sorts of things, and to remedy all sorts of evils, real or imaginary, the immediate consequence would be that the bringing in of these Bills would be thrown upon the Government, whereas at present the larger portion of such legislation was in the hands of private Members. One effect of the hon. Member's proposition would be the placing of great power in the hands of the Government with respect to the admission of clauses to Bills that might be introduced. He, however, considered that the Government were responsible for all such clauses, and that they ought not to allow them to pass unless they gave their approval to them. He should be glad if the hon. Member should prove successful, for he (Mr. Henley) was friendly to any thing of this kind.

Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE said, that the hole which had let in these demands upon the public money was due to some ingenious Member of the other House. The proposition of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets, if it were adopted, would administer a considerable check to a very bad practice. With respect to Addresses to the Crown relating to grants of money, he would suggest that the proceeding should not be completed in one day, and thus he thought the object of the right hon. Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Walpole) would be attained. A great difficulty arose from the wording of the Standing Order; for, after looking at it, and considering what the House was in the habit of doing, it was not easy to see how the Order and the procedure of the House harmonized. As some doubt as to the Standing Orders affecting grants of money was entertained by various hon. Gentlemen, he suggested the appointment of a Committee, comprising Members familiar with the business of the House, to take into consideration the Standing Orders as well as those points affecting them indicated by hon. Members who had spoken on the subject. He had no doubt that in this way the object they all had in view would be effected.

Mr. AYRTON said, that he did not think it was necessary to submit the Standing Orders to the investigation of a Committee. He did not intend to touch the Standing Order 320—regulating the presentation of petitions—which had been referred to in the course of the discussion. What he proposed was to take the Standing Order affecting grants of money as it was, enlarge the Bills and Motions which were prospective in their charges, and place them on precisely the same footing as if for a present charge. The change was simple, and could easily be effected. With respect to the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bouverie), the objection to it was that, as he himself and other hon. Members who took an interest in the question were now engaged on other Committees, it would be impossible for them for a long time to undertake to serve on a Select Committee to consider the Standing Orders. He hoped, therefore, his right hon. Friend would not press his suggestion.

Standing Order 25th June 1852, relating to applications for Public Money read, and *repealed.*

Resolved, That this House will receive no Petition for any sum relating to Public Service, or proceed upon any Motion for a grant or charge upon the Public Revenue, whether payable out of the Consolidated Fund or out of monies to be provided by Parliament, unless recommended from the Crown.—(*Mr. Ayrton.*)

Standing Order 25th June 1852, relating to Public Aids or charges upon the People read, and *repealed.*

Resolved, That, if any Motion be made in the House for any aid, grant, or charge upon the Public Revenue, whether payable out of the Consolidated Fund or out of monies to be provided by Parliament, or for any charge upon the People, the consideration and debate thereof shall not be presently entered upon, but shall be adjourned till such further day as the House shall think fit to appoint, and then it shall be referred to a Committee of the whole House before any Resolution or Vote of the House do pass therein.—(*Mr. Ayrton.*)

Ordered, That the said Resolutions be Standing Orders of this House.

Mr. E. P. Bouverie

COLONY OF VICTORIA.

MOTION FOR PAPERS.

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU said, he rose to move an Address to Her Majesty, humbly praying Her Majesty to cause to be laid upon the table of the House any Papers with regard to the Appropriation Bill in Victoria, in addition to those which had been already produced. If the Secretary for the Colonies should think it worth while to accept from him any praise, he would with all his heart award the right hon. Gentleman the highest encomiums for the course which he had taken in this matter, and for the two most excellent despatches which adorned the book he held in his hand. The Governor (Sir Charles Darling), although open to the severest censure, had been recalled; he was now *functus officio.* He was a dead man, as it were, and therefore he (Lord Robert Montagu) would not think it worth his while further to allude to him, except where the narrative obliged him to mention his name. Between nine and ten years ago the colony of Victoria received its Constitution. Under that Constitution two Chambers were formed. The Upper and the Lower Chambers are both elective; but the franchise for the electors of the Upper Chamber was high, for that Chamber was to take the place of the House of Lords in this country. Now, the colonists in their petition to the Queen alluded to the character of that Chamber. They said—

> "The Legislative Council of this colony is an elective body composed of thirty members, and is elected by persons possessed of a certain freehold or leasehold qualification, by graduates of any recognized University, by members of the learned professions, by ministers of religion, and by officers of your Majesty's military or naval service. These qualifications on the part of the electors have rendered the Council a fair reflex of the property, education, and intelligence of the community."

According to the Constitution, the Lower Chamber was elected by £10 householders; but since the Constitution was established they had the misfortune to pass a Reform Bill, and the franchise had already been reduced to an universal suffrage. His narrative would show how the people of Victoria were enjoying the blessings of democracy. There was a general election in the colony in October, 1864. The question before the country was the reduction of the tariff. Mr. M'Culloch was at that time the Chief Secretary, and he was a well-known free-trader. Mr. Michie was Minister of Justice, and he called himself "an uncompromising free trader." Mr. Higginbotham (the Attorney General) was also a free-trader, and he said he would leave the Ministry sooner than allow protection to be proposed. These were, no doubt, all honourable men; they possessed undoubted talent; they had deliberately come to the conclusion that free trade was the most beneficial policy for the country. Yet as soon as they found that the universal suffrage electors turned against free trade they were driven before the popular breeze, and had to accept protection for their policy. Now, the Governor (Sir Charles Darling) had in Despatch No. 1 to the right hon. Gentleman stated upon what the election had turned. He said—

> "If I may judge by the declarations of opinion which have proceeded from the candidates for election to both Houses, and the results of the elections, I should come to the conclusion that what is designated 'protection to native industry,' by means of levying import duties upon articles which may possibly be grown or manufactured in the colony, instead of upon those which must be derived from extra-colonial sources, together with a decrease of qualification and duration of period of service of the members of Council, are the points upon which the contests, especially at the more recent elections, have turned; and that the popular opinion has been decidedly in favour of those views."

Now, the people desired to reduce the qualification of the Legislative Council, or Upper Chamber, because their object was to make them amenable to the will of the Assembly or Lower Chamber. After these elections, and after the people had plainly expressed these views, the Ministers turned round in favour of protection. The Houses met on the 28th of January, 1865; and no sooner did they proceed to business than these free trade Ministers, M'Culloch and the rest of them, who had said they would abandon any Ministry who would dare to propose a measure of protection, introduced resolutions for a new and amended tariff of a most complicated, vexatious, and protective character. These resolutions passed the House. Immediately the Chief Secretary made this announcement—that he did not intend to embody them in a Bill, and send them at once to the Upper Chamber, but that he would proceed to levy the duties upon the fiat of the Lower Chamber, and wait until the close of the Session, when the Appropriation Bill would be introduced, and then he would tack them to that Bill. The avowed object of that irregular proceeding was to rob the Upper Chamber of its right to consider the resolutions. Sir Charles Darling, in writing home, said that there had been

> "An announcement made by the Ministers in the Assembly that it is their present intention to embody the new tariff which has recently passed that House in the principal Appropriation Act of the Session, with a view of deterring the Council from rejecting the tariff, which there is much reason to believe will meet with but little favour in that branch of the Legislature."

And at page 39 Sir Charles Darling said—

> "I acquainted you with the avowed intention of the Assembly to unite the tariff with the Appropriation Bill, mentioning that the proposed combination was considered to be justified by the precedent of the Paper Duties Repeal Bill; and adding that this was done with the object of deterring the Council from rejecting the tariff."

Let it be observed that the Ministry proceeded all this while to levy the duties, although they had not been sanctioned by the Upper Chamber, or by the Crown in the person of the Governor. Sir Charles Darling went on to repeat that the policy of the Lower Chamber

> "Is justified, generally, upon the precedent of Mr. Gladstone's proceedings in the case of the Paper Duties Repeal Act, and a considerable majority of the Assembly appear determined to support them in that policy which is, in effect, their own."

But surely the popular Assembly of Victoria in attempting to imitate the proceedings of the House of Commons was only caricaturing those proceedings, and making them worse. The Bill was not sent to the Upper Chamber until the 25th of July following, and during the intervening six months the duties were levied. What did the Upper Chamber do? They were justified in feeling indignant with the Lower Chamber, they might reasonably, and made a strong protest; they might have been excused for standing harshly on their rights. But, so far from showing any passion, they proceeded calmly in the most legal and orderly manner. They appointed a committee to search for precedents. What were the precedents which the committee found? In the first place, there was the despatch written by Lord Grey, which was intended to be the text-book of all Colonial Governments. It was written to the Governor of Jamaica in 1849, and was to be found in his book on the Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell. Earl Grey said—

> "Although I am equally aware of the cogency of the motives which induced you to assent to the Import Duties Bill, notwithstanding the clauses of appropriation attached to it, I have to instruct you

not in future to admit of any innovation on the regular and constitutional practice of keeping Revenue and Appropriation Bills separate from each other; assuming that to have been, as I understand it to be, the case, a practice as fully established in Jamaica as it has been in this country, and in the other colonies whose Constitutions have been modelled on our own. It is a practice which cannot be departed from without danger."

They also found other precedents—one of them was a Resolution of the House of Lords which was made a Standing Order in December, 1702. It was as follows:—

> "That the annexing any clause or clauses to a Bill of aid or supply, the matter of which is foreign to and different from the said Bill of aid or supply, is unparliamentary, and tends to the destruction of the constitution of the Government."

The Upper Chamber, therefore, passed a resolution that it was irregular and unconstitutional to tack a Tariff Bill to an Appropriation Bill, and that the Bill in question should be laid aside. That was done on the 25th of July. Four days afterwards, on July 29th, the Ministry, backed up by the popular Assembly, put, by means of the Governor, the screw upon the Upper Chamber. A Treasury Minute was issued to the effect that, in consequence of the action of the Upper Chamber in not passing the Bill, the payment of wages and salaries must be deferred; that no public works could be prosecuted, and that the Governor had not a right to touch a farthing of the public money. The screw thus applied was unsuccessful. It had, as we shall presently see, to be taken off in about six weeks. When the appropriation-cum-tariff Bill was rejected by the Upper House, actions were brought in the Supreme Court against the Ministers for the recovery of the duties which had been levied under the new tariff. The Chief Justice there decided that the plea of the Ministry was unconstitutional and contrary to law, and damages and costs were in consequence awarded against them. What did the Attorney General do under the circumstances? He in open court threatened that a Bill should pass the House, retrospective in its nature, which would have the effect of quashing all those judgments and robbing all the poor people of the money and costs which they had obtained at the hands of a jury. Subsequently it will be seen that this threat was carried into execution. The new duties were still levied in defiance of the court. The Ministry finding, after the lapse of the six weeks which he had already mentioned, that the Upper Chamber stood firm, resolved to remove the screw which they had imposed. The Treasury notice had been daily advertized in the papers for six weeks; they now ordered it to be withdrawn. A message was then sent up to the Upper Chamber to say, that owing to the great inconvenience to Ministers and others who received salaries, an arrangement had been made which would shortly be put in practice. What that arrangement was they soon discovered. The public revenue of the colony was paid into six banks at Melbourne. The Ministry applied to those banks asking them for a cash credit to the amount of the balance of public money in their hands. Five of the banks took counsel's opinion, and declined to comply with the request. One bank, however—the London Chartered Bank—whose sole director was Mr. M'Culloch himself, the Chief Secretary, expressed its readiness to accede to the proposal. That message was sent to the Upper Chamber on the 5th of September. On the very next day £40,000 was advanced to the Government. Immediately an action was brought against them in the Supreme Court for that amount. The Attorney General appeared and confessed judgment. The Ministry took advantage of a clause in another Act which stated that money awarded by the judgment of the Supreme Court was "legally available;" and thus this sum was transferred from the public account to the Governor's private account. These operations were repeated until they had succeeded in getting into their hands no less a sum than £500,000. Such was the miserable dodge to which a popular Ministry resorted; judgment having been confessed by the law officers, the necessary certificate was given by the Audit Commissioners, and the amount owing to the bank was repaid by issues from the public accounts. By means of these collusive judgments, all the Parliamentary funds were paid away without the sanction of Parliament. All the while, however, the Ministry were aware that they were perverting the Act from its original purpose. This is Sir Charles Darling's account of the transaction—

> "Sums have been obtained from time to time from the London Chartered Bank of Australia; judgment has been confessed by a law officer of the Crown; the necessary certificate given by the Audit Commissioners; and the amount owing to the Bank repaid by issues from the Public Ac-

count. . . . . I do not maintain for a moment that the law to which I have referred was intended to be practically applied for the purpose which, in this instance, it has been made to subserve."

The Secretary for the Colonies in his latest despatches to Sir Charles Darling made some comments on that which were deserving of approval. He said—

> "The effect was practically to transfer the public money out of the 'public account,' from which the Bank could not ordinarily issue it without the Audit Commissioners' certificate, to another account, entirely under the control of the Government. . . . By such a mode of procedure the Governor and his Government, with the co-operation of a local Bank, may at any time withdraw any amount of Public Funds from the 'Public Account' to which it is consigned by law, and place it at their own command, relieved from all those checks with which the Legislature has surrounded it."

At the beginning of October an attempt was made to put an end to the difficulty. But from what quarter did it proceed? From the Lower Chamber? No. They, on the contrary, passed three resolutions copied from Resolutions which were passed by this House, appending to them, however, another of a still stronger character, which he would read to the House. It was written neither in very good English nor in a very good spirit. Indeed, the remark as to its being written in very bad English applied to most of the documents which emanated from the popular Assembly in Australia; the Upper House being in reality the reflex of the intelligence and education of the country. The conclusion of the resolution to which he referred was as follows:—

> "This House hereby declares its determination not to entertain any further or other Bill for the appropriation of supplies for the service of the year 1865, until the rightful control of this House over taxation and supply shall have been acknowledged by the adoption by the Legislative Council (or Upper Chamber) of the tariff approved by this House and contained in a schedule to the said first-mentioned Bill."

It would be seen, then, that the Lower House had passed a resolution to the effect that until the Upper Chamber knocked under and became submissive, the popular Assembly would not send up an Appropriation Bill. To that haughty determination they seemed resolved to adhere, without taking any step to get rid of the dead lock to which things had come. It was by the Upper Chamber, representing the wealth, the intelligence, and the education of the country, that the first step towards conciliation was made, on October 3rd. They passed a resolution asking the Lower House to agree to the appointment of a joint committee to prepare a case for reference to the Privy Council, whose decision should be binding on both parties. The proposal, however, met from the Lower House with a flat denial. Thus matters remained until the 25th of October, when another resolution passed the Upper Chamber, asking the Lower House to appoint a joint committee to consider what course it was best to pursue as to the questions at issue. The Lower House replied that until the Upper Chamber gave way they would not consent even to confer with them. On the 7th of November the Attorney General's threat was executed. The Tariff Bill was separated from the Appropriation Bill, and was sent to the Upper Chamber; but it contained a retrospective clause, which would have the effect of quashing all the judgments which had been obtained during the previous eight months. It was consequently rejected by the Upper House on the 16th of November. Thereupon the Ministry took it into their heads to commit another illegal action. Mr. M'Culloch, he believed, was connected with the tea and sugar trade, as well as being a banker. The reduced duties merely on those articles were still collected, and actions were, therefore, brought against the Government because they did not collect the full amount of the duties which by law were enacted. The Government, however, resorted to still worse measures and more illegal deeds for obtaining funds. They revived a Bill entitled the Units of Entry Bill, one of the most perplexing, complicated, and vexatious systems for interfering with trade which could be devised. It had been passed some time previously only for the space of one year, had then been sent home, but had never received the Royal assent; the Secretary for the Colonies, he understood, regarded it as so bad a Bill that he wrote back word that the Royal veto would have been sent out if it could have arrived in the colony before the year for which the Bill was to last had expired. With a view to getting out of the difficulty, the Governor thought of a dissolution; and on the 21st of November he consulted the Ministers as to the policy of dissolving Parliament. The Ministers said they would not dissolve, because that would be abandoning the popular Assembly in the assertion of what they conceived to be their rights. The Governor himself used this remarkable expression—"As to dissolving, that would only aggravate the evil, because the Ministry are driven on by popular clamour." Sir Charles Darling also wrote on the 25th of September—

> "I think there is a spirit aroused just now which will scarcely be satisfied with anything short of a reform of the constitution of the Council (or Upper Chamber)."

He was borne out by facts. Numerous large meetings were got up. One of them was held in the suburbs of Melbourne on the 18th of September, and passed a resolution, as usual not in good English—the populace have as great a contempt for the Queen's English as for British law—in the following terms:—

> "That while this meeting is willing to accord to the Legislative Council the privileges of a branch of the Legislature, it is still of opinion that, looking at the irresponsible power invested in that body by the Constitution Act, and their obstruction to the popular wishes of the country, considers it advisable that an urgent, loyal, and emphatic appeal be made, without delay, to the Imperial Parliament for such an alteration of the constitution of the Upper House as will render it in some degree amenable to the popular will and control."

On the 28th of November, that is to say, a week after the Governor had consulted the Ministry, and they had advised against a dissolution, the Governor dissolved the Chambers. From the *Melbourne Argus*, which has just arrived, we find that this popular Ministry are in a state of absolute sedition; they are going about the country making speeches and saying that they will not stand the interference of England. Mr. Michie, the Minister of Justice, speaking of the British Constitution, said (as described in the *Argus*)—

> "He did not care *that* for it, suiting the action to the word, and expressing, in a tone and manner which are characteristic, supreme contempt for the opinion of the Secretary of State and of all others opposed to the policy of the [Victorian] Cabinet."

He had now finished his narrative, but he wished to comment on one or two points. They had seen how a dead lock was brought about by the Lower House levying certain duties directly they had passed resolutions in Committee of Ways and Means before the Upper Chamber had sanctioned them. It was our practice here to pass similar Resolutions, and the duties were immediately levied, before the other House had given its sanction to the measure. In 1848, in answer to Mr. R. C. Hildyard, the Attorney General of the day, stated the rule to be this—

> "If the House of Commons resolved that a given duty should be imposed upon goods before they were entered for home consumption, it was fairly to be presumed (and the practice proceeded upon the presumption) that the House would pass a Bill founded upon that resolution; and, as the Bill related to a matter of money, it was not supposed that the other House would interfere with the resolution. The Government would therefore give an order to officers to act on that resolution. He admitted that an action would lie; but before it would be ripe for investigation the Act of Parliament would have received Her Majesty's assent that "from and after that date such and such duties should be levied," and that would be a perfect answer to the action."

But suppose the other House should not sanction them? It was only in 1861 that the Lords rejected a Resolution. This fortunately did not bring us to a dead lock, because it was not for levying but for remitting duties: that made the difference, which saved us from a dead lock. The Secretary of State in one of the two last despatches in the blue book, which despatches indeed formed a manual of constitutional government, and should be studied by everyone, said—

> "The plea that taxes are levied in this country on a vote of the House of Commons before they are imposed by law is manifestly irrelevant. Such taxes are so levied because it is not doubted that the Bill imposing them as from the date of the resolution of the House of Commons on which the Bill is founded (and after which only they are levied) will become law, by the concurrence of the two other branches of the Legislature."

Suppose they did not concur, then we should be involved in a dead lock. It might cause inconvenience and unfair speculations in trade if duties were not levied immediately they were voted; but the evil of a dead lock would be far greater than this. This point was worthy of consideration with a view to the prevention of such a difficulty. The other point to which he wished to call attention was the operation of universal suffrage. A man who was a great Radical in this country, writing from Melbourne to a Liberal in this country, said—

> "I am glad to see from the home papers that the Liberals have obtained again a majority, although I have considerably altered my opinion in regard to the suffrage, which here is extended to manhood, and you will observe from the papers sent you into what this country is drifting by manhood suffrage. . . . I am sorry to think we do not have such an intellectual array of able politicians as we have at home. The most of our public men are men of no education, who pander to the most depraved tastes. . . . I can assure you that if you were here to see the evil effects of manhood suffrage, and also to think of the evils it has caused in America, it would make one pause before thinking of an extension of the franchise at home."

[Mr. CHILDERS: What name?] He supposed there was no objection to his reading the name and address, as the letter was not confidential, and there was nothing in it for which anyone could feel shame. They were J. M. Thompson, 52, Rosslyn Street, Melbourne. This letter showed what were the consequences of reducing the franchise. The House of Commons was asked to take a leap in the dark, to reduce the franchise without knowing what the real effect would be. Many had gone out from this country to America as Radicals and had soon become Conservatives there. He believed it was the famous actor Kean who went to America as a Radical and on returning said—"Give me a Nero if you will, but never give me manhood suffrage." Should not the judgment of those who had experience warn those who had never tried its effects? The *Melbourne Argus—The Times* of the colony—said—

> "The petition of the Council to the Queen will speak for itself, and will fully assert the intellectual and moral fitness of the Council (or Upper Chamber) to act as a bulwark against the attempts of those who openly avow their desire to substitute for the two Chambers at present existing one which would be an immediate reflex of popular clamour and caprice, and to which it would be impossible for a Governor, or for the wiser classes of the community, to oppose an effectual resistance."

In Victoria both the Upper and the Lower Chambers were elective. The voters who elected the Upper Chamber also voted for the Lower one; but the Upper Chamber was elected by the voters of a high qualification; to these in the election of the Lower Chamber were added the working classes. That was the only difference between the constituencies of the two Chambers. It was a rule of logic that where there was a difference of effect it must be due to a difference of cause. Here the only difference of cause was that difference between the two electoral bodies—the addition of the working classes to the electors who chose the Upper House. What, then, was the difference in effect? The Upper Chamber "which represented the intellect, the education, and the wealth" of the colony, adopted an enlightened commercial policy, showed a reverence for the law, and offered a determined resistance to all encroachments on the Constitution. The Lower Chamber, following a blind and exploded policy, exhibited disregard for the law, nay, even substituted popular caprice for the law, and overbore, like a mountain torrent, everything that stood in its way, or opposed and thwarted its will. In New South Wales there were also two Chambers, but while the Lower Chamber was elected by universal suffrage the Upper Chamber was nominated by the Governor. Another rule of logic was that where the effect was the same it was due to the same cause. With an elected Upper Chamber in the one case and a nominated Upper Chamber in the other, the Lower Chamber in both was elected by universal suffrage. In both there was the same result—a collision between the two Chambers, and the Upper Chamber overborne; for that of New South Wales had been swamped by newly created members to make it subservient to the Lower Chamber. This showed how democracy dealt with those wholesome checks which the wisdom of our ancestors invented to rein up the changing passions of men. The solemn majesty of the supreme Court was treated with defiance; the steady deliberations of the Upper Chamber met with scorn; while the Lower Chamber, blown hither and thither by the inconstant breath of popular opinion, had resorted to a blind and foolish commercial policy, and to the illegal levying of unenacted duties, to a haughty defiance of legal decisions; to forced loans and collusive judgments, until at length both sides, wearied of responsible Government, fly from anarchy to a despotic interference in their broils. The illegal loans and ship money of Charles I. might be enforced by an elected Chamber. And this was far more perilous to representative Government; because no Hampden dares to defend the Constitution against an agitated and headstrong populace. The noble Lord concluded by moving an Address for additional Papers concerning the dispute between the Houses of Legislature in the Colony of Victoria with regard to the Appropriation Bill of 1865.

Mr. MARSH said, that he had great pleasure in seconding the Motion. He would refer to circumstances connected with the establishment of Victoria as a distinct colony from New South Wales, and to the original institution in those two colonies of what was called responsible Government, though it was hardly in his power to add anything to what had been so ably stated by the noble Lord. Having resided in the colony, and having paid considerable attention to what had there occurred, he thought the noble Lord had correctly described the state of the colony and the general tendency of its institutions. The practically-universal suffrage which existed was the *fons et origo mali.* With respect to Victoria, he wished to say a few words with respect to its tariffs. Many of the items were taxed very heavily. In the tariff which had been alluded to a great many items were put down, and among them was the item of varnish. Now, what could be the reason for inserting varnish in the tariff, unless it were that some Member of the Assembly was interested in the varnish trade? Again, of all things in the world, salt was taxed: that must be for something like the same reason. Doors and window sashes were also among the protected articles in the tariff, and their insertion seemed to indicate the influence of a carpenters' trades' union. In like manner, it might be depended on that if the franchise were lowered in this country the House of Commons would be under the dominion of trades' unions. After reading the despatches presented to the House, he felt bound to declare that there was one person who deserved the highest praise, and that was the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Cardwell), who throughout the whole of this matter appeared to have acted most judiciously and wisely.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that She will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House any additional Papers relative to the dispute between the two Houses of Legislature in the Colony of Victoria concerning the Appropriation Bill of 1865."—(*Lord Robert Montagu.*)

Mr. AYTOUN said, he did not wish to discuss the merits of the controversy which had arisen between the two Houses of Legislature in Victoria, but, having read the despatches very carefully, he hoped he might be allowed to say that in his opinion the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Cardwell) had come to a most correct judgment in the matter, and had expressed that judgment in his despatches in the most judicious and well-chosen language. The right hon. Gentleman had blamed and withdrawn the Governor for having made himself a partizan in the dispute, but had not expressed any opinion on the dispute itself. In that course he most entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman. However much it might be regretted that the Assembly of Victoria had adopted what in this country would be deemed a retrograde system of legislation, it was evidently not the duty of this country to interfere by coercive means or by holding out a threat to the people of the colony. He would make a few remarks which might elicit some expression of opinion as to the manner in which the Government of this country should act with respect to the general question of protective tariffs adopted by its colonies. He looked on this as an important matter, because it was much to be desired that a friendly feeling between this country and the colonies should be maintained, so that when at length a separation occurred that separation should take place under friendly conditions. If such was to be the case, it was of the utmost importance that the people of the colony should not run counter, as they were now doing, to the commercial policy which had been adopted by that House. He wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman what course the Government intended to take in this matter. He was quite aware that they could not interfere by violent means; but when the Government had negotiated treaties of commerce with the great military monarchies of France and Austria — when they had shown that it was not hopeless to overcome the prejudices that existed in those countries and induce them, if not to enter into free trade, at least to take a step in that direction—surely the Government might do something in the way of inducing our colonies not to recede from the policy of free trade between themselves and the Home Government. The system of protective duties, which had already come to something like a crisis in Victoria, was not new in our colonial history. For many years Canada had imposed protective duties on our goods, and they were maintained to the present day. Some years ago the effect produced by an increase of duties on goods entering Canada exported from this country was so remarkable that a Chamber of Commerce—he believed of Sheffield—addressed a communication on the subject to the Government, and a despatch was sent out to Canada by the Colonial Secretary, then the Duke of Newcastle, and the result was the Colonial Government replied, it was their affair not ours, and they would do exactly as they liked as to imposing duties on our goods. He frankly admitted that they had a right to do so; but they did so to raise up a protective industry in the colony. It might be said that protective duties were imposed for the sake of revenue, but the effect had certainly been to raise up a protected interest in Canada. Evidence of this would be found in the statement made by the Finance Minister of Canada in 1862, when he said that the duties on goods imported into Canada were stationary; but he added this was a matter of congratulation rather than regret, because it showed that the native manufactures were increasing, being protected by those duties. He should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman why no remonstrance had ever been sent out to Canada on this subject? When negotiation took place last year with the delegates from Canada, was the subject of import duties on goods discussed? Was no remonstrance made in relation to this matter when the Government undertook to recommend to Parliament to guarantee a loan for a railway in Canada and for other purposes? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies would say that that was of no use when they could not back them up by a stronger force. Still, when last year the fortifications of that colony were under discussion, why did not the right hon. Gentleman mention this matter to the Canadian Ministers? He also wished to know what the Government intended to do in the case of the protective tariff in Victoria? He was willing to admit that it would not do to adopt a tone of menace to the colonies. We ought to proceed with extreme caution in this matter; but, looking to the result of the protective duties which had existed many years in Canada, which now existed there, and which there was no inclination to abate, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not think he (Mr. Aytoun) sought too much when he asked, first, whether the course now pursued by the colonies might not have the effect of weakening the ties which subsisted between this country and her colonies, and of greatly accelerating the period of separation; and secondly, what steps it was possible for the Government to take in order to induce the colonies to revert to that system of free trade which formerly prevailed between them and the mother country?

Mr. CARDWELL: Sir, this is a Motion for papers; and my reply with regard to them is, that an answer has been received from the Governor of Victoria to the first despatch among these papers, and that answer is in preparation to be laid on the table of the House. With regard to the Motion of the noble Lord (Lord Robert Montagu), I will say if it had been any criticism on the action of the executive Government at home, it would have been my duty to enter fully into the discussion of the course which has been pursued; but so far as I am concerned nothing could be more gratifying than the tone taken by the noble Lord and those who followed him. All that I have to regret is that the debate has taken place before the whole papers were on the table. I should have been glad, as I stated to the noble Lord, that the Motion had been postponed with that view; but he thought from the turn the discussion was likely to take it was not advisable to postpone it. Now, with regard to the whole case I have one desire, one opinion which I wish most strongly to impress on the House. I do earnestly hope that we are not about to constitute ourselves into a court of appeal with regard to colonial matters. When the question is whether you should require a Governor to observe the law, you have no alternative but to insist on its observance in the colony, but when it is a question of the autonomic action of the colony, I can conceive nothing more calculated to sever the tie between the colony and the mother country than that there should be in this House any disposition to constitute ourselves the judges of their rights, the guardians of their interests, or the interpreters of their policy and their wishes. We have deliberately determined to leave these matters to themselves, and I earnestly and sincerely hope that we shall not by any discussion that occurs here give rise to an opinion that we regret the course we have taken in that respect. My hon. Friend who has just sat down asks me what my opinion is on the subject of a protective policy being adopted by a colony. My views on protective duties are, I hope, well known so far as regards their bearing on this or any other country; but if we are to say that the Victoria Assembly ought to be censured because it has not yet arrived at what we consider sound opinions on this question, we ought to remember that the day is not very far back when we ourselves held opinions very different from those we now entertain. And when my hon. Friend speaks of that free trade that used to exist between us and our colonies, for which they are substituting what he calls the principles of restriction, I should rather have said, whatever may be the defects of colonial legislation, the true history of recent times has been that we have determined to shake off the mistaken policy of protection between ourselves and the colonies, to withdraw the restraints which we imposed on them, and to encourage the adoption of an universal policy of free trade with all countries, as best calculated to promote the interests of all concerned. Then, I say, do not let us, in dealing with disputes that have arisen in Victoria, entangle ourselves with questions of who are in favour of protection and who not. Let us rather consider who is contravening the law and who supporting it. In this country we are on the side of the law, whatever the policy of the colonies may be. It has been my painful duty to recommend that the Governor of Victoria shall be relieved from his duty. My hon. Friend who has just sat down truly stated that the reason of this is to be found not in any errors I consider he had fallen into in the difficult circumstances in which I admit he was placed during the contest between the two branches of the Legislature. It appeared to me that the proposal he conveyed to me, that the Members of the former Executive Council should be deprived of the distinction they enjoyed, because they presented a petition to their Sovereign praying for redress of grievances, which I thought they were justly entitled to do, was couched in terms which rendered it impossible that the Governor who employed that language and adopted that course should be a safe guide to the colony or an impartial arbitrator of differences in the circumstances in which the colony was placed. I only hope that if in the course of this discussion any expressions have fallen from any hon. Member which may be calculated to give pain to anybody in the colony, such expressions will not be too much insisted on or thought of. I think it is of the utmost importance in the government of all our colonies that we should not only be conciliatory to them, but that, above all things, we should avoid casting imputations upon them in respect of matters within their own proper control, jurisdiction, and cognizance; and particularly we should not evince a censorious disposition with regard to the manner in which they may exercise any part of their legislative functions. And when I hear remarks made upon the policy which those colonies have pursued, I hope we shall never forget from what small beginnings they have risen into large dominions, how rapidly they are progressing, and how materially they reproduce the greatness, the glory, and the power of this country in distant quarters of the globe. Let us remember that our institutions have not passed into the perfect state in which we now behold them by any sudden and rapid growth. We have had our infancy, contended with our difficulties, and grown slowly into mature life. Let us not, therefore, discourage the colonies by adopting a tone which they might deem uncourteous. I was reading the other day an interesting review of the growth of these very colonies, from the pen of an historian who is not unknown to this House, for, indeed, we see him daily sitting among us. Mr. May, in his excellent *Constitutional History of England*, speaking of these colonies in Australia, says—

> "The transition from a state of control and pupilage to that of unrestrained freedom seems to have been too precipitate. Society, particularly in Australia, had scarcely had time to prepare itself for the successful trial of so free a representation. The settlers of a new country were suddenly intrusted with uncontrolled power, before education, property, traditions, and usage had given stability to public opinion. Nor were they trained to freedom, like their English brethren, by many ennobling struggles and the patient exercise of public virtues. . . . Hitherto there have been many failures and discouragements in the experiment of colonial democracy. Yet the political future of these thriving communities affords far more grounds for hope than for despondency."

Now, let us not, in the first place, travel out of our province in order to censure the colonies; and, in the second place, when we differ from them, let us not be discouraged by temporary difficulties. Let us acknowledge the thriving power they possess and the tendency they evince to grow greater, and, above all, let us take care that we do not by discussions in this House engender feelings in our distant possessions of animosity towards the mother country.

Mr. ADDERLEY said, he thought the House were much indebted to the noble Lord (Lord Robert Montagu) for bringing forward a question of so much interest and usefulness, and in so able a manner. It would have been very unwise for them to pass over without notice events of such importance as those which had just occurred in the colony of Victoria. Whether the additional papers for which the noble Lord had moved would throw any additional light on the subject they could not tell, but, as the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cardwell) had wisely remarked, they had not the Governor's case fully before them at present. Quite sufficient information, however, was in their possession to indicate the general character of the events which had taken place, and to render the discussion not a premature but a timely one. In fact, had the noble Lord's object been simply to call the attention of the House to what had occurred in the colony, it would, in his opinion, have required no apology, for it seemed to him that the House ought from time to time to be made acquainted with the principal events taking place in our colonies, especially in those which had within the last few years received representative institutions with the concurrence of the Imperial Parliament. In saying this he had no intention of asserting that the House should interfere in the internal affairs of colonies which enjoyed institutions as free as our own, for he should regard it as most disastrous were they to attempt again to undertake the conduct of colonies now possessing responsible governments of their own. They were indeed under the same Crown, but they controlled their own affairs, and had a government as constitutional, as representative, and as responsible as our own; so that this Parliament had no right or interest that would justify any interference with this Parliament in matters which were entirely within their own province, and for which we were not in the least degree responsible. He should like, indeed, to see the proper corollary of that position; he should like to see these self-governing communities accepting the legitimate consequences of their self-government, and maintaining the forces required for their own defence. Returning to the question more immediately before them, he must say that he was not at all prepared to admit what the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cardwell) appeared to imply, that those free institutions had in any instance been prematurely conceded. He fully acknowledged the value of the work from which the right hon. Gentleman had quoted, but he certainly took exception to the passage which implied that these free institutions had been too hastily granted. The fact was, that those concessions were only a recurrence to the earliest principles of our colonial policy, which were attended with much greater success than those subsequently followed. He could give no better proof of this than by mentioning the fact that Rhode Island at the present time retained the very Constitution which she originally received from this country. He did not know whether the noble Lord's intention was to criticize in any way the conduct of the Colonial Secretary in this very difficult case, but the result had been to draw forth from every quarter of the House the warmest encomiums on the course pursued by the right hon. Gentleman. He fully concurred in those encomiums, believing, as he did, that the right hon. Gentleman's conduct had been moderate, wise, and well considered. The right hon. Gentleman had had to deal with several other questions of difficulty, and in those, as in this, his policy had been such as to strengthen the influence of this country in her colonies, and to increase the confidence of the colonies in the mother country. It was not the province of Parliament to interfere with matters which came before the Colonial Legislatures, but they had a perfect right, and he hoped they would never cease to exercise it, to discuss the conduct of the Home Executive in the superintendence of colonial affairs. They were justified also in looking occasionally into those mirrors of our own Constitution which were placed around us in various parts of the world; not as a mere historical study or to see a sort of caricature of the anomalies existing at home; but to watch some of the most difficult problems of our Constitution worked out with a boldness which we could not venture to imitate, because we might learn wisdom as to experiments which were being made in this country from the more speedy results of the bolder experiments instituted there. He ventured to say that if any lesson was to be drawn from the recent occurrences in Victoria, it was a warning as to an unlimited infusion of democracy into British institutions. In America such an infusion was perfectly safe, because it harmonized with the principles of their Constitution; but, introduced into British institutions, the result was to make the Executive the absolute tool of the popular branch of the Legislature. In the present case, they found a man like Sir Charles Darling, who had acquired considerable reputation in other colonial governments, and had established for himself a high character, following the mere impulse of the popular will in the lower branch of the Legislature, and this almost confessedly in opposition to his own views, and certainly in opposition to the advice of the Ministers of the Crown, whose counsel he should have taken. If, then, they were to learn a lesson bearing on questions now before the House from these events in Victoria, it was a caution against admitting American democracy to pervade our English institutions. Putting new wine into old bottles, would only result in the bursting of the bottles. In America the difficulty was avoided by the separation of the Executive from the Legislature, and were the same experiments to be carried out here, they would have to adopt a similar safeguard. He had ventured to offer these remarks upon what seemed to him to be the most important aspect of the question, for they were all agreed in approving the conduct of the Home Government, and in deprecating any interference with problems which had to be settled by the colonists themselves.

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU said, he had deferred his Motion until the production of papers on the question, and it was by no means his object to criticize the recall of Sir Charles Darling, with whom the Government had, he believed, dealt justly, or to constitute that House a court of appeal on colonial subjects. His thoughts were entirely confined to this country, and his motive had been to draw from those occurrences a lesson for our own guidance, remembering that we could only profit either from events which had happened at former periods, or from those now taking place in other parts of the world. After the statement of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cardwell) with respect to the papers, he begged permission to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

COMMONS (METROPOLIS.)—LEAVE.

Mr. COWPER said, that he rose to move for leave to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the improvement of commons in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and the protection thereof from nuisances. One of the fortunate circumstances in connection with the position of London was, that this capital was surrounded by a circle of fresh and breezy commons, where furze and broom flourished, and possessing the natural and unpretending charm of land never brought into cultivation. Within a radius of fifteen miles of London there were 180 commons, containing in the whole 10,500 acres. From the earliest times some of these had been village greens, used for the recreation and amusement of the people, and though the law did not acknowledge any right of the public in these commons unless the right had been restricted to some particular body, long usage had enabled the people to enjoy those commons without the risk of being dealt with as trespassers. No institution handed down to us from our Saxon forefathers had contributed more to the happiness of the people. The maintenance of those open spaces was important for the inhabitants of the metropolis at large, and they were essential to the success of the Volunteer movement by affording ground for drilling and prize shooting, which, but for the existence of commons, it would have been difficult, and, in some cases, perhaps, impossible to obtain. It must be remembered, too, that as in London are found the rulers of the Empire, the representatives of the people and the guides of the nation in science, art, and literature, whatever conduces to its salubrity and enjoyment is of national concern. But in proportion as the great Babel was encroaching on the country—just as those commons were becoming more valuable for the enjoyment and recreation of the people, they were being more menaced by the builder and the railway engineer. It was, therefore, a matter of moment to develop, as far as we could do so, the means of preventing them from being engulfed in building operations. The public policy in respect to these matters had been for years directed to encouraging the inclosure of waste lands. At the end of the last century there were seven million acres of land untouched, and large portions of these had since been cultivated. In an agricultural point of view inclosure was desirable; because in the present day no farmer liked to put his cattle on our commons. The commons in the neighbourhood of large towns, although not particularly valuable for agricultural purposes, were of immense importance as places of amusement and recreation, and in the Inclosure Act of 1845 a distinction was drawn in respect of all waste lands within a radius of fifteen miles round London, and in respect of all waste lands within a smaller radius round other towns. It was provided that as regarded waste lands so situated Parliament should have a more direct and particular control. He proposed by the Bill which he was about to introduce to renew that distinction, and provide that the Inclosure Commissioners should not take within the operation of their office any waste lands within fifteen miles of the metropolis. The proposal was to establish a Board of Commissioners who would act like the Inclosure Commissioners, with a different object. A careful examination into the circumstances of the commons round London showed that the dissatisfaction existing with regard to them mainly arose from the condition in which they were suffered to remain. They were ill-drained, boggy, cut up into gravel pits, frequented by tramps and disreputable persons, so that respectable persons wishing to resort to them were debarred from their enjoyment. The lord of the manor, upon whom the responsibility rested of keeping the common in order, ordinarily derived but a very small income from it, and was not prepared to spend his own money in draining and levelling the ground, from which improvements the benefit would be reaped by the commoners who turned out their cattle upon the improved pastures, rather than by himself. In the case of the Epsom Common it was represented to the inhabitants that they could derive little enjoyment from the common in its then boggy and swampy condition, but that the rates of the parish would be diminished by the increase of houses. It was stated that the lord of the manor had no pecuniary advantage in the inclosure; and therefore, merely because the common was damp, it was proposed to deprive the residents in the vicinity, as well as the people of London, who frequently resorted there by railway, of a fine, open, healthy space, abounding in beautiful views. Wimbledon Common, of which so much had been heard, last year appeared to have been taken in hand for pretty much the same reason. Lord Spencer stated that numberless representations had been made to him as to the want of drainage and police regulations upon the common. In accordance with those representations he thought it right, as lord of the manor, to consider in what manner the necessary expenses might best be met. Giving to the noble Lord the fullest credit for a desire to benefit the public, he yet took a course on that occasion which, under the circumstances, seemed unnecessary. For, not contented with taking steps to drain the common, he wished to improve it and make it into a park, obtaining the funds necessary for that purpose by the sale of portions of the common alleged to be particularly useful to the inhabitants. These latter, meanwhile, were quite willing to be rated for all purposes of necessary expenditure, so that the proposed outlay by the lord of the manor became quite unnecessary. There were many lords of manors who desired to render commons more useful and beneficial to the public, and one of the objects of his Bill was to call forth local energy, and facilitate the raising of money for drainage and other improvements which would render commons more suitable for purposes of recreation. The Board of Commissioners contemplated by the Bill was intended to consist of five persons, of whom one would be the First Commissioner of Works, another the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, a third, one of the Inclosure Commissioners, and the two remaining members would be nominated by the Crown, as persons interested in the subject, who would give their services gratuitously for the benefit of the public. The Commissioners would have the corporate power of holding land, if any should be given to them, for they knew by the evidence given before the Commission that several persons were desirous of giving over the rights which they possessed to any competent authority which might be established. Mr. Alcock, for instance, whose name was entitled to public respect, had expressed his wish to give over his rights, as lord of the manor, to upwards of 1,400 acres on Banstead Downs. The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's were prepared to surrender their rights as lords of the manor over Barnes Common for the benefit of the public, and there were other lords of the manor inclined to follow their good example. The lords of the manor of portions of Clapham Common and Blackheath were favourable to some measure of this description, though they had not actually declared their approval of the provisions of this Bill; and there could be little doubt that many lords and commoners would avail themselves of the opportunity to surrender to a permanent body, acting as guardians of the public, rights which at present were only burdensome in their own hands, and which they had no wish to use in opposition to the public interest. Then, with reference to local management, the Commissioners that the Bill will constitute would proceed as the Inclosure Commissioners did, only with a different object. It was the business of Inclosure Commissioners to facilitate the inclosure of commons, whereas the Commissioners under this Bill would exist for the purpose of keeping them open, and of creating a local management to do what was necessary in the way of levelling, draining, preserving, and protecting the commons for the benefit of the public at large. Upon the receipt by the Commissioners of a memorial from the lord of the manor, or from the commoners—[Mr. POWELL: Not from inhabitants?] No, only from those having rights on the common, the supposition being that if improvement were absolutely necessary, some commoner would be found to set the machinery in motion. The Commissioners, on receipt of such a memorial, would empower the Assistant Commissioner to hold a public meeting of all persons having rights in the common, and to report as to how far the scheme put before him was acceptable to the persons concerned, according to the value of their property. It would be his business to specify whether the scheme would interfere in any way with rights of property, so that these might not be affected without ample notice and full consideration. The scheme, if adopted by the Board of Commissioners, would then be presented to that House in the form of a confirming Bill. It was provided that the expenses should be defrayed from local sources, and that the inhabitants of any district might, if they chose, agree to be rated. There was also a proviso empowering the Metropolitan Board, in case they thought fit, to add to the local funds by a contribution from the general funds of the metropolis, just as they were accustomed to do in the case of public improvements, where one-third was often contributed from the general fund of the metropolis, when the remaining sums were levied from the actual district. The principle of the Bill was to provide machinery to call out and give organization to local activity and effort. These commons were to be mainly enjoyed by the people who lived near them, and it was only fair they should pay a considerable proportion of the expense. But they were also enjoyed by the inhabitants of the metropolis, and it would be fair that the whole of the metropolis should also contribute to their maintenance. The circumstances and commoners rights of each common varied so much in the details, that it was impossible to lay down any general rule applicable to all. The attempt to include all in one Act of Parliament would therefore be a failure. The rights of the lords of the manor and of commoners, and the customs in each case varied, but the persons who would be the natural guardians of the commons would be there to secure the public interest. By giving those locally interested the management there would be always on the spot a conserving element ready to resist encroachments, and to keep these places of public recreation free from nuisances. When the confirming Bill came to the House the same course would be adopted as in the case of Inclosure Bills. Where a petition was presented against the measure it would be treated as a Private Bill, and the opportunity would be given to parties to be heard by counsel and witnesses in Committee against the Bill. Where there was no such petition, the measure would pass in the ordinary way. The Bill embodied the recommendations of the Committee of last Session, which was moved for by the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Doulton), and presided over by the hon. Member for Southwark (Mr. Locke). An alternative proposal was considered by the Committee, which embodied a resolution of the Metropolitan Board of Works. That Board were willing to undertake the management of all the Commons and open spaces around London if the funds were found to enable them to purchase the rights of the lords of the manors and of the commoners. These funds they proposed to obtain partly by the sale of a portion of the land of the commons, and partly by the imposition of a new tax on the ratepayers. To the sale of these commons, however, he (Mr. Cowper) and many others entertained the strongest objection. It was an awkward way of preserving a common to begin by selling and alienating the portion most adapted for building purposes. The plan must fail, too, in a pecuniary point of view, because if the rights were to be purchased upon the principle embodied in the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, not only the full present value, but the possible value would probably be given by the jury to the persons having an interest in the commons. If so, the sale of the property would only produce the sum of money that would be paid over, and no surplus would remain to the Metropolitan Board of Works. The chief objection, however, to this scheme was, that the Metropolitan Board of Works would require to have a central management over all these commons, while they were, in fact, placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Board, because the area of the jurisdiction of that Board did not extend over half the area of the metropolitan police district, which included a fifteen mile radius round London. So that it was proposed to impose upon a Board already, according to the statement of its own members, too hardly worked the duty of watching over and managing these various commons and open spaces, and this duty he could not hope they would be able satisfactorily to discharge. The Select Committee, after consideration, came to the decision that the only practical solution of the question was that embodied in the Bill. It would not effect all that one could desire, but would do what was at present possible. The Central Board would call into existence local action; it would be the natural enemy of encroachments, and it would be safely consulted in such cases. It would not be required to intervene in the proceedings which startled the public the other day at Berkhampstead, where the commoners showed fight against the lord of the manor, for that was a common not within the metropolitan district. The Board would give organization to local effort and co-operation with local authorities. The hon. Member concluded by moving for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision for the improvement of commons in the neighbourhood of the metropolis and the protection thereof from nuisances.

MR. POWELL said, he seconded the Motion. He congratulated the Government on having grappled with a difficult subject, but could not help regretting that the First Commissioner had not enlarged the radius from fifteen to twenty-five miles. He also thought that power of originating action should be given to the inhabitants of the district, as well as to commoners and lords of the manor. He could hardly go so far as to advise the extension of the Bill to the whole country, although he was aware that the Inclosure Commissioners, while paying regard to the interests and rights of the manor, had often exhibited but little care for the rights of the people. He could mention cases within his own knowledge where the spaces devoted under the Inclosures Act for recreation and other like purposes were so situated as to be useless for those ends. In the case of Clapham Common negotiations had been entered into between the lord of the manor and the inhabitants, and the result was that the common was open to the public for all purposes of rational enjoyment, while it was at the same time preserved against nuisances. It was quite time that something should be done, because a process of encroachment was going on around London. In London the legal rights of the people were extremely narrow and limited. Attempted encroachments on Hampstead Heath had been defeated by the House, not without injury to the individual, who desired to build on other parts of the property he held by the same tenure. He would mention one case which he found in the evidence. Mr. William Thompson was lord of the manor of Tooting. He was, probably, a liberal and philanthropic individual, but his mind appeared to have passed through "the seven ages" of Shakespeare. Never was there a witness examined before a Committee who revealed the workings of his mind with more refreshing simplicity. At first he purchased the manorial rights with a view only of benefiting his neighbours. He had lived on the common for eighteen years, and thought the manorial rights of no value, except to prevent any nuisance from occurring. Next he found that the rights had some value, and, passing through a series of mutations, ended by believing the whole to be his freehold. This gentleman having bought the land for a small sum, and having made a certain arrangement by way of compromise, now said he gave up to the public land worth £20,000. He did not say whether this was or was not an accurate estimate, but he did say, that when these rights could be appropriated by any one man to the exclusion of the public time, for Parliamentary interference had arrived. Moreover, it appeared from the evidence taken before the Committee that, on the grounds of strict law, the rights of the people should be promptly vindicated. He could not venture to pronounce any opinion upon the Bill which had been introduced, without having further time to consider its provisions, and the new authority which Government proposed to create. As to the nature of this new authority, it must be an authority strong, vigilant, and able to adapt itself to circumstances as they arose from time to time; and it must, moreover, be an authority competent to resist the Committees upstairs, and the plans brought before them by engineers, promoters of companies and others. In order that that end might be obtained, the Bill should be most carefully drawn, so as to show distinctly that the duty of the Commissioners was to protect commons for the benefit of the public against railway companies and all others who might seek to encroach upon them. It was in the interest of the poorer classes that this law should be passed, and he hoped that its provisions would secure to them the blessings of fresh air; that the next generation, instead of being weaker, might be more powerful; even better able than men of this age to discharge the duties of public life.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for the Improvement of Commons in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis, and the protection thereof from nuisances."—(*Mr. Cowper.*)

Mr. DOULTON said, he had listened with satisfaction to the observations that had fallen from the hon. Member who had just spoken, and ventured to say that this Bill would not answer the purpose which all admitted should be kept in view. He had heard with pleasure at the commencement of the Session, that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for the better preservation of the commons and open spaces around London, but as far as he could gather from the observations of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) the Bill now introduced would not add one tittle to the protection of those places. If the Bill were to become law, it contained nothing to prevent the shameless inclosures that were taking place on every side of the metropolis. The three most important commons around London were Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath, and Wimbledon Common, and he asked the right hon. Gentleman what there was in the Bill now under discussion that would prevent their being enclosed? In the case of Wimbledon Common, of which Earl Spencer was the lord of the manor, which of the provisions of the Bill would prevent the noble Lord from coming to an arrangement with the copyholders and freeholders of the manor for its inclosure? There would be no necessity in the case of either of those commons for the lord of the manor, if he came to an arrangement with the copyholders and freeholders, to apply to the Inclosure Commissioners now proposed to be appointed for the special protection of the public. A strong power should be created to deal with this matter, not by confiscating the rights of the lords of manors, but by purchasing those rights on behalf of the public. One great defect in the Bill was, that it did not even provide for raising the necessary funds for defraying the expenses incurred in preserving the commons from nuisances. The right hon. Gentleman, indeed, said that the object of the Bill was to bring into action the local machinery, but he did not think that the inclosure of commons could be prevented by local efforts. They ought to buy up the rights which existed, because they could not with more justice confiscate those rights than they could appropriate any other kind of private property. Those rights, though not of great value, were certainly worth something, and it would be the duty of anybody constituted for that purpose to buy them up and dedicate them to the service of the public. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down alluded to the case of Tooting Common. Tooting Common was now being enclosed, and it would continue to be enclosed if this Bill passed, because the lord of the manor had made arrangements with the copyholders and commoners by purchasing their rights, and he could proceed with the inclosure therefore without being compelled to go before the Commissioners. Then take the case of Epping Forest. At the present time there were miles of fence on the ground, and in the course of a few months the forest would be enclosed, and there would be no power under this Bill to prevent it. He hoped that before the second reading of the Bill the right hon. Gentleman would consider whether a clause could not be added, which would not only recognize the evil, but provide a remedy. The right hon. Gentleman said the Bill would do something, and therefore it would be well to let it pass; but he (Mr. Doulton) said no, it would do harm, because it would prevent better legislation.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for the Improvement of Commons in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis, and the protection thereof from nuisances."—(*Mr. Cowper.*)

Mr. LOCKE said, that when the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Doulton) objected to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman he should have told the House what his own plan was. The plan of the hon. Gentleman was laid before the Committee, and the Committee rejected it, while the plan upon which the Bill was founded was carried. The hon. Member's plan was a Metropolitan Board of Works plan to compensate everybody, whether they had anything for which to compensate them or not. [Mr. Sandford: Oh, oh!] He (Mr. Locke) should like to know what course the hon. Gentleman who cried "oh!" took in the Committee. It was difficult to say, for he was first up and then down. He first advocated one side and then the other. A more inconsistent Member of a Committee, or one more obstructive, he (Mr. Locke) had never had the lot to meet since he had had the honour of a seat in that House. He cheered compensation now as a delightful thing. What did he propose in the Committee? That the statute of Merton should be abolished. He and his statute of Merton were the clog on the Committee throughout. They must look at the two propositions that were made in Committee. One was made by the hon.

Member for Lambeth, and it was that the Metropolitan Board of Works should have the power to compensate all the lords of the manors, and all the commoners upon every common throughout the metropolitan radius, and for that purpose they should have the power of selling portions of the land of those commons, and besides that of levying what Sir John Thwaites called a property tax upon the metropolis for the purpose of paying for it. [Mr. DOULTON: That was not my proposal.] That appeared to the Committee to be a strange measure; they did not like it, and they thought that some other scheme might be adopted. The scheme they did adopt was that which was contained in the Report of the Committee, and which was in a great measure embodied in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. It seemed to be assumed by the hon. Member for Lambeth that the rights of lords and commoners were defined rights; that everybody knew what they were, and that they were so clear that everybody could understand them. But those rights were in many instances extremely doubtful. If they adopted the proposal of the hon. Member for Lambeth, and held out to the lords of manors that the Metropolitan Board of Works, with the property tax and the coal tax at their back, were ready to compensate everybody who chose to ask for their money, he would like to know what the demands might be. The scheme now proposed was one which at all events ought to be tried, and it was that recommended in the Report of the Committee. It was extremely difficult to ascertain the title to numbers of commons around the metropolis. The lords of the manors would certainly have enclosed the commons long before now had they known exactly what their rights were; but as it was, if they attempted such a thing the commoners at once stopped them, because the property of the lords and the interests of the commoners in the commons were undefined. It was treated as a trifling matter that Mr. Alcock and the Dean and Chapter had come forward with an offer of their lands, to be held for the benefit of the public. It had been stated that Lord Spencer's powers over Wimbledon Common were not so great as he claimed, and an attempt to enclose a portion of it had been resisted by knocking down the fence. In that case an action was commenced against the person who destroyed the fence, but it was not proceeded with. The hon. Member for Lambeth began everything with an "if." "If 'ifs' and 'ands' were kettles and pans"—but they knew the rest of the old saw. "If" the lords of the manors could get all the commoners to go with them, they would enclose all the commons. Why, of course they would. But that "if" was most unfortunate. To take an example: Did the lord of the manor of Wimbledon get the commoners to agree with him? Did they not rise up when he sought to obtain a Bill to enclose the common, and say that Bill should not pass? Was not that Bill sent to a Select Committee, and also to a Committee of that House? And had Lord Spencer been able to enclose the common at Wimbledon, after all? He thought this Bill ought to be brought in. If the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Sandford) wished to make it more stringent, let him do so—it was elastic enough. The hon. Member for Lambeth might also introduce some of his clauses, if he liked, in order to make the Bill perfect. It was the most beautiful skeleton ever seen on the face of the earth as it stood, and it could be fitted up in any way the hon. Members might choose. One subject that his right hon. Friend (Mr. Cowper) had not touched upon was the question of the Crown rights. When they found Mr. Alcock handing over his property to any Board that might be established for the benefit of the public, and leaving his commons open to them, should not the Crown hand over its rights? But how did the Crown use its rights? The Crown had rights over a portion of Blackheath, the other portion being owned by Lord Dartmouth. The representatives of the Crown told the Committee that the only object they had in view was to make all they possibly could out of the heath. Seeing that Scotch gentlemen used it for playing golf, that donkeys were always running over it, and every kind of amusement going on, what profit could the Crown make out of it? Why, a man was allowed to dig gravel and make great holes in the heath at a gain to the Crown of £56 a year. Then with regard to Epping Forest, how had the Crown behaved? The Crown used to grant licenses to persons selling its forestal rights, until that House passed a Resolution that it should no longer sell any of those rights. But did that make the Crown better behaved? Far from it! Instead of selling any of its forestal rights it withdrew all its officers of the forest, and allowed people to encroach just as they pleased. The

Crown, in abandoning its own rights, had abandoned the rights of the people. When they were establishing a Board for the purposes of protecting all the places of recreation around the metropolis for the benefit of the people, they ought not to forget the Crown lands, which he believed were as large in extent as all the rest put together. He would like to have some statement from his right hon. Friend as to what course would be pursued by the Crown. If they were to have a body to whom the conveyances of these rights and privileges were to be made, and to establish for ever those open spaces around the metropolis for the benefit of the public, they ought, when considering what private persons might do, to know what the Crown would do.

MR. SANDFORD said, he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the Bill, but he felt called upon to remark that the hon. and learned Member for Southwark (Mr. Locke) had by his remarks confirmed him in an opinion which he had formed when sitting in his company upon the Open Spaces Committee, an opinion shared in by a large majority of the Committee, that the hon. and learned Gentleman did not quite understand the subject with which he was dealing. The hon. and learned Member had thought proper to state that he (Mr. Sandford) had carried a proposition for the repeal of the statute of Merton against the wish of a great portion of that Committee; but he held in his hand a record of the division upon the occasion referred to, and it showed that ten Members supported him in the proposition and four voted against him. Not only so, but one-half of the Report upon the subject, which was drawn up by the hon. and learned Gentleman himself, was occupied by an elaborate defence of the repeal the Committee had decided upon. It was certainly most extraordinary conduct on the part of the hon. and learned Gentleman to retort upon him for having carried a proposition to which he had himself devoted four or five pages of his Report. [Mr. LOCKE: It required so much defending.] The statute of Merton permitted the lord of the manor to enclose all the waste that he pleased, provided he left the commoners sufficient pasturage. If the rights of the commoners were encroached upon by the lords of the manor, their only remedy was in an expensive lawsuit; and, as that was the sum and substance of the statute, the House would not be surprised that the Committee had desired to repeal it. He would not address himself to personal questions further than to say that the general opinion of the Committee as to the hon. and learned Gentleman's conduct in the chair would, if described by him, be anything but agreeable to his feelings. Proceeding to discuss the Bill, he would inquire of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) whether he had submitted his measures to the Law Officers of the Crown? [Mr. COWPER: No.] He thought not, and recommended him to do so at once. He had never heard of a measure framed in such complete ignorance of the existing state of the law. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the lords of the manors had mere property in the soil, and the commons were to be enjoyed by the public in the vicinity. But the lords of the manors had absolute control of the soil, subject to certain rights of the commoners. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood of the commons, with the exception of the commoners, had no right upon them except by permission, and without permission they were trespassers. He regretted this state of things as much as the right hon. Gentleman did. But he understood the right hon. Gentleman to say also that the Commissioners were to have power to tax the people for the purpose of taking care of the commons. Had he taken the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon that? Then the Bill did not appear to make any provision for the raising of money to purchase rights. It was absolutely nugatory in this respect in all points but one. It proposed to empower certain Commissioners to receive the munificent donations of such persons as Mr. Alcock. No praise could be too great of Mr. Alcock for the princely way in which he had dealt with his rights, and it was meet that some provision should be made for placing the gift in proper custody; but beyond power to receive these rights the Commissioners had nothing. They would not have a shilling at their disposal. He did not intend to throw out any alternative suggestion. Possibly hon. Gentlemen were naturally jealous of the Metropolitan Board of Works. He confessed he had no great confidence in it, but they should consider it was the only body in the metropolis empowered to raise money, that it was not advisable that such a power should be created in a fresh body, and that it was desirable that the rights in the commons should be purchased for the use of the people. The Bill, as it stood, would amount to a complete confiscation of the rights of lords of manors.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, he thanked the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) for having brought in this Bill, and regretted that the hon. Member for Lambeth should have so hastily condemned it, from misapprehending its scope or purport. The Bill was founded on the Report of the Select Committee, and it would neither confiscate the rights of the lord of the manor, nor touch those of the commoners and the public. It was certainly a matter for consideration whether some of these rights should not be purchased, but having been a member of the Select Committee, and since then having paid much attention to the subject, he had come to the conclusion that it was not desirable that the rights of the lords of manors should be purchased at once; because he believed there were very few commons with which the lords of the manor could deal either with or without the consent of the commoners. He found that with regard to all the commons around London the interests of the commoners were opposed to the lords of the manor, and that there was no possibility of obtaining the consent of the latter. The commoners still claimed the right of turning out cattle upon them; but they used them for the purpose of keeping the commons open as against the lords for the benefit of the public, and not for feeding cattle. As to the rights of the public in these commons, the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Sandford) appeared to revel in the notion that the public had no such rights. It might be so; but that was an undetermined question of law. There could be no doubt that in regard to many of the smaller commons, such as village greens, the public had rights. Therefore, in the present state of the law and of the titles to all these commons, it was not desirable that the Metropolitan Board should at once proceed to purchase them. The question was—What steps should be taken to prevent the deterioration of these commons by nuisances of all kinds? The evidence of Lord Spencer in respect to Wimbledon Common showed the very great difficulties under which lords of the manor now laboured in preventing encroachments and nuisances of various descriptions upon commons. Great nuisances and deterioration were going on on almost every common around London, to the injury alike of the lords of the manor, the commoners, and the neighbouring inhabitants. If these commons were to be purchased under compulsory powers, they would have to be bought at building land value, which could hardly be less than from £300 to £400 per acre. As there were about 10,500 acres of common in the neighbourhood of London, a sum of nearly three millions of money would be required for that purpose. The South-Western Railway Company had recently to pay £5,000 for twelve acres of land on Barnes Common, and to show that the rights of the lords of the manor were not so great as were generally supposed, in that case the Court awarded one-fourteenth part of the purchase money to the lord, and the remaining thirteen-fourteenth parts to the commoners. Then it had been proposed that they should sell a portion of the commons to buy the remainder, but that would be a dangerous mode of proceeding, because it would entail a sacrifice of large portions of the commons and would raise all sorts of difficulty between the lords of the manors and the commoners. Three-fourths of the commons in the neighbourhood of London were beyond the Metropolitan Board of Works district. They had already heavy duties to discharge, and besides other difficulties, they would have no power to levy rates in those neighbourhoods for the purchase of the commons beyond the district. He hoped the House would assent to the introduction of the Bill.

MR. COWPER said, that Epping Forest did not come under that Bill. The Commissioners of Woods and Forests conceived that by their Act of Parliament they were bound as trustees to administer the property intrusted to them with a view to obtain as much money as they could from it. He hoped the question would shortly be dealt with in a satisfactory manner. The same remark applied to the rights of the Crown over the waste of Blackheath, from which the Commissioners obtained the £56 that had been referred to. However unfortunate it might be that a common should be spoiled for the sake of such a small sum, yet, entertaining that view of their legal duty, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests thought they must do so. The hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Sandford) had attributed to him some very erroneous views of the law of the question in relation to these commons; but he had never doubted that the lord of the manor had the soil of the waste, subject to the rights of the commoners over the surface. The public had legally no rights. If these commons were to be improved and protected it was but right that it should be done at the expense of the public at large. That Bill would set on foot a system of special Acts of Parliament for each special case; and consequently each Act of Parliament would provide the power of raising the money necessary for giving effect to it. That seemed to be a more practical and intelligible course than any attempt to establish a uniform measure applying to all commons, however varying might be their particular circumstances.

Mr. SANDFORD said, he wished to ask if the powers of the Commissioners were to extend to all large towns?

Mr. COWPER said, they were not, but only to be confined to the metropolitan area.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER said, he wished to ask whether the Commissioners would have power to spend the money on a common without the consent of the lord of the manor?

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he thought that a suitable opportunity of noticing the highly official view put forward by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) as to the relation between the property of the Crown and the rights of the people. That was not the first time when the two things had been placed in violent opposition to each other in that House. The legal representative of the Crown was supported in exacting the very last farthing in respect to every right possibly appertaining to the Crown, to the utter disregard of the wishes or the enjoyments of the people. The property in the Crown was merely nominal. For all practical purposes it was completely alienated from the Crown, and the office of Woods and Forests was put into such a position as compelled it to act in direct hostility to the wishes of the people. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he brought forward the Budget, and on similar occasions, would appeal to the feelings of the House in favour of the people, while the Government would exact the last farthing in respect of the Crown property, with entire disregard of the rights and interests of the people. Different Departments of the Government were thus opposed. This, he contended, was an anomaly which ought not to exist.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, the hon. Gentleman who had just resumed his seat had appealed to him to prolong the debate; but the hon. Member had not consulted the convenience of the House in expatiating on topics which would have been better discussed at an earlier stage of the debate, particularly as his right hon. Friend (Mr. Cowper) in reply had not broken up any new ground, but contented himself with noticing the observations that had been made by hon. Members. It was an entire mistake to suppose that the possession of Crown property was merely nominal. As far as regarded the person of the reigning Sovereign there might be some truth in the assertion, but although the reigning Sovereign had for years parted with all pecuniary interests in the property, it was an established principle that no changes affecting the Crown lands could be made without the assent of the Sovereign. The House had no right to encroach upon them without the consent of the persons interested. The reigning Sovereign was strictly tenant for life. Any renunciation of right, therefore, would not bind the succeeding Sovereign. The Prince of Wales on his accession to the Crown would be perfectly entitled, if he thought fit, to take the management of these estates into his own hands. This was a matter entirely beyond dispute. Still less was it necessary to raise this question after his right hon. Friend had stated that the forestal rights of the Crown at Epping were under the consideration of the Government, and that he hoped very shortly to make a proposition to the House on the subject. The rights of the reigning family in the Crown lands must be respected just as much as any other private rights. The subject of Epping Forest could not have been included in the Bill before the House, because it did not come within the jurisdiction of his right hon. Friend. In the course of a few days he hoped that the Government would be in a condition to inform the House that, without at all giving in to the doctrine of the hon. Member, they had made arrangements respecting the forestal rights at Epping, with the full concurrence of Her Majesty, which would bring them out of a state of conflict with the interests of the community, and enable the Government to deal with them at proper seasons in a manner satisfactory to all concerned.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to make provision for the Improvement of Commons in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis, and the protection thereof from nuisances, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Cowper and Mr. Childers.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION &c., DECLARATION ABOLITION BILL.

RESOLUTION. FIRST READING.

Acts read.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN said, he rose to move that the House resolve itself into Committee in order that the Chairman might be directed to move the House that leave be given to bring in a Bill to abolish a certain declaration commonly called a Declaration against Transubstantiation, the Invocation of Saints, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as practised in the Church of Rome, and to render it unnecessary to take, make, or subscribe the same as a qualification for the exercise or enjoyment of any civil office, franchise, or right. Many Members, when they saw the notice of his Motion on the paper, doubtless were unaware that such a declaration was in existence. It was instituted in the reign of Charles II., at a time when great excitement prevailed in the country, and the people were afraid of the increase of Roman Catholic influence. The declaration was embodied in terms most offensive to Roman Catholics, but, according to the present law, before accepting certain public offices they were compelled to make the declaration. The person making the declaration expressed his belief that the body and blood of our Lord were not present in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Invocation of the Saints were superstitious and idolatrous. It had to be made by every one who succeeded to any office from which Roman Catholics were by law excluded. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had to subscribe the declaration in the presence of the Members of the Privy Council in Ireland, many of whom were themselves Roman Catholics. That was manifestly an offensive proceeding, and one which was wholly unnecessary. He would not, by the Bill he then asked leave to introduce, make any change whatever in the law which excluded Roman Catholics from certain offices; but he would merely put an end to the necessity at present imposed on Protestants, under certain circumstances, to make the declaration. The declaration was a relic of barbarism, which ought to be immediately erased from the statute-book. He did not believe there was one Member who would attempt to justify its retention, and he therefore moved that the Speaker leave the Chair.

Sir JOHN GRAY said, that he seconded the Motion. A Commission, comprising some of the highest dignitaries of the Church, both in England and Ireland, appointed some years ago, unanimously resolved to recommend Her Majesty to abolish a declaration similar to that under the consideration of the House.

Mr. KER said, he did not feel inclined to allow the proposed alteration to be made without entering his protest against it. The Bill was not exactly what the hon. Baronet had described, for, as he understood it, the words would apply to the holders of any civil office, and therefore to the Lord Chancellors of England and of Ireland. If the Lord Chancellor was to be freed from the obligation of taking the oath, he did not know what was to become of the Settlement of this country. He strongly objected to the Resolution, which, if carried, would affect the existing Constitution, inasmuch as it would enable Roman Catholics to hold offices from which they were excluded by the existing law.

Mr. COGAN said, he could allay the fears of the hon. Gentleman. The Settlement of this country would not be in any way endangered if the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend was accepted, because the second clause proposed to enact that nothing in this Act contained should be construed to enable any person professing the Roman Catholic religion to exercise any office which could now be held only by persons making the declaration which the Act proposed to repeal. The object of the Act was simply to remove a declaration which was offensive to Catholics, and which had given great pain to many persons who were obliged to take it.

Mr. KER said, he certainly had not read the Bill. He only judged of its nature by the terms of the Resolution.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, the Government had no intention to offer any resistance to the proposal. He was bound, however, to say for himself and his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that they would have preferred that this matter should be dealt with by a general Act relating to the present state of oaths and declarations, which, as the House would see from papers recently laid before it, involved a great deal of anomaly and of useless and cumbrous phraseology. It would have been better that the whole subject should have been handled by a competent body which, while dealing with one part of the question, would have the other parts in view. However, his hon. Friend was anxious to remove words which were of a very painful character, peculiar in their origin, and adapted for a particular object, which had become unnecessary, and as they were now much more likely to give pain than to serve any useful purpose, it was impossible for the Government to refuse their consent.

Mr. WALPOLE said, he quite concurred in what had fallen from his right hon. Friend. His own opinion was in accord with that of the hon. Baronet, and he could say for Members on that side of the House, that they were not desirous of keeping up any test which was in the slightest degree unnecessarily offensive or distasteful to the feelings of others. He quite agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the papers laid upon the table of the House during the last Parliament showed that there was a number of oaths which it would be well to repeal. He hoped he might consider what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer as an intimation coming from Government that they would be prepared to consider the whole question. There was clearly too great a variety of oaths, and if, as he believed, the simpler they were in form the more solemn they were, he should be very glad to see some modification of them adopted.

Mr. KER said, he wished to ask, whether he was to understand that it was the intention of the Government to take up the subject?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he thought he might venture to say that the Government would probably introduce some measure for a general revision of those oaths.

Mr. KER said, that would be the more satisfactory course. Those oaths, which were of a very grave nature, should not be altered except upon the responsibility of Government.

Mr. PIM said, he wished to express his satisfaction at the course indicated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to abolish a certain Declaration commonly called the Declaration against Transubstantiation and the Invocation of Saints and the Sacrifice of the Mass as practised in the Church of Rome, and to render it unnecessary to take, make, or subscribe the same as a qualification for the exercise or enjoyment of any civil office, franchise, or right.

House *resumed.*

Resolution *reported:* — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Sir John Gray, and Mr. Cogan.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 82.]

ARMY—MORTALITY OF TROOPS (CHINA).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Colonel NORTH said, he rose to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the Mortality in the Troops in China; the causes which led to it; and the conduct of those Departments of the Government whose duty it has been to administer to the wants of those troops. As the Government had expressed their willingness to grant the Committee he would make but very few remarks upon the subject. The fact that the Committee would be granted was *primâ facie* evidence that he was not about to give unnecessary trouble by the Motion which he was about to make. On the 8th of December last the feelings of the people of this country were most painfully excited by a statement in *The Times* of the deplorable condition in which a detachment of the 11th Regiment landed in Japan, and of the melancholy state of health of the force at Hong Kong. Feeling the deepest interest in these unfortunate men, and especially in those of the 11th Regiment — in which he commenced his military service and in which he was subsequently adjutant — he communicated his intention to his noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) that as soon as the House met he should move for all the correspondence, and for any information which could be given on the subject of this deplorable event. It was only fair to his noble Friend opposite to say that every request which he had made for information in connection with the case had been instantly complied with with his usual courtesy. The question was no party question. Hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House had relations and friends in the army; but, independent of all such considerations, it was, he thought, the duty of the House to bear in mind the interests of the non-commissioned officers and privates, a body of men who always served with fidelity their Sovereign and their country, and who never shrunk from exposing their lives to the unhealthful influences of pestilential climates or the deadly bullets of an enemy. As there would be no opposition to the granting of the Committee, he should merely call attention to two or three of the letters contained in the correspondence which had been placed in his hands. It opened with a letter from General Guy, the commander of the forces in China, dated 12th of November, 1864, which, after stating his intentions as to the accommodation of the 9th Regiment on its arrival, and pointing out the diffiulty of providing for them, closed as follows:—

> "I would therefore request your Lordship's instructions as to the disposal of the 2nd battalion 11th Regiment, which by Horse Guards' letter of the 26th August last it is proposed to send to China, as under existing circumstances it will be impossible to provide for it in this country."

The result of that statement not having been attended to, he would presently show. The second battalion of the 9th Regiment landed at Hong Kong on the 7th of February, 1865. Its strength on landing was 34 officers, 839 men, 47 women, and 19 children. Within eight months and a half 1 officer, 36 men, 5 women, and 23 children—amounting in all to 65 persons—had died; while 1 officer, 78 men, 20 women, and 27 children were invalided, making a total, dead and invalided, of 193 persons. The second battalion of the 11th Regiment landed at Hong Kong on the 28th of May, 1865. It consisted of 25 officers, 784 men, 54 women, and 92 children, and out of that number, in the course of only four months and a half 2 officers, 49 men, 3 women, and 48 children, or in all 102 persons, had died; while 3 officers, 124 men, 16 women, and 14 children were invalided—making a total of 259 dead and invalided. That report was made up to the 15th of October last, and did not include the Artillery, the Engineers, or the Staff. A ship was freighted for the purpose of taking many of the invalids to England, but on the passage from Hong Kong to the Cape, out of the 234 persons who embarked on board the *Gresham*, 31 men, 3 women, and 6 children, making a total of 40, died. He should, with the permission of the House, read an extract from a letter dated Capetown, December 18, 1865, which said—

> "The *Gresham* left Hong Kong on the 13th of October, 1865, with 239 persons on board, and arrived at Simon's Bay on the 6th of December, having lost by death 31 men, 3 women, and 6 children, principally from dysentery, the remaining invalids being in a very unhealthy state. The commodore had the troops immediately removed from the ship, some, the healthiest, were put into huts; some not so well were sent on board Her Majesty's ship *Seringapatam*, and the remainder, 21, were sent to the Royal Naval Hospital, of whom 5 men and 1 child have already died, and there are but slight hopes that any of the others will recover. In consequence of the state of debility that many of the men and women were re duced to, and very advanced stages of their diseases, it was considered advisable some should be left behind. I therefore made a careful selection, and regret to state that there were 34 men who did not present any favourable hope of arriving in England."

On the arrival of the *Gresham* at Portsmouth, his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief had ordered a report to be made, with the view of ascertaining whether the mortality was attributable to any defect in the ship, and the following was the letter of Deputy Inspector General Innes, dated Portsmouth, February 5, 1866:—

> "Sir,—I have the honour to report that a Board of Officers on which I attended was ordered by his Royal Highness the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief to ascertain whether the mortality on board the hired transport *Gresham*, on her late voyage from Hong Kong to Spithead, is to be traced to any of the arrangements on board that ship. The result of a careful and minute inquiry into all the circumstances was a unanimous finding in the negative. The accommodation for the troops was spacious, thoroughly ventilated; the supplies and medical comforts good and abundant; the *excreta* from the sick were promptly thrown overboard, and disinfectants freely used. The ship was easy at sea, carrying her ports always open. The soldiers and their families on board expressed the fullest satisfaction with the treatment and accommodation they had received. The Board ventured to express a high opinion of the attention and care displayed by Captain Burland, the officer commanding, and Staff Assistant Surgeon Adams, in medical charge. The detailed proceedings of the Board were forwarded to the military authorities."

The amount of the deaths and invalidings in those two unfortunate regiments was, in the case of the 9th, 193; and the 11th, 259—making a total of 452 persons—of whom 40 died on the passage to the Cape; at the Cape, 5; 34 being left at the Cape as there was no favourable prospect of their reaching England. The *Agincourt* was now on her way home with another batch of invalids of those regiments. The expense, according to the account which he had received the other day as being paid by the Government, from China was £29 10*s.* per head for 235 men, or no less a sum than £6,827, and that merely for one detachment. He did not wish to impute to anybody blame in the matter, but it was, he thought, the duty of the House to ascertain to what cause the frightful mortality to which he had called their attention was to be attributed. He could not close his observations without expressing the greatest admiration for the conduct of the Military Medical Department, and especially for the conduct of Dr. Saunders, surgeon of the 9th Regiment, who, in the absence of his senior (Dr. Dick), took the whole responsibility on his own shoulders and saved many valuable lives. The report of Dr. Snell was also entitled to much praise. The hon. and gallant Member concluded by moving—

> "That a Select Committee be *appointed* 'to inquire into the mortality in the Troops in China, the causes which led to it, and into the conduct of those departments of the Government whose duty it has been to administer to the wants of those Troops.'"

SIR HARRY VERNEY said, he seconded the Motion. He thanked the hon. and gallant Gentleman for the manner in which he had submitted it to the notice of the House. The officers and men of our army, unlike that of other countries, were frequently obliged to spend a considerable time away from their homes in unhealthful climates, and it was the duty of the House of Commons to see that the necessary precautions were taken to provide for their health and safety. If it should be found that this great mortality among our troops was occasioned by negligence the authors ought to be severely punished. He was glad that the Government had consented to a full inquiry.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, that the Government, in common with the House and the country, deeply regretted the unfortunate occurrences narrated. Undoubtedly, both the House and the country, and more especially the friends of those who had perished, had the fullest right to demand investigation and inquiry as to whether the causes of that mortality resulted from the negligence of the Government or of the commanders of the troops. While acknowledging the candid and impartial manner in which the subject had been brought before the House, he must state that he should be prepared to deny that these unfortunate events had occurred through the shortcomings of the Government. It might be said that the matter might have been disposed of in the House, and that the question of the responsibility of the Government, or of individuals, might have been decided there, but there were circumstances which rendered it more advisable that the subject should be investigated in a Committee. In a discussion in that House when the conduct of individuals was called in question, assertions were often made and rumours were referred to which it might be impossible at the moment to deny, but which on further investigation might prove to be perfectly groundless, and such rumours and charges could be more properly met in a Committee than in a debate. So far as he was aware, every one connected with the Government and with the War Department, including his noble predecessor (Earl De Grey) was anxious that the affair should be thoroughly investigated, and was ready when called upon to state what had passed in reference to these transactions. His hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel North) had said that the mortality had occurred in consequence of the Government not having attended to the recommendation of the General; but his representations were not neglected by the War Department, as two letters in the correspondence would show. In the first reply of the War Office to General Guy he was told that the distribution of the troops which would remain at his disposal in the command between Hong Kong, Kowloon, and Japan, was left to his discretion, subject, of course, in the case of Japan, to his consulting Her Majesty's Minister there. A subsequent letter, dated the 23rd of March, contained the following more specific instruction:—

> "With regard to the difficulty which you anticipate in providing sufficient accommodation for a second regiment at Hong Kong and Kowloon, I am to acquaint you that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, have decided on withdrawing the Royal Marines now serving in Japan. There will, therefore, be no objection to your sending the 2nd battalion 11th Foot, on its arrival from the Cape, or such portion of it as you may be unable to accommodate at Hong Kong, to Yokohama, where the climate is better suited than that of China to the European constitution."

It never was intended, as had been stated in the press, to replace the Indian troops who were last year serving in Hong Kong by a British regiment. What was intended was the reduction of the garrison in China. It was thought that a force of three battalions was an unnecessarily large one to be stationed at Hong Kong, as it was never intended that the force there should exceed one or one and a half battalion. It was possible the Government might be accused of attempting to get rid of some responsibility in leaving the matter to the consideration of a Committee; but if it were thought necessary afterwards to bring forward a Motion impugning the action of the War Department, he would then make any statement which he was now prepared to make. If it were said they were delegating to a Committee a duty which more properly devolved upon that Department—an inquiry as to the degree of responsibility that ought to attach to any of the officers of the army—he repeated, as far as he was personally concerned, he was quite ready, if it were the wish of the House, to undertake the responsibility of an investigation.

Motion *agreed to.*

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire into the mortality in the Troops in China, the causes which led to it, and into the conduct of those departments of the Government whose duty it has been to administer to the wants of those Troops."—(*Colonel North.*)

And, on April 10, Select Committee *nominated* as follows:—Colonel North, The Marquess of Hartington, Lord Hotham, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Adderley, Lord Frederick Cavendish, Mr. Roebuck, Colonel Percy Herbert, Mr. Dalglish, Lord Henry Percy, Mr. Calthorpe, Major Anson, Lord John Hay, Mr. Trevelyan, and Major O'Reilly:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

ART UNION LAWS.

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire into the operation of the Art Union Laws."—(*Lord Robert Montagu.*)

And, on April 30, Select Committee *nominated* as follows:—Lord Robert Montagu, Sir Michael Beach, Mr. Blake, Mr. Schreiber, Mr. Beresford Hope, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, Mr. Bentinck, General Dunne, Mr. Monsell, Mr. Bazley, Sir Wentworth Dilke, The O'Conor Don, Mr. Francis Leveson Gower, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Torrens:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

INNS OF COURT BILL.

On Motion of Sir George Bowyer, Bill to enable the Benchers of the Inns of Court to appoint Judicial Committees in certain cases, and to give the necessary powers to such Committees, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir George Bowyer and Mr Denman.

DIVORCE BILLS.

Select Committee on Divorce Bills *nominated:* Mr. Walpole, Sir John Pakington, Mr. Bonham-Carter, The Judge Advocate, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Adderley, Colonel French, Colonel Packe, and Mr. Gathorne Hardy.

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 21, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Select Committee—*Report*—Controverted Elections—Chairmen's Panel; six Members *added.*

Public Bills — *Ordered* — Contagious Diseases Prevention Act Amendment*; Lunacy Acts Amendment (Scotland).*

First Reading—Inns of Court* [83]; Commons (Metropolis)* [84]; Lunacy Acts Amendment (Scotland)* [85]; Contagious Disorders Prevention Act Amendment* [86].

Second Reading — Tests Abolition (Oxford) [15]; New Forest Poor Relief* [57]; Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man)* [80].

Referred to Select Committee—New Forest Poor Relief* [57].

Considered as amended—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* [75].

Third Reading — Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment* [77]; County Courts* [47]; Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Act (1860) Amendment* [ ].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that Mr. Speaker's health continued to improve, but he was still unable to resume his duties in the Chair:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

THAMES EMBANKMENT (NORTH) APPROACHES, &c., BILLS.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. COWPER, in moving that these Bills be referred to a Select Committee, said, that they were intended to improve the thoroughfares of the metropolis, and promote the convenience of the public, and the cost of carrying them out was to be defrayed out of funds to be raised within the metropolis itself. It seemed to him that measures of this kind ought not to be treated as Private Bills and referred to an ordinary Private Bill Committee, and thus to be withdrawn from the practical cognizance of the House. The Thames Embankment Act was introduced by the Government; it was made a "hybrid" Bill, and among its enactments was one providing that all the reclaimed land not required for the purposes of the highway, and not otherwise appropriated, should be dedicated to the use and enjoyment of the public, as places of recreation and ornamental grounds. One of the clauses of the present Bill, however, repealed that clause and gave the Metropolitan Board of Works the power of erecting buildings over the whole of the land thus set apart for the enjoyment of the public for ever. This was an important provision, and he mentioned it to show that the House ought not to allow a Bill to pass without special inquiry which would deprive the public of open spaces very essential to the health, recreation, and ornamentation of the metropolis. The present Bills, however, as it happened, passed the second reading without objection or discussion as Private Bills, although many Members desired to offer remarks against the particular Bill to which he referred. What he wanted to secure was, that these Bills, instead of going before an ordinary Committee, whose business it would simply be to listen to the remarks of counsel, and the evidence they might tender, should be remitted to a Committee to consist of a certain number of Members, who should have for their special object to take into consideration the interests of the public. It might be better, as a rule, that such measures should be dealt with as hybrid Bills; his Motion, however, only applied to these three Bills. The next question arose as to the funds, but that was not a part of the subject to which his Motion related. The promoter of the Bill was the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Tite), and he (Mr. Cowper) only interfered in the matter on behalf of the public.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Thames Embankment (North) Approaches Bill, the Thames Embankment (Chelsea) Bill, and the Park Lane Improvement Bill, be committed to a Select Committee, consisting of Eleven Members, Six to be nominated by the House, and Five by the Committee of Selection."—(*Mr. Cowper.*)

GENERAL PEEL hoped that the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Tite) would tell the House from what funds the works provided by the Bill were to be made. The right hon. Gentleman said out of the public money. [Mr. COWPER: Of the metropolis.] He was the more anxious to have an answer to this question, because he understood the hon. Member for Bath to tell the House last year that unless the Metropolitan Board of Works obtained a renewal of the coal duties, these improvements could not be carried out. Now, before the House called upon a Committee to consider these Bills, it would be well to inquire where the money was to come from. This, however, was not to be part of the inquiry. A Select Committee, presided over by the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton), was already sitting to inquire upon the taxation of the metropolis, and he should like to know whether this inquiry was to be hurried on before that Committee had reported.

MR. TITE said, that the Metropolitan Board of Works had no intention whatever of paying for these improvements out of the general rates. They applied for an extension of the coal duties for ten years; but as considerable doubt was felt as to the expediency of this measure, they next contemplated the imposition of a distinct rate to be called an improvement rate. The matter was now before the Committee upstairs, and the condition upon which that Committee was granted was that they should report at the earliest moment on the means of supplying the funds for this and other City improvements. He trusted that the Committee in question would finish the evidence on this subject by Thursday next, and that they would report early after the Easter recess on that part of the subject. Until that Report was made it would be unnecessary to go on with that part of the subject. The Metropolitan Board of Works desired that every one of these improvements should be thoroughly examined, and this would be better done in the interest of the public by a hybrid Committee than by the ordinary Private Bill Committee of four Members. He wished to state that so far from interfering with the land belonging to the public or diminishing the area, the Bill would increase the total area of the ornamental ground set aside for the recreation and amusement of the public. It was, however, necessary to take powers to vary the line of existing buildings.

MR. ROEBUCK must admit that he, for one, was very jealous of granting these powers, which they was told were never intended to be employed. The Metropolitan Board of Works asked for powers by this Bill to do away with an Act which secured to the public the enjoyment of certain land reclaimed by the Embankment. Instead of sending the Bill to a hybrid Committee, the best course would be to send the Bill to a Committee that day six months.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the words "Approaches Bill" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "be committed to a Select Committee upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Roebuck,*)

—instead thereof.

MR. COWPER thought the House must be rather taken by surprise by the severe punishment which the hon. and learned Member wished to impose. He quite agreed that the Bill was drawn in a very careless manner, or perhaps with some possible expectation that the fault would not be observed. The promoters of this Bill stated that it was not their intention to deprive the public of any portion of the recreation ground secured to them by the former Act; but it was the fact, nevertheless, that the Bill proposed to repeal all those clauses of the existing Act. It was not, however, necessary on this account to reject the Bill altogether, because the alteration of a single line would be sufficient. The Bill provided for the construction of a street between Charing Cross and the Thames Embankment, which would be greatly for the benefit of the public. One of the great objects contemplated by the Thames Embankment and the new street from Blackfriars Bridge to the Mansion House was to have another thoroughfare parallel with the Strand, which would relieve the choking traffic along the Strand and Fleet Street. The facilities thus provided would be much assisted if a direct communication was provided between Charing Cross and the Embankment. The proposal, as originally made, was to go through the property of the Duke of Northumberland; that part of the scheme had been withdrawn, but the Metropolitan Board might devise another access from Charing Cross to the Embankment. Another improvement provided by the Bill was the power to lay out a new street between the Strand and the Embankment near Waterloo Bridge. He thought that some new streets were indispensable to facilitate the immense traffic which would be sure to come down to the Embankment when completed. If the Bill were referred to a Committee, it was capable of very considerable improvement; but there was, he thought, no reason for rejecting it altogether for a defect for which the promoters were not responsible, and which they were prepared to remedy.

COLONEL WILSON PATTEN said, that before the right hon. Gentleman last addressed the House he had wished to point out that the Bill referred to had been drawn in a most improper manner, and that if it were not a measure of some importance it ought not to be permitted to go to a Committee at all. Sufficient notice was not provided for the persons whose property was interfered with, and no one would know until it was too late to take objection to it whether it would touch their property or not; neither was any fund provided from which the expenditure was to be defrayed. This was a most objectionable feature of the Bill, and ought not to be tolerated in any Private Bill. It was for the House to consider whether on account of the importance of the measure it should not be an exception; but if the other promoters of similar Bills were allowed to follow this precedent, private parties would never know with whom they had to deal.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE said, that being interested in this matter, he should be unable to vote upon the present Motion, but the public question raised was so important that he should wish to say a few words. The House had to deal with a Bill that affected the public interests. Every one knew the haste with which Private business was conducted, and the impossibility of paying attention to Private Bills unless the notice of the House was especially drawn to them. When once the Bill went before a Private Bill Committee the public had no means of defending its own interest, and the greatest injury might thus be inflicted unless the notice of some public officer or of the Members of the House was drawn to the matter. If, therefore, it should appear at any time that by the carelessness with which it was drawn a Bill was calculated injuriously to affect the public, it would not be a very improper punishment for such a misuse of private legislation to throw out the measure and let the promoters bring it in in a more satisfactory manner.

MR. TITE hoped that the House would not visit the sins of the drawer of the Bill upon him. He had nothing to do with the preparation of the measure, but being a member of the Metropolitan Board of Works his name, with that of two other Members of the House, also members of the Board, appeared on the back of the Bill. The original Bill for making the Thames Embankment in 1862 was brought in by the Government, and the Metropolitan Board of Works had little to do with it. The Government at first proposed to hand over the subject to a Commission, but this was refused by the House, and the Metropolitan Board of Works were charged with the construction of the Embankment. The work, so far as it had progressed, was executed in a creditable manner, and the Embankment promised to be constructed within a moderate time. The Embankment was to be not less than 100 feet wide from Westminster Bridge to Blackfriars, and then it would be continued by means of a new street to the Mansion House. As, however, some of the side approaches of this great road were imperfect the Metropolitan Board of Works brought in a Private Bill, and gave the parties interested the usual notices. The object of the Bill was not to interfere either with private or public rights, but so to vary the road as to make it more convenient to the public. A new approach was wanted from Wellington Street and the Strand to the Embankment, and this would be a long oblique line, enabling traffic to come from Lincoln's Inn and particularly from the New Courts of Justice along the Embankment to these Houses and Westminster. Another street was wanted from Charing Cross. It was at first proposed to pass through the premises of the Duke of Northumberland, but Northumberland House had been struck out of the Bill, and the subject had been re-considered. The Metropolitan Board had been able to propose a new street nearly equal to the one originally laid down. He had postponed the Bill for a fortnight in order expressly that the hon. Members more particularly interested might have an opportunity of considering it. It was no fault of his that he did not explain the provisions of the Bill on the second reading, which was passed *sub silentio* by a mere accident. He begged to remind the House that the Amendment if carried would delay a very important public work. In addition to the Thames Embankment and the new street from Blackfriars a railway would run along the line of the thoroughfare, and until the approaches were settled the Metropolitan Board could not give the railway company the levels they required to carry out their line. He trusted that the House would appoint the Committee, so that the whole matter might be fully inquired into.

COLONEL WILSON PATTEN said, he must remind the hon. Member for Bath that it was not stated in the Bill from what source the funds were to be provided. Was it from the ratepayers, and, if so, would they have notice? If, on the other hand, the money was to come from the coal duties, what arrangement would be made for that purpose?

MR. TITE said, that in the preamble of the Bill that question was left open. It awaited the consideration of the Committee on Metropolitan Improvements now sitting upstairs. With regard to the expenses to which private individuals might be put in opposing this Bill, if they should be given by the Select Committee they would be defrayed out of the ordinary funds of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and no wrong would be done in that respect. The Metropolitan Board of Works had suggested the coal duties as the source out of which the expense of the new work should be defrayed, and they were in communication with the Government on that subject.

SIR WILLIAM HEATHCOTE reminded the hon. Member for Bath that he had again resumed his seat without answering the question whether if the coal duties were not to be resorted to, the Metropolitan Board of Works would go on with the Bill.

MR. TITE: We have no intention of proceeding with the Bill and charging the expenses on the ratepayers in the ordinary way.

MR. LOCKE said, he hoped the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield would proceed with his Amendment. The new street was not to be made through the Duke of Northumberland's property, and no land or houses were mentioned in the Bill through which the street substituted would pass. He understood Sir John Thwaites to state to the Committee that it would be necessary to introduce a new Bill next Session for making the street from Trafalgar Square to the Thames Embankment. Therefore, it was not of so much consequence if the Bill referred to in the Amendment were struck out of the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. TITE appealed to the Deputy Speaker to say whether it was not irregular to quote matters given in evidence before a Select Committee before the Committee had reported to the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not competent for the hon. Member to refer to the proceedings of a Committee which has not yet reported to the House.

MR. LOCKE would only say that what he had stated was in his mind the real state of things. By that Bill there was no land or houses in the line of deviation through which that street could pass, and the Duke of Northumberland's property being excluded, the street could not be made at all under its provisions; but it would be necessary to come to Parliament next Session for the purpose of making a street in a different line altogether. Therefore, there would not be much importance in striking that Bill out of the right hon. Gentleman's Motion. He agreed entirely with the noble Lord opposite (Viscount Cranbourne), that, in regard to cases of that description, there was not sufficient notice given to the public. These were not Bills which ought to be brought in as ordinary Private Bills. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) did perfectly right in proposing that the Bill should be treated as a hybrid measure, and go before a Committee of eleven Members; but whether the particular Bill with respect to the Thames Embankment ought to be excluded should depend upon any examination which might be made by the members of the Metropolitan Board of Works as to what powers they had to make that street.

MR. LOCKE KING suggested that the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Tite) should withdraw that Bill, and make some arrangement, with respect to the Standing Orders, with the view of introducing another Bill of a satisfactory character.

MR. HORSMAN said, there was a point with regard to which he wished to have an opinion from the Minister of Public Works. A Bill was introduced several years ago by a Government Department, and all the weight and authority of the Government was brought to bear in that House to carry it. It would appear that the Duke of Northumberland, having at first opposed the Bill, subsequently assented to it upon certain conditions—that was to say, upon certain clauses which were given to him by the Chairman of the Committee, and afterwards ratified by that House. On that understanding the Bill was carried through Parliament. Now an arrangement having been made on settled conditions between the Government and the Duke of Northumberland, there ought at all events to be clauses introduced to prevent that settlement being unsettled, and the Duke left year after year to fight the battle over again. It was no longer a question between the Duke of Northumberland on the one side, and the House of Commons and the public on the other; but the Government Department which had made a compact with him and given certain pledges on their part ought to defend their own Act of Parliament, and not throw the burden of doing so upon an individual.

MR. COWPER said, his view of the transaction connected with the Thames Embankment Bill passed in 1862 was different from that of the right hon. Gentleman. The Act of 1862 took away the water from the front of certain wharves; and it was necessary either to give compensation for the loss of the water-frontage or to purchase the wharves entirely. It did not then seem of much importance which of those courses was taken, and he had been quite willing that the Duke of Northumberland should take his choice between these two alternatives. The Duke of Northumberland elected to take the compensation, and the matter having been settled on that footing he (Mr. Cowper) did not see that, as the promoter of the Bill of 1862, he had bound himself by any engagement to oppose any future application that might affect Northumberland House. He had, therefore, not felt it to be his duty or his province to interfere in that respect, although, of course, if there had been anything like a compact or engagement to that effect he should have been the last person to hesitate in performing it. It might, however, be quite competent for the Duke of Northumberland to say that that clause ought not to be repealed.

MR. ROEBUCK said, that, unless the hon. Member for Bath accepted the proposal made by the hon. Member for Surrey, he should divide the House.

MR. HENLEY said, the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Office of Works had spoken of what he should have done if there had been "anything like a compact or engagement." It was quite clear that the parties on the other side had thought that there was not only an agreement but a compact; and a most unfortunate state of things now arose. What were the facts of the case? There was a portion of land occupied by wharves and covered with an extremely low set of buildings for the specific purpose of not interrupting the river view from Northumberland House. The value of the property was reduced on account of that speciality; that speciality was brought fairly before the notice of all the parties, and it was stated in the very memorandum of agreement drawn up in the case that the object was to protect the enjoyment of the view from Northumberland House. He must say that if the special pleading now adopted on that matter was to prevail, people must look sharply after all the Acts of Parliament that came under the cognizance of the Department of Works.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the Thames Embankment (North) Approaches Bill, the Thames Embankment (Chelsea) Bill, and the Park Lane Improvement Bill, be committed to a Select Committee, consisting of Eleven Members, Six to be nominated by the House, and Five by the Committee of Selection.—(*Mr. Cowper.*)

TESTS ABOLITION (OXFORD) BILL.

(Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Grant Duff.)

[BILL 15.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. COLERIDGE: Sir, I am sorry that I should be obliged to break the silence I had hoped long to observe in this House with regard to a subject in itself so difficult and important, mixed up with so many complicated considerations, and in respect of which I must expect to come across the feelings and convictions of many hon. Gentlemen whose goodwill and support I would most gladly conciliate. How it has come to pass that this measure has fallen from the hands of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London (Mr. Goschen) into mine can form no matter of interest to the House; but I may observe that it is only at the desire of other Members, and more especially at the desire of the hon. Member for Elgin (Mr. Grant Duff), that I have undertaken this duty—a duty which every one must feel that he, the zealous and consistent advocate of the measure, would himself have far better discharged, and yet I am not altogether sorry to be obliged to speak upon this question, because with respect to it, and with respect to questions of a kindred character, I desire to say that I recognize a double duty—the duty first of all of a member of the Church of England, and of a member of the University of Oxford, to maintain what he believes to be the best and truest interest of the great religious body, and of the noble academical institution to which it is his privilege and his blessing to belong; and the duty of a Liberal Member of Parliament to advance by all lawful and honourable means those Liberal opinions which he ardently professes, and which he has entered this House to support. I believe that these duties need not in the least conflict, certainly not upon the present occasion; for, yielding to no hon. Gentleman in loyal gratitude to the Church of England and to the University of Oxford, it is distinctly as a Churchman and as a University man that I venture to submit this Bill to the favourable attention of the House. It is a Bill which has hitherto received a persistent and successful opposition—successful, that is to say, from the force of circumstances, and not as the result of divisions in this House. It is a Bill to enable the lay subjects of the Queen to obtain the full benefits of a University education, and to become in the fullest sense of the word members of the University, without any reference to the particular religious opinions which they may chance to entertain. One would have thought—although experience teaches us that one would have thought very wrongly —that it would only be necessary to point out that loyal lay subjects of the Queen called upon Parliament to enable them to partake of benefits from which they are now excluded in order to ensure the success of such an appeal. The University is a great national institution, which was founded and which flourished for centuries before any of the existing Colleges came into existence. The alleged foundation of Oxford by King Alfred, and of Cambridge by his son, are probably equally mythical, but any one in looking into so common a book as Stowe or Ayliffe may satisfy himself that in the time of King Stephen, centuries before any College was founded, there were at least 3,000 students at the University of Oxford; and although it is true that the Colleges have at present, so to say, obtained possession of the University, yet they are altogether different from it in point of theory, and were for many centuries different from it in point of fact. The University is a lay corporation, as Lord Coke and Blackstone expressly lay down; and no lawyer will for a moment deny that proposition. Its Chancellor is always a distinguished layman; its Vice Chancellor may be a layman; its proctors may be, and sometimes are, laymen; a large proportion of its graduates are laymen also; it is, as we know, to our advantage, represented in this House, and it has not been at any time represented in Convocation. It is true that the clergy go to the University, but they go there as they go to Eton, and Winchester, and Rugby, and other schools, not as clergymen, but as boys and young men. They do not live separately, they are not taught separately, they do not even graduate separately; for every one is aware that divinity degrees come to a man late in life. And it is a great advantage to clergymen in after years, when they come to live among laymen, that they are thus enabled to comprehend the tone and character of those to whom they minister, and the nature of the temptations against which they have to preach. But the matter does not stand there, because, as every Member of the House must know, a number of theological training colleges have of late years been set up by eminent Churchmen in different parts of the country for the purpose of supplying that purely theological element in the education of our clergy in which it is supposed they are deficient, and the imparting of which in due measure is hindered by the lay pursuits, the lay studies, the lay atmosphere, of our old Universities. It is not, therefore, correct to say that those great corporations are in any sense clerical seminaries; and I believe there are no persons who would more strenuously resist any attempt to give them that character than the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford, who, I understand, is to move the rejection of this Bill, and the hon. Member for the University of Oxford, who sits beside him. But if the University is a place to which the lay subjects of the Queen are entitled to have recourse, on what ground can a measure be resisted which is to enable those subjects of the Crown to share in the fullest advantages of these corporations, even though they should not be prepared to subscribe to all the propositions contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, or to accept the Prayer Book of the Church of England as the guide of their devotion? I had not the honour of a seat in this House on any of the former occasions on which this question was discussed; but I have thought it my duty to read the speeches of those by whom it was recommended to the favourable consideration of the House, as well as of those who took a leading part in opposing it. It would not much be wondered at if I could not find in the speeches of the opponents of this measure substantial arguments in its favour; but I have done my duty, I think, in endeavouring to find out what is the case against the Bill I have the honour to advocate. As far as I can make out, the real case comes to a statement of unquestionable fact, and to a statement of two or three somewhat old and bold assumptions. The statement of fact is this: that in a certain sense, and as a matter of paper legislation, the Nonconformists have no right to that which they are now asking, as by the powers of the University Bill of 1854 they can already obtain to a certain extent the benefits of an University education, and take the B.A. degree. It is assumed that there is an essential connection between the Church of England and the University, and that the presence of a few Nonconformists in Convocation will sever this connection; and that disastrous results will follow to the Church of England and to the University itself. Now, first of all as to the fact that the Nonconformists can, if they please, now go to Oxford and derive the benefit of an University education. I cannot help thinking that last year the hon. Member for Bradford gave a true and conclusive answer to that argument. The hon. Member said—and I take the liberty of repeating his statement—that we had no right to subject Nonconformists and their children to humiliating distinctions. High education and refinement are good things, but there are things greater and better than these. High education and refinement are bought too dear if purchased at the sacrifice of personal self-respect and personal dignity, and of that sentiment of honour and independence which is the source of half of the great actions and more than half of the great characters in the world, on the possession of which hon. Gentlemen pride themselves, and justly pride themselves, and which does not cease to be a great sentiment, or change its character and degenerate into sentimentalism, simply because it crosses the House and animates the souls of men who sit upon these Benches. Hon. Gentlemen opposite know what I say to be correct. They know they would so act themselves; they know they would fling back with disdain any such unworthy attempt at drawing the distinction against themselves, and they ought not to use as an argument against the Nonconformists that which they would feel to be unfair if used against themselves. The other part of the statement of the case of the opponents of this measure rests on what I may call assumption. The hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir William Heathcote)—justly honoured by everyone in this House, and whose acquaintance and friendship, I believe I may say, I have enjoyed for many years—is, I think the House will agree with me, far too keen a man not to know when he is making an assumption, and far too candid not to admit it when made. On the last occasion the hon. Baronet used language in which, in a certain sense, I agree, and which I adopt as my own, because it proves what I am now stating. The hon. Baronet said, in 1864, that a Bill which struck at the root of the principle of association in the governing body of the Church it would not be wise or necessary to argue at any length—that argument depended on the principles on which hon. Members had made up their minds, and that the same facts and arguments would lead to opposite conclusions according to the aspect from which they were regarded; and he added that he assumed that the Universities were Church institutions. To a certain extent I entirely agree in that statement, but venture to say that in the sense in which the hon. Baronet made the assumption the Universities are not Church institutions. And I say further, that the presence of a few Nonconformists in the Convocation of the University will no more prevent its being a Church institution in reality than the presence of a few Jews in this House prevents its being substantially a Christian assembly, or than the existence of Roman Catholics in this country prevents England from being substantially a Protestant Power. We need a definition. If by Church institutions the hon. Baronet means exclusive Church institutions, then I say that at this time of day, and in the present state of the country, the Church of England is not entitled to have these exclusive Church institutions. If he means to say substantially Church institutions, then I say that the practical relationship between the Church and the University will remain the same as it is now. I admit that in a certain sense what he says is perfectly correct, and that these matters do much depend on the point of view from which they are regarded. I frankly avow that my great object is to make the University of Oxford once more what it once was—a great national institution, to which all subjects of the Queen can resort at their pleasure. I ardently desire that large numbers of the Nonconformists of England may be attracted there, in order that they may be subject to the refining, the ennobling, and, I believe I may add, the sanctifying influences of that most reverend place. I desire this for the Nonconformists themselves, for the Church of England, and for what is greater and wider, and ought to be dearer to us than either, for the great English nation. Sir, not being a Nonconformist myself, I should not venture to say that Nonconformists would be better for an University education if some of the most leading members of the Nonconformist body had not said so themselves. If they say so, however, I hope I may be permitted to state that I entirely agree with them. There is great goodness amongst them, much high principle and earnest zeal, and I have the best reason for knowing that they are animated by great generosity and forbearance, but not having amongst them the highest education as a body, their views on political subjects, if I may be permitted to say so, are somewhat narrow, and their religious toleration somewhat confined. We have heard contemptuous observations on Nonconformists because, as it is asserted, their education is imperfect; whether this be true I do not know; but I do know that it is not very generous to taunt them with not possessing that of which you who taunt them prevent them from acquiring. I may, perhaps, overrate the importance of those studies which have been the delight of my own life and a relief from the labours of a profession which, it is said, to a great extent deadens the heart and narrows the intellect. It may be that I exaggerate the effect of the wonderful and glorious associations of the University of Oxford on an ardent and sensitive mind. For my own part, I do not much envy the feelings of those who are insensible to these associations and to the memories of the illustrious dead. I do not think much of the man who could pass

"Through the same gateways, sleep where they have slept,
Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,
That garden of great intellects,"

without being much the better for it. It is because I think Nonconformists would be much the better for it that I desire to see them there. But the Church of England itself as well as the Nonconformists will benefit by the change. It will drive her to rely on herself, on the purity of her system and the truth of her doctrines, and I believe that the destruction of her exclusive defences would be the beginning of a life of vigour and increased usefulness within the walls of the University. If this is to be a legitimate result of a recognized system to which both parties agree, where is the unfairness of it? Why should we as Churchmen doubt the truth of those opinions which we profess when brought face to face with the views of those with whom we do not agree? It is for Nonconformists to trust to the force of the opinions which are uppermost in their minds; but in the case of either party the desire among each should be that truth shall prevail, and it is not less likely to prevail when you give greater facilities for intercourse, or it may be conflict, between the most accomplished intellects. As to my own opinions and convictions, I have no fear of their being brought into opposition with those of others, and it is not for Nonconformists to shrink from honourable conflict. But to take another view of this question, this is not merely a matter between Nonconformists and Churchmen; it is the country at large which must benefit by the change. No party can deny that the conflict between the Established Church and the great body of Nonconformists is a source of great religious weakness and political dissension. The mere existence of wide religious differences is of itself a source of weakness. The Reformation, doubtless, did a great amount of good, but it was not unattended with a certain amount of evil, because it extracted from the ancient Church almost all the minds that represented principles of a popular cast—it set in array against each other the principles of liberty and authority; and the consequence has been that Protestantism has generally become more latitudinarian, and Roman Catholicism more Roman, in every successive century since the Reformation. A similar result, on a smaller scale, has been represented in this country by the conflicts perpetually going on between the Established Church and the numerous sects of the Nonconformists which surround her in perpetual hostility. I am desirous, if possible, of seeing this state of things altered; and I believe nothing in the world would more tend to bring about this result than bringing eminent Churchmen and eminent Nonconformists upon one common ground while prosecuting their studies at the University. Nothing tends more to liberalize the feelings and to smooth the acerbities of religious controversy than bringing men of honest and independent minds together, and causing them to do justice to the characters and motives of their opponents, however diverse may be some of the opinions in question between them, and however varying their views of truth. We live in an age of which De Tocqueville has traced the spirit, and which has seen the rise and progress of the great American Republic. We live in a democratic age, in an aristocratic country. We cannot afford, therefore, to minimize those Conservative influences which ought to be brought to bear on those who have so great an influence in moulding those institutions under which we live, and which we all so much admire. As you increase the opportunities of University education so do you widen the influences which tend to progress, but still more, undoubtedly, those which tend to moderation and to order. It is, besides, essential in this age that free inquiry should be conducted somewhere; and it should be conducted where it can be conducted safely. And the University is just the place where inquiry may be conducted under the most softening and healing influences. I will not ask how far it is wise to stop free inquiry even among our clergy, but free inquiry you must and will have; nay, I will say you ought to have, as the only right foundation of reasonable belief and intelligent conviction. You must have it; if you try to shut it out it will break in upon the University from without; and the best way will be to deal with it in the most open and avowed manner. You can no more bar it out than you can prevent the sun from shining in the sky because you may shut your eyes and refuse to see it. There has been too much fear of inquiry; too much of that which was described in a noble passage written about the University of Cambridge some seventy or eighty years ago, and true in the main of Oxford, as I knew it—

> "Murmuring submission and bald government,
> The idol weak as the idolator,
> And Decency and Custom starving Truth,
> And blind Authority beating with his staff
> The child who might have led him."

Free inquiry, no doubt, like every other good thing, is unquestionably liable to abuse—*corruptio optimi est pessima;* and the rash exercise of this privilege has sometimes degenerated into infidelity. There is no ground of dread on behalf of religion or the Church from free and fair inquiry. When have religion and the Church been found unequal to the conflict when fairly matched with their foes? Was what Gibbon called the giant spear of Horsley unable to pierce the shield of his able but still inferior antagonist Priestley? Was the profound and religious intellect of the illustrious Butler unequal to deal with the various forms of infidelity that surrounded him? The fear of free and sound inquiry is a baseless one, it is one in which I cannot share, and as a believer and as a Churchman I protest against it. I have now only to state shortly the provisions of the Bill it has been my lot to introduce. It is a short and simple Bill, and has for its object to enable laymen to take degrees without religious tests. It repeals a portion of the University Act of 1854, which limits its operation to the B.A. degree, and repeals such part of the Act of Uniformity as compels professors and laymen to declare their assent to the Thirty-nine Articles. By the University Act of 1854 certain fellowships were suppressed, and certain professorships of art and science were founded from the revenues thus diverted; these professors sit at the high table, and have rooms in the College, but there is no instance in which they are obliged to be, I believe there is none in which they have actually become, members of the governing body or fellows. It is with this class that the last clause of this Bill deals, with the view of rendering their position less anomalous. The question of grammar schools has also been raised in connection with this subject, but this Bill will not interfere with those institutions throughout the country the benefits of which are limited to Churchmen. Now, Sir, upon that question I do not desire to express any opinion. It is an important question, no doubt; it is one which I think ought to be determined upon its own grounds when it arises; but it is a question which has nothing to do with this Bill. It seems to me far better to confine the operation of the Bill to one particular object, leaving the question of the grammar schools to be decided upon its own merits. I have, therefore, thought it right to put into this Bill a special provision, the object of which is to compel masters of such schools to make the same subscription which they are compelled to make, as the law now stands, as they have at present—in effect, to leave the existing state of the question as it is in respect to a matter which does not come within the operation of the Bill. Well, Sir, I have done that with the most perfect good faith. If there be anything in the wording of the measure which is imperfect, of course I shall be happy to remedy the defect. I have now stated the object of my Bill. It is a small and a short measure. I have received an intimation from the hon. and learned Member for Oxford City which I hardly think was seriously intended, inviting me to fuse my Bill with the Bill of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock, with a view of framing therefrom what is called a large and comprehensive measure. To such a proposal, I must reply, in the language of Horace to Augustus—

> "—— Cupidum, pater optime, vires
> Deficiunt."

I have not strength for the undertaking, nor have I the experience of the hon. Gentleman who, apparently with the most perfect ease to himself, can frame a large and comprehensive measure upon this question, and secure its success in this and the other House of Parliament. I have shrunk from the introduction of any measure but one of a simple and definite character. In regard to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilmarnock, I can only say that that measure is not now before us. I confess that upon its provisions I do not entertain a very clear opinion. It seems to me, however, that the question of the Colleges and that of the University of Oxford are wholly distinct, and that a man may with perfect consistency vote for the present Bill and against the measure of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock. I do not say myself what I shall or shall not do in respect to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilmarnock. But I maintain that the questions involved in the respective Bills are perfectly distinct, and that the arguments I have ventured to put forward in regard to the University of Oxford do not apply to the Colleges which are more materially affected by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. I repeat, then, that my Bill and that of the right hon. Gentleman are perfectly distinct. They have nothing to do with one another, and I respectfully submit that they are presented upon totally different grounds. I earnestly hope that the House will permit my Bill to proceed to a second reading. I see that the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford has given notice of his intention to move that the Bill be rejected. I trust, however, that upon consideration the hon. Baronet will not fly the old flag of "No surrender," and that we shall hear no more of the stale argument of "danger to the Church and the University," which cannot apply to my measure. I suppose that no hon. Gentleman who sits upon either side of the House entertains in his heart the slightest shadow of a doubt that this or a like measure must, sooner or later, become the law of the land. Well, if that be so, I ask you why should we delay its passing? Why should we wait until those angry feelings which are now being allayed and repressed become embittered and strengthened by time and disappointed hopes? Why put off the passing of a simple measure of justice, when by doing so we may deprive it of its character of a gracious concession, and give it that of a tardy and hard-wrung extortion of right? Surely, you may trust something to the good sense and right feeling of men in earnest; something to the innate and invincible strength of that religion which is, and which I hope may long remain, enshrined in the University of Oxford. Mr. Windham said in this House many years ago—

> "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great Empire and little minds go ill together."

That sentence seems to me to be as wise as it is eloquent, and in the spirit of that sentence, and thanking the House for the patience with which they have listened to what I have inflicted upon them, I beg leave to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

MR. TREVELYAN seconded the Motion. Certain Gentlemen opposed this Bill upon the ground that it would give an advantage to the sister, or as some would call it the rival, University. He entertained no such apprehensions. Speaking, as he knew he was, the sentiments of a considerable minority of Cambridge men, so far from viewing this measure with anything like a feeling of envy, they cordially congratulated themselves upon the prospects which this Bill presented to them. The interests of the one institution were identical with those of the other, and they were anxious to stand by the true friends of the University of Oxford now, because they knew that when their turn came for Reform those friends would stand by the sister University, which so eagerly desired Reform, and wanted it even more. The friends of the sister University desired to return to that state of things which the hon. and learned Gentleman had depicted with such fidelity, when the education in the Universities as well as the religion of the country were national—when, in fact, the institutions of the country were not only national but cosmopolitan. When Erasmus came from Germany he was not called upon to make tests or affirmations: the tests were framed subsequently by the wisdom of our ancestors as represented by Lord Leicester. It was idle to deny that the best College education was not one of a religious, but of a secular character. He knew that once or twice in the course of their residence the students were obliged to get up a certain amount of theology by means of grammars, epitomes, and *memoria technica.* All would remember the old criterion by which they used to sum up the reasons for believing in the Old Testament, and how they were afterwards obliged to go to chapel to receive the Sacraments under penalties—a very questionable mode of spiritual edification. The best education consisted of a free intercourse of mind and mind and a generous struggle for academic honours. It was in a training of this kind that their true education consisted, and not of a constrained assent to some hundred articles of theology given in one breath at the termination of their University career. When Dissenters claimed to share the benefits of the generosity of the old Kings and Queens of England they were told to put their shoulders to the wheel, and to found Colleges for themselves; and when the Dissenters did found such institutions, University men gave them a name which was neither respectful nor fragrant. As a Trinity man, he could never forget the shame he felt when a Senior Wrangler, who was universally beloved for his modesty and amiability, was driven from the walls of the University without either honours or emoluments. He did not think that a mixture of Dissenters with the youth at the Universities would shake their attachment to the Church. From the tone of the debates in the Ecclesiastical Union one would suppose that Dissenters were scarcely acknowledged to be brother Christians. Not only would the junior clergy be benefited by such a measure as this, but the senior clergy also. The evils of what had been called the Liberal element in Convocation had been referred to. Why, only the other day a proposition from another University — the University of Longfellow, and Everett, and Lowell—was rejected by the Senate of Cambridge, not because it would introduce a new principle, but because the Yankees were democrats. Now, they ought to welcome such new recruits with open arms. The advantage, moreover, would be mutual; the Dissenters wanted the culture of the Churchmen and the Churchmen needed the vigour of the Dissenters. Hon. Members would act wisely in establishing by their votes that day the doctrine of free trade in intellect and knowledge. It had been stated that the measure would not be successful, because of the existence of a Conservative reaction in religious matters; but if such a reaction had taken place it was owing to the increased popularity of the Church. He believed that some improvement had been manifested during the last few years in the organization and the doctrine of the Church, and the tone of the clergy, and, as a consequence, she had grown in general favour and esteem. This was no reason, however, for maintaining what was unpopular and unjust. As a Churchman, he disclaimed what was known in theological parlance as "ulterior views;" and stated that he had no intention to break down the bulwarks of the Church. Her strength lay in national affection. Without the aid of Parliament enough had been done to perpetuate sectarian strife; and as a Member representing a constituency of Churchmen and Dissenters who lived together in harmony and mutual confidence, he supported the Bill of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Coleridge.*)

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE: I am sure I express the sentiments of all Members on this side when I tender to the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge) their thanks and admiration for the eloquent speech which he has just delivered. We who knew him expected much from him on his becoming a Member of the House, but I feel I can say that he has exceeded our expectations. I thank him also for that which is even more admirable than his eloquence—for the tone and moderation with which he has brought this subject before the House. If indeed I were to find a fault, it would be with that excess of moderation which has led him to describe the measure as a small one. Taken on its real merits I should not say that the measure was a small one; and after the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman I should be still less disposed to close my eyes to its important and extensive character. Last year, the right hon. Gentleman who had charge of the measure (Mr. Goschen) suggested for consideration the question whether it was or was not a measure of importance, and he chose the alternative of considering it a large and important question. It is in that aspect that the subject presents itself to my own mind; and if hon. Gentlemen have recovered from the charm of the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman, I hope they will allow me briefly to state the nature of the practical difficulties which we have hitherto had to grapple in dealing with the question. I wish to say for myself, and on behalf of many friends—especially on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir William Heathcote)—that we do not mean to meet the question in a spirit of "No surrender," or by raising suggestions of an alarming character. We propose to discuss it temperately, and endeavour, if it be possible, to arrive at such a settlement as may be satisfactory to those who have proposed the measure, without endangering the interests which we consider it our bounden duty to protect. I will first state the ground we take, and the difficulties with which we have to contend. With regard to the status of the Universities, I will not dispute the justice of the appellation which has been applied to them when they are called "lay corporations." On the other hand, I am sure my hon. and learned Friend will readily endorse the statement that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are institutions of very great antiquity and importance, and that they possess a status very different indeed from institutions which have been created by Parliament for the purposes of the State. For instance, the Universities differ widely from the Military Colleges of Woolwich and Sandhurst, which were lately under discussion, which Parliament maintains, and which Parliament therefore may deal with without hesitation or difficulty. The Universities are corporations which have existed, I may almost say, time out of mind, and as far as Parliament is concerned, I may even claim that the Universities are older than the House of Commons itself. The Universities possess legislative bodies of their own; which discharge functions of high importance, and which are fully competent to deal with matters which the House of Commons is very incompetent to deal with in detail. Considering all these things, it is not, I think, an extravagant demand when we ask that Parliament should be very cautious in doing anything which may affect the constitution of the Universities. I willingly acknowledge that they are subordinate institutions; I acknowledge that Parliament has the right, and may from time to time exercise it, to interfere with them in order to obtain from them a greater amount of benefit for the nation at large. But I maintain that it is inexpedient and most undesirable that Parliament should frequently meddle and tamper with the Universities upon small and trivial points. It is desirable that the Universities should be dealt with by Parliament only at rare intervals, and for the settlement of some great question, and then only in a spirit which shall keep in view all the questions connected with them; and it is desirable when questions have been raised and settled, that they should be allowed to remain settled for a considerable length of time. Now, with regard to the admission of Nonconformists to the Oxford University, that question was raised, together with a number of other questions, about twelve years ago, upon the discussion which took place on the passing of the University of Oxford Bill, in 1854. After a very long and very careful inquiry into all matters affecting the University, the Government of the day introduced a Bill for its future regulation. The question to what extent Nonconformists should be admitted to the University was then raised, and it was for a time disposed of. True, it has been said that the settlement arrived at formed no part of the Government scheme, but was suggested incidentally in the course of discussion, that the decision of the House was arrived at in a hurried manner, and that it ought not to be taken as a final settlement of the question. But in the following year the matter was again revived, in connection not with the University of Oxford, but with that of Cambridge. Generally speaking, identically the same considerations were involved in dealing with both Universities. After very careful consideration, the Government introduced a Bill through the then Lord Chancellor, the same noble Lord who now holds that office; it proposed a certain settlement of the question; that settlement was discussed very fully in the House of Lords; Amendments were proposed and divisions taken, the measure being opposed by the Dissenters as not going far enough, and by some Churchmen as going too far, and divisions being taken in both senses. Finally, what was known as "the Cambridge Compromise" was adopted, and the Bill passed the House of Lords. The Bill made no further progress that year (1855), but in 1856 it was introduced again, and it then came down to the House of Commons and fell into the hands of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie), who proposed the Bill containing the clause precisely as it now stands in the Cambridge Act. In the first instance the Bill was opposed by Mr. Wigram, then Member for Cambridge University, who said that it gave too much to the Dissenters. A division was taken, and he was defeated in his opposition. Mr. Heywood afterwards objected to the clause because it did not go far enough, and upon his Motion a division was taken, he too was defeated, and the clause was passed as it now stands. That being so, Parliament has, I contend, in the most deliberate manner possible come to a decision with respect to the case of Cambridge; and how, I will ask, does the matter stand in connection with Oxford? It is said that Oxford does not give to Dissenters entirely the same advantages as Cambridge confers, although, practically, there is very little difference on the point between the two Universities. The difference practically is, that while at Cambridge Dissenters or any other persons who may object to sign certain declarations, or to avow themselves to be members of the Church of England, are allowed to take the degree of M.A., but are not admitted to the governing body, they are at Oxford prevented from taking that degree, as well as being precluded, as at Cambridge, from taking any share in the government of the University. Dissenters, therefore, no doubt labour so far under a nominal disadvantage at Oxford; but there is no disposition on the part of any one to resist the proposition that Dissenters, or any other persons, should be admitted, if they desire it, to the privilege of writing M.A. after their names. If that be all that be asked, there will be no difficulty in arriving at a settlement of the question. The real difficulty to be met is, that the promoters of the Bill insist, in addition, on the granting of something beyond what the University of Cambridge gives, and beyond what the University of Oxford is prepared to give. Since, then, the House is called upon to disturb the settlement which was arrived at during the three years ending in 1856, under these circumstances it is but fair to ask who the persons are by whom the fresh demand is made, and on whose behalf it is advanced. I do not mean to contend that the decision pronounced by Parliament on the question during the period which I have just mentioned must be regarded as final. I do, however, maintain that the question, if re-opened, ought to be brought forward in a solid and serious manner by persons able to speak with authority on behalf of the Nonconformists as to what they would look upon as a complete settlement of the subject. I am perfectly ready to admit that if it be proved that in practice the compromise which was effected some years ago has not realized the objects proposed, good ground would be furnished for reconsidering its terms. I will further admit that in the case of Oxford, as far as I am able to judge, the arrangements entered into in 1854, with the view of enabling Nonconformists to avail themselves of the benefits of the education given there, have turned out to be a failure, owing principally—and this is a matter which, although it has not been alluded to by my hon. and learned Friend to-night, was often mentioned on former occasions—this arrangement failed, owing chiefly to the circumstance that those Dissenters who wish to send their sons to the University, cannot open halls to which they may go, inasmuch as the Act of 1854 prohibits anybody from opening a licensed hall unless he is a member of Convocation, while from Convocation every one failing to make the required declaration, is excluded. Under these circumstances, the advantage which Parliament intended to secure to the Nonconformists by the Act of 1854 has not been obtained for them, and I admit that this is a matter on which those who have a right to speak on the matter on behalf of the Nonconformists, may very reasonably ask for an alteration of the law. But who are the persons who may fairly be regarded as possessing that right? The Universities themselves may, if they think fit, very properly allege that the statutes which have been passed do not meet the requirements of the case, and may express a wish that Parliament should again take the subject into consideration, upon the ground that their action was unduly fettered by that provision of the Act of 1854, and that they are not competent unaided to deal with it satisfactorily. That would, of course, be a perfectly legitimate application on the part of the Universities, but it is needless to say that it is one which they have not made; for, although my hon. and learned Friend may have spoken the sentiments of certain persons connected with Oxford or Cambridge, he did not, in moving the second reading of this Bill, profess to speak on behalf of either University as a body. The House of Commons, again, may also be asked to re-open the question on the part of the great body of Nonconformists, who may fairly urge that they have not received those advantages which Parliament intended to confer upon them in 1854 in an honest and not merely an illusory spirit. But my hon. and learned Friend, like those hon. Members who have advocated this measure in former years, is not able to say that he speaks the sentiments of the Nonconformist body, and can only inform the House that that for which he asks is a thing which ought, in his opinion, to be given, without being enabled to state that, if given, it will be satisfactory to those who are principally concerned, and will be accepted as a settlement of the question. It is quite possible that many other things may be required; indeed, the Nonconformists themselves admit that they require many other things. But my hon. and learned Friend, omitting those other things, invites the House to pass the present Bill first, and to deal afterwards with the questions which remain behind — referring to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilmarnock, who contends that the Dissenters have a right not only to take degrees at the Universities, but to participate in the emoluments of the Colleges. That is a proposal against which, judging from the speech of my hon. and learned Friend, he would as probably vote as not. It is obvious that my hon. and learned Friend in abstaining from any allusion to that question, is angling for votes in support of his own measure. But the two questions must be considered as one, and you must say whether the proposal be reasonable or not. The Dissenters, if the Bill under discussion should become law, may come forward and argue that a principle which has been admitted in reference to the Universities applies equally to the Colleges; maintaining that Parliament has given them that which they did did not much prize, while it has refused to grant them that on which they really set a value. It is natural that the Nonconformists should wish to see their friends and relatives admitted at Oxford and Cambridge, and my hon. and learned Friend has with great force and truth pointed out the immense advantages which they would derive from the associations with which they would there be brought in contact. It should, however, be borne in mind that Oxford and Cambridge consist of the Colleges and halls of which they are composed; because no man, unless he is a member of one of these Colleges and halls, can, according to the present statutes, be a member of the Universities. What, however, I apprehend that the Dissenters want is, not that they may be enabled to go to some Dissenters' Hall to be established by-and-bye, or to some private lodgings, as indicated by the proposal of the hon. Member for Dumfries (Mr. W. Ewart), but that they should be allowed to become *bonâ fide* members of one of the old Colleges of Christ Church or Baliol, or any other College they might choose to select, in the same way as members of the Church of England. Indeed, the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) very frankly contended last year that, if the doors of the Universities were opened at all to Dissenters, they should be opened freely; adding, that he thought the Dissenters would not, and ought not, to accept any concession that did not enable them to go to the Universities with a feeling of absolute and complete equality with Churchmen. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the City of Oxford (Mr. Neate) also stated with great candour and ability, the year before last, that the House must not expect to deal with the Universities without dealing afterwards with the Colleges, which he said we should be invited to bring into harmony with the Universities, as we were then invited to bring the Universities into harmony with the national feeling. Under those circumstances the House ought to look at the question as a whole, and ought not to be led away by the beautiful idea to which my hon. and learned Friend has given expression, of a national University in which the Dissenters might be freely admitted though they might be excluded from the Colleges. Is such a state of things as has been sketched by my hon. and learned Friend, I would ask, possible? It is all very well to speak, as he has done, in general terms of what he desires to see, and pictures to himself in his imagination; but it must not be forgotten that *dolus latet in generalibus*, and that he was unable to say what would really satisfy the Dissenters. I must, therefore, object to consider the question in the way in which it has been placed before the House; we must go into particulars, and see what the state of the Colleges is, whether the Nonconformists can be admitted to the Universities without being admitted to the Colleges; whether it is possible that they can be admitted to the one, and excluded from the other. But there is a third party—the Government—who might, I think, fairly ask for a revision of the Settlement of 1854. They might come forward and say, "This settlement has failed in its operation, it does not accomplish all that we intended, and we propose a new measure to give effect to our intentions." My hon. and learned Friend, however, does not profess to speak for the Government; nor would it be easy for him to do so, because, so far as the House is aware of the feelings of its Members—and many of them have at various times spoken on the question—the Government do not agree with him in proposing to give to Dissenters that voice in the government of the Universities which he proposes. I will not quote from the speeches of different Members of the Government in support of that view; but will simply refer to what fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer two years ago, in favour of a proposal which was far short of that of my hon. and learned Friend, and which would exclude Dissenters from seats in Convocation, while giving them a right of opening private halls, of voting for Members for the Universities, and other things which I need not mention. But I should like to remind the House of what took place when that proposal was made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer threw those points out for the consideration of his Colleague in the representation of the University at the time (Sir William Heathcote). Having consulted his friends, the hon. Baronet intimated that he was willing, and that he thought many of his friends would be willing, to take the matter into consideration, and that some settlement of the question might be arrived at analogous to that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thereupon communicated with the promoters of the Bill; but they declined to accept those terms. My hon. and learned Friend, therefore, does not speak for the Government, but for those who rejected the proposals of the Government. Speaking for those who sit on my side of the House, I can say with sincerity that we are anxious for a settlement of the question; but then we are not prepared to deal with those who are not in the position of plenipotentiaries, and who are not enabled to offer any definite terms on behalf of those whom they profess to represent. It must, therefore, be difficult to come to any arrangement. The course we propose to take is this. I have given notice of a Motion for the rejection of the Bill. I see so much difficulty in passing it or in changing it into a measure which would accomplish what we think is all that the Dissenters have a right to demand that I think the best course would be to reject the Bill at once, and allow the introduction of some other Bill, either by the Government or by those who represent the Nonconformists, or by the Members for the Universities themselves, dealing with the question in the way in which we wish to deal with it. But I am told that we shall be open to misconstruction if we adopt that course. We should be accused of offering a blind resistance, and refusing to admit what we really do admit to be a grievance on the part of Dissenters. I should not necessarily be bound, if it should appear that those who are most directly representatives of the Dissenting interest are prepared to come in under a compromise, or that the members of the Universities desire that the opinion of the House should be taken not on the second reading, but on any measure which may be submitted to its consideration, to divide against the second reading. But I am afraid, from the explanation which has been given by my hon. and learned Friend, that it is not likely that he will agree with what we desire to do. The question is whether you are to admit the Dissenters to share in the government of the University? That is a question on which we must take our stand, and my hon. and learned Friend has not held out any hope that he is prepared to recede from that part of his demand. He asks why we should exclude the lay subjects of the Queen from the full advantage of University degrees. He says he does not wish to meddle with the clergy, but he makes a demand on behalf of the whole of the lay subjects of the Queen. The answer is this—we are dealing not merely with the lay subjects of the Queen, but with certain lay subjects of the Queen who have a particular duty thrown upon them—the duty of imparting instruction to the clergy of the Church of England. And that is the point on which we insist. The real difficulty is this. If the Universities are to continue to be places of education for the clergy it is of the highest importance that they should from the very beginning of their career be educated in the principles of the Church of England. If we are to maintain the doctrines of the Church of England, and send out a body of clergy competent to maintain those doctrines, it is of the utmost importance that their early education should be conducted on the principles of the Church which they are to represent. If, then, Convocation is to be the body responsible at the Universities for the details of that education, and is to be held to be the supreme authority within their walls on all matters connected with teaching, it is desirable that its character should be distinctly Church of England. If that be not the case, one of two things will happen; either the clergy will be withdrawn from the Universities, and will have to accept their education at theological colleges or some other institutions where they would be separated from the laymen, or else the teaching given them in the principles of their Church would be so mixed and diluted as to be conducive to nothing but a sacrifice of their principles and the growth of latitudinarianism. "But," says my hon. and learned Friend, "surely you are not afraid of having a few Dissenters in Convocation?" Certainly not; but what I am afraid of is, that if all the tests are relaxed, and Dissenters are admitted to the governing body, the whole tone of its distinctive teaching will run the risk of being changed. My hon. and learned Friend does not seem to shrink from that result, because he speaks of doing away with the outwork of tests, which he describes as being nothing worth to the Church, and he speaks of the influence which Churchmen may have on Dissenters and Dissenters upon them. But what is the meaning, I should like to know, of his illustration of "the sharp line" drawn between Roman Catholic and Protestant divines? Is it contended that it is desirable that Dissenters and Churchmen should mix with one another, and that for "the sharp line" which now marks off the doctrines of the Church of England a sort of general hazy compromise should be substituted which shall, as it were, fuse together all denominations of Christians at the Universities? That is really the danger of which I am afraid; and it is because I am afraid of it that I wish to see the distinctive character of the education at the Universities kept up. Sir, the cardinal point on which this question turns is, whether we intend to maintain the principle of clerical subscriptions. My hon. and learned Friend indeed said that he did not propose to meddle with the clergy; but in the able pamphlet which the Dean of Westminster published three years ago, dealing with the whole question of Subscription, he said that although approaching the question from the point of view of the tests imposed at the Universities, yet so closely were they connected with clerical tests that he was obliged to deal with both together. In my opinion nothing can be more cruel than that at a time when the minds of young men destined for the Church are being formed, when they are being instructed in philosophy and all the liberal arts, they should be exposed to the risk of being imbued with the principles of a latitudinarian theology, and that afterwards, when ordained, they should be obliged to subscribe to tests which they had been taught to regard as of no value whatsoever. The spirit in which I wish to deal with the question is this—I desire to give to the Dissenters everything that we can give without injury to our own Church, but I cannot give them that which I believe would injure the Church deeply. I cordially concur with my hon. and learned Friend in all that he has said with respect to the great body of the Nonconformists in this country. I honour them for the sacrifices which many of them have made for the sake of conscience, and I am persuaded that those who are ready to make sacrifices themselves for their own conscience sake will respect the consciences of others. We are not talking upon a mere question of emoluments—we are talking upon a question which, in our view, affects the very life of the Church, and upon the maintenance of which our religious life, as a Church, to a great extent depends. I say that one of two things must happen. If the House were to surrender the safeguards which now exist in connection with the education of our clergy, then would the distinctive character of that education be diluted or destroyed. Either this (and this I think is the more probable solution, though certainly it is not a satisfactory one) must happen or the clergy must be withdrawn from our Universities, where they are now educated with the laity, and must have a separate and distinctive education provided for them — and I need scarcely point out how materially their influence would be thus impaired, and how serious a blow would be struck at their usefulness. I have given notice that it is my intention to move the rejection of the Bill at its present stage, and that, I believe, is the best course to adopt. I have, however, been informed that that course would be liable to misconstruction, inasmuch as it might lead to the supposition that I and those who share my views refuse to admit that which they do admit is a real grievance in the case of Dissenters. If then, during the progress of the debate, any hon. Member speaking on their behalf should hold out the prospect that an arrangement in which all parties might concur would be suggested in Committee, far from wishing to press the House to a division, I shall be glad to afford an opportunity for entertaining any such proposal. For the present, however, I shall conclude by moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Sir Stafford Northcote.*)

MR. BUXTON said, the hon. Baronet spoke as though the Nonconformists looked upon this as a matter of little moment; but he (Mr. Buxton) thought the hon. Gentlemen opposite would display great pusillanimity if they refrained from dividing on the second reading of that Bill. The question was not a question of details that might be settled in Committee; it was a broad question of principle, and he was confident that neither his hon. Friend, the Mover, nor the Seconder of that Bill would consent to any compromise whatever with regard to it. They based themselves on the fact that the Universities were not the property of the Established Church, but were the property of the whole nation; whence it inevitably followed that the Dissenters, who formed so large a portion of the nation, were entitled to a full share in all the privileges and all the powers which those Universities could bestow. He was, however, far from thinking that this Bill should be regarded simply as a Bill for the relief of Nonconformists. That, perhaps, might be its more immediate object; but he believed, in its practical result, it would be found that its chief value lay far more in giving relief to Churchmen themselves. For, beyond question, those tests burdened the minds and vexed the consciences of numberless men who yet were genuine members of the Established Church; but these tests were forced upon them at that very time of life when the mind was most inclined to spurn restraint and be revolted at being called upon to accept, wholesale, a vast mass of dogmatic teaching. Surely it was deplorable that the Church herself should hold out to these young men such strong temptation to tamper with their own truthfulness and to cast upon their consciences the shade of dishonour. The effect of her persisting in so doing could not fail to be disastrous to herself, and to the Universities as well, no less than to those individual men. For happily now there was such stir of mind among young men, they were so resolved to think for themselves courageously, and yet he did believe in a religious spirit, upon the religious teaching they had received, that if those extravagantly stringent tests were still applied to them before they were allowed to take part in the government of the Universities, the inevitable result would be to exclude from that government numbers of men who yet accepted the teaching of the Church as a whole, and who would adorn the University by their vigour of mind and generous feeling. Nothing, in his opinion, could be more shortsighted than for those who sought the well-being of the Universities or of the Church herself to persist in thrusting these hateful tests upon men whose noble love of truth and of mental freedom would not permit them to submit themselves to any such bondage. It was cruel to expose a young man at the turning-point of his career to such a dilemma between his sense of right and of honour, and his natural desire for the just rewards of the industry and ability he had displayed. These, he thought, were considerations of a most serious kind. And, now, what were the arguments against this Bill? The only argument in which he could discover any real force or vitality was the assertion, that if those tests were not maintained all definite religious teaching would cease in the University, and that that would be a great calamity at once to the undergraduates and to the University itself, which thereby would lose its hold upon the affections of the country. Now, he at once admitted that such a result would be a great calamity. He would go so far as to admit that were such to be the effect of that Bill, the arguments in its favour would be outweighed by that great peril. But were there real grounds for believing that such a result would ensue that this one argument should overpower all that could be said in favour of the Bill? He utterly denied that that Bill had the least tendency to bring about such a result. That argument was the very same that for so long excluded Roman Catholics and Jews from Parliament, and which experience had demonstrated to be so utterly futile; and in that case let them look on the matter in the light of plain common sense. Suppose a few Dissenters should creep into the governing body of Oxford—nay, he desired to correct that expression, for so far from deprecating such a result, it would in his belief be an unmixed advantage to all parties that a fair proportion of Nonconformists should be admitted to the governing body—was it rational to suppose that they would be a majority powerful enough to abolish all definite religious teaching on the part of the University? or that even if they had the power they would have the smallest wish to do so? He was honoured with the friendship of many Dissenters, and he vouched for this, that they had not the least shadow of a wish to lessen the religious influence of the Established Church. So far from it, they rejoiced in the good she was doing. All they wanted was perfect justice and honourable treatment for themselves. But suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Dissenting interest became so powerful and so venomous in the governing body of the University as to abolish those few scraps of religious teaching, such as the University sermon once a week, which was all that the University as a University afforded—still, would even the most foolish dreamer dream that the Colleges would not still retain definite religious teaching within their own walls? Possibly, two or three of them might adopt that of the Roman Catholic Church—possibly, a few might adopt that of some Nonconformist Church; but, beyond all rational doubt and question, the great majority of them would still retain the religious teaching of the Church of England. Not only principle, but interest, would compel them thus to adapt themselves to the religious sentiments of the classes whose sons they were called upon to educate. That argument, therefore, had, it seemed to him, nothing but the merest gilding of plausibility. But, in truth, the resistance to this Bill did not really emanate from any such alarm. He believed those tests were so highly valued in certain quarters simply because they were the one remnant—the one miserable rag and remnant—of the old claim made in bygone days on the part of the Established Church to absolute supremacy over the mind and conscience of the whole people. That claim was put forward in the boldest and most vivid way in the Declaration prefixed by law to the Thirty-nine Articles. In that Declaration the Sovereign said—"We require all our loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession of the Articles of the Church, and prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles." And again, it said:—"From the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England we will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree." That was the claim put forward in former days by the Established Church, and that was a claim still put forward on her behalf by a large portion of the Conservative party. That was a claim which, in his opinion, every true-hearted Liberal must reject with indignation. They held that every man had an absolute indefeasible right to choose his own faith for himself—a right upon which no law, no Sovereign, no institution could be suffered to make trespass. Those tests, however, were in reality nothing whatever but an emanation from that idea—happily obsolete elsewhere in England—that no man should be allowed to share in any national privileges or powers unless he would submit his mind to the dogmatic teaching of the Church. That question has nothing to do with that of the alliance between Church and State: nor yet did it bear at all on the question of preserving to the Church the property with which she was endowed. His right hon. Friend the Member for the City (Mr. Goschen) had demonstrated on a former occasion that, in the eye of the law, the Universities were not the property of the Church, but of the State. All history, all reason, all theory led to the same conclusion. It was the State that laid down the law for the Universities—that regulated them, and from which all their powers were derived. With the State lay the power, and therefore on the State lay the duty, the responsibility, of governing the Universities on the soundest principles, and in whatever way would best advance the well-being of the whole nation. He advocated the abolition of these mischievous tests, partly because they harassed the consciences of numberless Churchmen, but mainly because they deprived Nonconformists of privileges which as citizens they had a right to claim.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE expressed his pleasure at listening to the speeches of his hon. Friends the Members for East Surrey and Tynemouth, recalling to his mind, as they did, those speeches so full of gushing and youthful eloquence in which they had all indulged in the Union Debating Room at Cambridge. Their fault was that they seemed to have been prepared for the Union and then pigeon-holed till they had become obsolete. To take first that of the hon. Member for East Surrey, he had been eloquent in his exposition of the 700 points to which the clergy had been required to give their unfeigned assent and consent; but he forgot that within these two years, mainly by his own exertions, this subscription had been notably altered for the better; and what he ought to do, therefore, was to take steps to assimilate the University subscription to the new form. As for the hon. Member for Tynemouth, his argument was, that Dissenters ought to be admitted into the governing body at Oxford because the Senate of Cambridge had, he thought rightly, rejected a meddlesome plan for introducing an American lecturer. He came to the speech of his hon. Friend the Mover, which was not a Union one. He begged to point out that there was a certain grievance, but one which the side of the House from which he spoke was desirous to see rectified—namely, that Nonconformists at Oxford who had gone through the University course could not have that course crowned by the honorary distinction of the M.A. degree. He was willing to see that grievance remedied at Oxford, as it had been at Cambridge; and he also thought that the right to vote for the Members at both Universities might be conceded to every man who took the degree of M.A. After these points were conceded he did not know what else there was to ask for, unless a demand were made merely for the purpose of trumping up a popular cry. Young men did not go to the University, generally speaking, with a view to taking a part in its future government, but either to study or to enjoy society and make acquaintances. Now, the Nonconformist could do and did all this already. And the offer was now being made to him, when he had gone out into the world, of doing so with the same badge upon him as the Churchman. With regard to the naked vote in the Convocation or the Senate, how were the Nonconformists to be advantaged by it? They would only have the theoretical power of raising some question with great difficulty with the certainty of being outvoted on the question they had raised. The fact is, the Bill itself was futile, but it became dangerous, and it derived its meaning from its connection with the Bill of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie) for throwing the Colleges open to the Dissenters. His hon. Friend had, indeed, disclaimed the connection, but for all that it existed and was felt. He could understand, though he deprecated, a measure which would knock down all church distinctions in our Colleges and throw them open to all classes of Nonconformists. Those who wanted this result could consistently support the Bill before the House; but had not his hon. and learned Friend separated himself from that party by his eloquent appeal to Nonconformity to go to Oxford—what for? To be brought face to face with the Church, and to be converted or silenced by the august image of its purity and truth which would there be revealed to it. He was ready to meet and remedy any real grievance which might prevent Dissenters from going to Oxford. The proposal which he, in common with others, offered, of the Master's degree giving the Parliamentary vote, was all that reason required. That was one intelligible position. The other position, which he would resist to the utmost, while recognizing its logical consistency, was to knock down all ecclesiastical distinctions in College and in University alike. The proposal of his hon. and learned Friend was neither one nor the other. It would not satisfy the Dissenter nor conciliate the Churchman.

Mr. LAMONT said, that, as a Scotch Member, he desired to express his approval of the Bill. Fully 19-20ths of the population of Scotland regarded the illiberal regulations by which Nonconformists were debarred from the advantages of University education as a national grievance and a national insult. In that feeling he entirely sympathized, and, as a representative of a Presbyterian country, he would give his most cordial support to the Bill.

Sir WILLIAM HEATHCOTE said, that notwithstanding the difficulty which the House would have before it when it came to deal with the Bill in Committee for the purpose of enabling Dissenters to take degrees, he thought it advisable to make the attempt, and therefore he would wish that his hon. Friend the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) would not persist in his Amendment. On previous occasions the House had heard arguments used which, if they meant anything, went the length of recommending the entire abolition, not only of tests in the University and of the Church character of the University, but of a Church establishment, and of tests in support of the dogmatic formularies of any Church whether established or not. The hon. and learned Member who proposed the present Bill (Mr. Coleridge) took, however, a different view; and, while abiding by his own Church and desiring that his University might continue imbued with Church principles, also wished that the benefit of the University training might be extended to others besides members of the Established Church. But, notwithstanding all the eloquence of the hon. and learned Gentleman, there was obviously a fallacy in his argument, inasmuch as the hon. and learned Gentleman hoped to maintain what is a consistent and definite dogmatic teaching, though leaving it to be worked out by men not belonging to the Church. There would be a variety of subjects to deal with if the House entered on the course which the hon. and learned Member invited it to pursue—the difficulty affecting the dealing with the question as related to the University, and as relating to the Colleges was one of degree rather than of principle; but still he (Sir William Heathcote) was ready to admit that if they could practically deal with one of those subjects, it would be desirable to do so. Therefore, he was not opposed to going into Committee on the Bill, with the view of seeing whether some satisfactory arrangement could be come to, excluding extreme views on either side and removing a practical hardship. The hon. Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) had recalled to the attention of the House the points on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer enlarged last year, and which some of the Members on the Opposition side of the House were ready to accept; and, therefore, he (Sir William Heathcote) had rather that the House, instead of rejecting the second reading, would allow an opportunity for the proposal of Amendments in Committee, in order that some agreement on this subject might be come to if possible. He thought that for this purpose certain halls might be established with the Vice Chancellor's licence, and votes for the members of the University might be extended to Nonconformists; but he desired still to maintain for admission to Convocation the test of Churchmanship, which ought now to be in the form prescribed by the Clerical Subscription Act of last year. His hon. and learned Friend (Mr.

Coleridge) laid stress on the insult involved in allowing Nonconformists to enter the University, and not permitting them to go on to take a seat in Convocation; but he (Sir William Heathcote) did not think that the Bill, in granting to Nonconformists the right to sit in Convocation, would prove any great attraction to them, unless it went further and enabled them to hold fellowships of all kinds. The Bill would not otherwise remove from the minds of the Nonconformists any feeling they might entertain of being placed in an inferior position. Those who oppose proposals of this kind have frequently been taunted with the question, if they are afraid of being swamped by the introduction of a few Dissenters? He was ready to make two admissions to his hon. and learned Friend. He admitted that he did not expect that there would be any such dangerous influx of Nonconformists in consequence of the Bill as to make it dangerous on that account; and he was also ready to admit—although the admission laid him open to retort—that if there were any such influx that in itself would be a proof of the right to admission. But, believing there would be no great number, he asked whether it was worth while to run the risk of an alteration of the Church education of the University for the sake of a very few? He thought that the House ought to consider seriously before taking such a step. Again, he admitted that there was a great deal in the present aspect of affairs to induce the House to try to get rid of any legitimate complaint on the part of the Nonconformists. There were men who were much more to be dreaded than an honest Nonconformist —those who took these tests and yet fostered a spirit of infidelity. He believed, however, that, as far as Oxford was concerned, that spirit had reached its culminating point, and was declining; and, therefore, dismissing that point from consideration, he thought it would be desirable to meet as far as possible all demands for the admission of Dissenters, and to remove from their minds any impression that they were treated harshly or contumeliously by the University; but, at the same time, not to go to any extreme which might occasion alarm. As some cases of difficulty and of dispute might be done away with, he hoped that his hon. Friend the Member for Stamford would not ask the House to divide on the Amendment.

MR. BUTLER-JOHNSTONE said, there was only one point as regarded the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman who had proposed this measure (Mr. Coleridge) which he regretted, and that was that a speech breathing such a true spirit of Conservatism should have been spoken from the opposite Benches, and not from that (the Opposition) side of the House. The Universities might be designated as a federal union of the Colleges; but though this was a true designation now it did not represent correctly the ancient status of the University which existed prior to, and independently of, all Colleges, and it was, perhaps, regrettable that the recommendation of the University Commissioners was not carried out, and the University restored in this respect to its ancient condition. He was glad that the hon. and learned Gentleman had not confounded together two things entirely distinct, and that he had not attempted to embody in his Bill the proposition of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. E. P. Bouverie); and if a division took place upon this Motion he should go into the lobby with the hon. and learned Gentleman, although he might not vote in support of the Motion of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock. He protested against treating the Universities as mere theological institutions. Some people talked of the University as if it were a grammar-school, or, rather, a nursery school, where children were to be brought up with nothing to militate against their own ideas as members of the Church of England. His notion of a University was very different from that; and as to contamination from Dissenters, the undergraduates were already contaminated, for Dissenters and Churchmen walked about at the University in friendship and intimacy, and were allowed to compete together for all the honours of the University. It was only when the Dissenters arrived at the threshold of a Master of Arts degree and of a share in the government of the University that they were debarred from reaping a fair share of the advantages their talents entitled them to. The hon. Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) asked that he might see the claimants in this case, and ascertain what it was they asked for. The hon. Member talked of this measure as if it were a Private Bill, with Dissenters on one side and Churchmen on the other. The claimants were the people of England. He hoped that he had for Oxford University as much respect as any of its Members could feel for it; and he trusted that he was also a good and zealous member of the Church of England; but he repudiated the notion that the present Bill was a concession to Dissenters—he regarded it as a concession to the University of Oxford and common sense. The Bill proposed to admit lay members of the University to professorships and readerships, not in Colleges but in the University, without subscribing any formulary of faith. This measure was not to interfere with the purely theological teaching staff. It was, therefore, extremely small—and, indeed, so small that the hon. Member for Stoke (Mr. Beresford Hope) stated that it only offered to Nonconformists the power of bringing forward propositions with the certainty that they would be rejected. Yet all sorts of danger were conjured up as likely to proceed from it, and it was described as a Bill to un-Anglicanize the University of Oxford. Why, the glories of that University, its teaching, its traditions, its associations, its services, in fact the very breath of the place, were Anglican, and it was absurd to suppose that the admission of a few Dissenters to readerships and professorships in the University would affect the miracle of un-Anglicanizing it. If he were a political Dissenter, and felt sentiments of hostility to the Church of England, he might dread to send his son to a place whose sole condition was Anglican. He conceived that the present measure would affect a great good, would remove a ban from other classes, would tend to bring the University in harmony with the spirit of the time, and would show the Dissenters that there was something in the noble traditions and tolerant spirit of the Church of England. When he heard the tests spoken of as the bulwarks and outworks of the supremacy of the Church of England, he thought that those metaphors were ill-placed and out of date — they might, perhaps, have been appropriate in the last century. They were first introduced at the time of the famous Chatham Methodist petition against the extension of Toleration, and the great Burke made havoc with those mixed spiritual and military metaphors. The Church of England had now no need of them. She was strongly rooted in the affections of the great mass of the people, and was viewed with reverence by the great bulk of the Dissenters, and had nothing to fear from throwing those professorships and readerships open. If destined to fall, the Church would not succumb to external attacks, but by herself abandoning that wise and Catholic spirit which formed at once her title-deed to existence, her honour, and greatest security. He (Mr. Butler-Johnstone), on the contrary, hoped to see her putting forth new efforts in the great work that had devolved upon her.

Mr. NEATE thought that there was no reason why the rule acted upon in other Universities should not be applied to the University of Oxford. The real question was, whether the University was not so far a national body that she had no right to confine her privileges to certain classes? The University of London and the Queen's University in Ireland were institutions on the open principle, and there was no reason why the same principle should not be applied to Oxford and Cambridge. This had been put forward too much as a question between Churchmen and Dissenters; but it was really a question whether they had a right to apply to those who were willing and desirous to remain in communion with the Church of England a binding test which they could not accept. If they attempted to ride the young and more intellectual of the students with too tight a hand they would bolt altogether. It was for the sake of such that he urged the abolition of those tests. As to the condition on which hon. Gentlemen opposite were prepared to assent to the second reading of the Bill, in the hope that they would obtain alterations in Committee which would remove their objections to it, he must observe that nothing had been said on his side to encourage that expectation. It was founded entirely on their opinion of the strength of their own case, and the state of parties in the House.

Mr. HENLEY: Sir, I am extremely obliged to my hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Buxton) for having, with his usual honesty and frankness, spoken out clearly on this matter. We can now be under no mistake as to the intentions of the promoters of this Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) indicated a wish to come to some sort of arrangement, by which he would be relieved from the task of moving the rejection of the Bill. But what immediately happened? The hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Buxton), who was sitting next to the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge), and who was evidently in full communication with him, got up and told the House, in the same plain and unmistakable manner as that of the hon. Member for Oxford, that "we will have no compromise at all." I confess I was utterly astonished when the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir William Heathcote) got up immediately afterwards and expressed a wish not to oppose the second reading, in the hope of some such arrangement as that to which I have referred. I certainly could not understand the reason for such a course being taken by the hon. Baronet. Now, let us look to the measure itself. In a speech which we all must admire for the ability, temper, and spirit which characterized it, the hon. and learned Member for Exeter told us some very plain things. The hon. and learned Gentleman is entirely agreed with the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Butler-Johnstone), and both of those hon. Gentlemen have given us definitions of what a University is according to their view of the question—a University to teach everything except religion. It is true that they did not say so in as many words; nevertheless, it is as plain as the sun at noonday that that is what you mean. You may shake your heads as you please, but there can be no mistake about the matter. One hon. Member says we are to have denominational Colleges. Well, if we are to have these Colleges with every religion within them from the earliest foundations, beginning with the Jews and ending with the Mormons, you cannot pretend to say for a single moment that the University can take cognizance of religion under these circumstances. I must say I admire the spirit and truth with which the Prelates of the Roman Catholic Church say, "We won't run the risk of the faith and morals of our people being contaminated by their being exposed to this mixed religious teaching." Now, I am not going to argue the question with reference to the English or any other Church, but only on this ground—Why do we send our children to the University—that is, those who have them to send? Thank God mine have passed that period. We send them to the University at that most dangerous time of life, in their passage from youth to manhood, in the hope that those principles which we have endeavoured to instil into them when young will be finally confirmed and established at the University. But if the University is to become what the hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the second reading says it is to become—and what if this Bill passes it will become—that is, a lay corporation having nothing to do with religious teaching — what must be the consequence — the logical consequence— of the premises laid down by the hon. and learned Gentleman? Well, but what a change this will be for those young men who are sent to the University at the most dangerous period of their age! Instead of having those religious principles which they have imbibed at home established and confirmed, these young men will become unsettled in their minds by being exposed to all the evils of religious controversy. I do not see how you are to escape from this evil or difficulty. Well, what will this result in? In one of two things — either religious indifference or utter infidelity. In my mind the consequences will be these. On the great duties of life the minds of young men will become unsettled amid a confusion of religious controversy. All those higher principles will be neglected, and the teachers of the respective schools of all these denominations will be endeavouring to instil into the minds of their pupils all the sectarian differences, and not the great principles of religion. I can appeal in some sense to the experience of those who have lived as long as I have in the University. Some thirty-five years ago a great religious controversy sprang up which divided the University into several parties. Well, I ask whether that state of things at all tended to the preservation of peace and charity among its various members? Far from it. They looked to their differences and not to their points of agreement, and such, so far as I am able to judge, will invariably be the case. I have ever been a great friend to the principle of denominational education. I would have a Jew instructed by a Jew, a Presbyterian by a Presbyterian, a Roman Catholic by a Roman Catholic, and a Church of England man by a member of the Church of England. I do not pretend to interfere with the divinity students or their teachers. No one pretends to say that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge will not be the main instructors of the students intended for the Church; but as to the laymen, why are they not to be instructed in religion? Is the University to shut her eyes to everything in the shape of religious education? Is she to have persons within her walls whom she knows to be infidels, and yet to be prevented interfering with the view of enlightening their minds upon the subject of religion? Now let me touch for a moment upon what has been much dwelt upon, especially by the last speaker—namely, what is called the separation between the Colleges and the University. The hon. Gentleman says the distinction is great. Well, we all know that they are distinct things. Nevertheless, they have become so wedded together for many hundred years that it is by no means easy to separate them. The hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Buxton) showed that this is a question of Nonconformity, and expressed his view as to how it will operate upon the Nonconformist body. The hon. and learned Gentleman who brought in the Bill told us that the Colleges will not be interfered with—that he contemplates the establishment of denominational Colleges. Does any one imagine that Nonconformists will send their children to be educated in Colleges of the Church of England? I believe there are some Catholics and some Jews in some of the Colleges; but I believe that as a body the Nonconformists have the same religious feelings that I have, and will send their children to be brought up in the faith they themselves love. Do you think it will satisfy them to have Nonconformist Colleges? If the Universities are not to have a distinctly religious character where are the influences to sanctify their teaching? Will philosophy impart this sanction? As well might these persons of all creeds, professing universal charity, march down High Street hunting a pig with a greased tail, as expect that the mental influence of a non-religious University sanctify the whole of them. We have heard a great deal lately about "comprehensive education." Comprehensive education means education without religious teaching. I am opposed to it tooth and nail. I do not mince matters, and never did. I believe no teaching is worth a farthing if it has not for its basis what the person teaching believes to be true. I believe there is no soundness except in teaching based on the Word of God; and that it is such teaching which has preserved the morality of this country. This may appear a little matter, but in my view it amounts to this—that we should break down the distinctive teaching in our Colleges. The hon. Member for East Surrey in the most emphatic manner said he could conceive no calamity greater than that the distinctive teaching in the University should be impaired. Well, can he believe that—I do not say in five or ten years, or in a generation, but by a certain although a slow process—the distinctive teaching of the University will not be impaired by such a Bill as this? I am not one of those who look to this, that, or the other thing as what is called a safeguard or bulwark of the Church of England. I consider that the Church of England rests on the belief by the great body of her supporters that she is founded on the Word of God, and because she appeals to the Bible as the foundation of her teaching. I do not think if they gave up this or that thing her people would become less attached to the Church, but what I fear is, lest the people should be induced to give up the religious education of their children. I believe that the great basis and foundation of the stability of this country is that her children, from the highest to the lowest, are trained in the principles of religion, and if they altered this they gave up the principle. On that ground I have always voted against Bills of this character, and shall vote against this.

MR. LOWE; Sir, the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) has told us that every Gentleman who speaks in this debate ought to have two qualifications—one the power of speaking with great solemnity, and the other that of representing the Dissenting community. I do not pretend to one or other qualification; but still, without possessing either, I hope I may be permitted to say a very few words on this subject—to me, one of very great interest, having spent some eleven years of my life in the University of Oxford. If I may venture a criticism on the very admirable speech of the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge), it would be that I think he made the measure we are dealing with appear to be more than it really is. Because he must remember that several Colleges of Oxford are already open; Nonconformists are admitted; the system is so far thrown open, and all the risk of the want of distinctive teaching has been incurred. Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, and I believe some Jews are mixed up together in several of the Colleges, and these not the least distinguished; and, therefore, the evil to which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henley) has referred already exists. The only thing this Bill does is that it will enable Nonconformists having taken B.A. to take the degree of

M.A., and become members of the governing body of the University. I say, therefore, a smaller measure, or one fraught with less power either for good or evil, except so far as the establishment of an honest liberal principle is concerned, I cannot conceive. Yet, small as this principle is, the hon. and learned Gentleman does not propose to carry it in its integrity: there are to be saving clauses to prevent Nonconformists from taking the full benefit of the concession to which they would otherwise have been entitled. So that the measure really appears infinitesimally small, and those who argue that it will not satisfy Dissenters I think argue quite correctly. I cannot conceive that a man who would not be willing to go to Oxford to take the degree of B.A., and to take honours, would be induced to go there by the additional allurement of being enabled to take M.A., and become a member of Convocation, which would entitle him to be sent for seven or eight times a year to Oxford to vote about something he does not care about. I have no claim to speak for the Dissenters, but I venture to tell the House what I think Dissenters ought to be satisfied with, and less than what ought not to satisfy them. If I understood the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford, he told us he admitted one grievance, which was this — that the University requires that all Halls should have a M.A. at the head of it, and Dissenters cannot occupy that position; that was the only grievance, to be remedied by separate Halls. But I do not think Dissenters will be satisfied or ought to be satisfied by being admitted to the University through Halls for themselves, as if they were not fit to mingle with all the others on terms of perfect equality. They have got beyond that already. There are, as I stated before, several Colleges in Oxford which are open to them; and it is altogether a retrograde step to go back to the notion of separate Halls, where they would be pointed out as persons of a different grade and condition, and have probably some obnoxious epithets bestowed upon them. I believe that any attempt to limit the University to members of the Church of England is a most foolish and mischievous policy. I go much further than the opening of a new set of Colleges. The University should be thrown open to admit the whole nation, and be co-extensive with the domain of human intellect itself. The University of Oxford is and ought to be a national University. By the operation of events it has been narrowed to its present position, and I maintain that Dissenters ought not to be satisfied until they are enabled—not to enjoy what this Bill will give them in the shape of Halls, but to participate in the full privileges of the University, so that people might belong to any College they please, as our ancestors did in the days of the Plantagenets. Another thing that ought to be done is this—the University should be made able to meet its extended duties by a larger number of fellowships being taken to strengthen the professoriate. Knowledge should be made cheaper and more accessible to the students. It is quite melancholy to reflect that its magnificent endowments are almost expended in giving annuities for the cultivation of the learned languages, to which mathematics has now been added, instead of being devoted to provide the best and most ample instruction that can be given. Dissenters, though coming from rather the poorer districts, have not, I think, claimed at the hands of the University that instruction should be provided for them gratuitously and of the very best quality. Among many elements of great progress and advancement, I think there is one great evil — the University is kept too young. There is no inducement for young men to remain at the University. The professorships are too few, and the management is left in the hands of young men who are teaching when they have a great deal to learn, and instructing others in the conduct of the affairs of life when they know little of life themselves. I believe what was stated by the hon. Member who seconded the Motion (Mr. Trevelyan) is perfectly sound — it is a scandal to the University when a man carries off the highest honours, but must go away without securing those rewards which are held out to her most distinguished sons. At the risk of being considered most extravagant and unreasonable, I cannot shut my eyes to the very small provision which is made in this Bill to meet the justice of the case. I repeat that the Dissenters will not be satisfied, and ought not to be satisfied, till they are placed, as far as the University is concerned, on a footing of perfect equality. As to the dread which appears to be felt by some, that by admitting them to the governing body you will alter the character of the teaching, why so far as regards any influence of the governing body over teaching, I would ask, is there any time, however remote, when it would be possible to conceive that the Dissenters would be in a majority in that body? So of the Colleges; has the fact of the admission of Nonconformists there altered the practice and teaching of the Colleges? The University is a lay corporation; the Colleges are lay corporations also. That has been decided over and over again in the Courts of Law. Therefore, with great respect to those Gentlemen who, with so much eloquence and ability, have brought this subject under the consideration of the House, I incline to think they have not altogether taken the right course in proposing first a small measure like this. I am not very fond of the doctrine of stepping-stones and instalments. I rather think if these great objects are to be carried at all, it can only be by rousing the public sympathy and proposing such a measure as may be adequate to the occasion. When you bring forward such a proposition as that of the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge) you fail to rouse public opinion in its support. But if it be a demand on behalf of the nation at large—if you say you would admit every layman, whatever his religious belief, to the full benefit of the University—every man would understand you, and you would raise in its behalf an amount of popular favour which would carry the measure over twenty times the obstruction which is offered to you to-day. So long as you go in for but the narrow end of the wedge there is no hope of making any advance. Holding these opinions, I take the liberty to express them once for all. With the very best desire to put the question on a proper footing, I submit that it is only by laying down some broad and intelligible basis that they can raise the sympathies of mankind and induce the people of the country seriously to consider the real functions of the Universities, and how far they perform the national duty which their functions cast on them.

MR. GATHORNE HARDY said, he thought the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Lowe) had spoken in terms which went much beyond the question before the House. He was glad he had done so; he only hoped the arguments he had used to-day might not by-and-bye be turned against himself, and the storm which he invoked for the University might not break out on another subject. His hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Butler-Johnstone) had spoken with a tone hardly as if he had been of the University, and had made a strange mistake as to the meaning of the term *Universitas,* supposing that it implied universality of studies, whereas its simple meaning was like that of *collegium*—namely, a corporation. And for the promotion of what studies? Not only originally for "religion and learning," but even the statute of 1854 so placed those words that religion occupied the first place, as it was the chief and main object of the University, as well as of the Colleges, and it must take a distinct and definite form before it could be inculcated. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne had spoken of a great and comprehensive measure on the subject, and he (Mr. Hardy) confessed he would rather treat the question in that way than deal with these guerilla attacks year by year. First came the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Exeter, whose speech it was impossible to hear without being to some extent lulled by the gentle voice and fair aspect which it presented; but his speech though expansive in itself was restricted in its consequences, for after all his expressions of love for Dissenters and free inquirers, and when one expected that they were to be admitted to the privileges of University and Colleges alike, the hon. and learned Member stopped short, and the generous sentiments which gave such delight to those behind him became comparatively inoperative. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Goschen) last year said the principle of the Bill was the general admission of Dissenters to the privileges of the University, and that their admission to the governing body was not the principle, but a mere incidental effect of the Bill. The hon Member for East Surrey (Mr. Buxton) went far beyond this. He wished to hand over certain Colleges—one to members of the Roman Catholic faith, another to Methodists, another to Independents, and, he supposed, another to the Baptists. But this Bill did nothing of that sort. His hon. Friend had asked whether he thought there would ever be so many Dissenters in Convocation as materially to alter its action? But what did the Mover say? He said he expected a very large accession of Dissenters to the University. [MR. COLERIDGE: I wished it, not expected.] At the time the Act of 1854 was passed it was generally expected that a considerable number would avail themselves of it, though an Archdeacon of his acquaintance, on asking an active supporter of the measure how many undergraduates he expected to cross Folly Bridge in consequence of it, was told that he did not think there would be any, and that he had been fighting only for a principle. His hon. and learned Friend, who did not expect, though he wished for, large results from this Bill, was fighting, he supposed, for a principle also. But he (Mr. Hardy) was likewise fighting for a principle in objecting to the admission into the governing body of a University, the main object of whose teaching was religion, of persons who, whether in a minority or not, dissented from, or were opposed to, that religion. The hon. Member for East Surrey was a great opponent of slavery. Now, suppose he were to ask permission to bring one or two slaves into this country, promising to take good care of them, and urging that so small an indulgence could do no harm, would the House, with all their respect for the hon. Gentleman's generous disposition, sanction the principle of slavery even to that trifling extent? ["Oh, oh!"] Some might think this a very poor illustration; but it showed that a concession, however small, made to a minority, simply because it was a minority, involved a principle, and it was in this aspect that they were called on to consider the question, for, as his hon. Colleague had remarked, a minority of Dissenters could only become a majority in the event of Nonconformity gaining the ascendancy in the country, and in that case the Church of England would no longer be able to maintain its position in the University. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne had argued that as the distinctive religious teaching of the University had not been interfered with by the admission of a few Dissenting undergraduates, it would be equally unaffected by the admission of a few Nonconformists into the governing body. The right hon. Gentleman was quite consistent in using this argument, for in the discussion on the Endowed Schools Bill, for admitting children of different persuasions into those schools with the privilege of absenting themselves from religious instruction, he expressed a wish to include persons of different religious opinions among the trustees — in order, he presumed, to protect those scholars. He probably desired in like manner that the governing body of the University should consist of persons of various beliefs. But what would be the consequence? A grievance would be created which did not now exist. It would be thought a grievance if Convocation continued in the Universities the same system of Church of England teaching as before Dissenters were admitted, and the next step would be to exclude religious teaching from the deliberations of Convocation, and lastly to exclude it from University instruction altogether. He was quite ready to admit most of the postulates which his hon. Friend had laid down in his opening address. He admitted, in the first place, that the University was a lay corporation; but he did so with a qualification, just as his hon. Friend admitted it to be a Church of England institution, with a qualification. It was a lay corporation, but with certain duties imposed upon it, the most important being the inculcation of religion, and that religion a dogmatic religion;—for it was impossible to inculcate any other on young men, who, if they were to be well educated, could not be left to wander at large in the way which the hon. Gentleman seemed to desire. They must be put under careful instruction, and not merely secular instruction, which they could obtain anywhere else, but under that Church of England tone and feeling which pervaded the whole society of the University, and which characterized all the different Colleges. This tone was even manifested in the taking of degrees; for he believed that at that very moment degrees were conferred in the name of the Trinity, to the honour of God, and to the profit of Holy Mother Church. It had always been regarded as a great advantage that the clergy and laity should be educated together, and in this opinion he cordially concurred, for he believed it to be one of the greatest benefits conferred upon any Church that its clergy should be associated at the Universities with laymen, pursuing the same studies, meeting in the same society, and thus becoming acquainted with the habits and tone of thought of their fellow men, and leaving those Universities with no narrow restricted views, but with that knowledge of the world which was essential to their profession. One of the principal results, however, of the changes proposed, would be to put an end to this advantage, for parents would certainly hesitate to send their sons destined for Orders to the Universities, if a period should arrive when distinctive religious teaching was not imparted, or even interfered with.

He made no objection to Dissenters sending their sons to Colleges, as was done now in a few instances, as long as the same religious teaching and services were continued, and the same tone pervaded the society, Nonconformists being excused, if they desired it—which he understood, however, was not generally the case—from attendance at chapel and from religious instruction. The right hon. Member for Calne says he does not think much of stepping-stones. Now he (Mr. Hardy) thought a good deal of them, and was not quite sure that there was not one before the House of which his right hon. Friend had a considerable horror. The stepping-stone in this case is an establishment of false principle—namely, that of having a governing body in the University of mixed or opposed religions. But could any instance be produced where a mixed system of Government in educational matters had succeeded? Such a system might not absolutely fail where the Colleges were of varied religions, as in the London University, though even there those Colleges had generally taken a distinctive and denominational character; but in Ireland, where it had been tried on a large scale, resistance to it was gradually increasing, and the people were urged by those who had most influence over them to demand a denominational University, or at least a denominational College. Few English Members, probably, had taken the trouble to wade through so many Reports on the subject of primary education in Ireland as he had done, and he found the Commissioners stating that where the patrons of the schools were of mixed religions it was almost impossible to carry them on. Mixed learners presented comparatively no difficulty, but with mixed managers or teachers no educational system could be properly carried on. Hon. Members opposite stated their object to be to expand the University and make it a home for the learning and teaching of all shades of religious thought and feeling; indeed, his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Coleridge) went beyond Dissenters, for he thought it should be a place where free inquiry should be carried on. Whether these free inquirers were to be learners or teachers he did not exactly understand; if teachers the effect would be to exclude all those whose parents wished them to receive definite religious teaching, and thus the main object of the University—that of teaching religion in priority to all other studies—would be entirely set aside. Instead, then, of Dissenters having to found Colleges it would be necessary for those who valued distinctive religious teaching to establish Colleges elsewhere, and they might judge of the gravity of such a result from the lifelong influence which Alma Mater had hitherto exercised upon its members. He traced this influence in the tone of the hon. and learned Member for Exeter, whose profession had evidently neither deadened his imagination nor chilled the emotions of his heart. He firmly believed the changes proposed would imperil the distinctive Church of England character of the University, and would pave the way for further innovations, until its reputation for what his hon. and learned Friend had spoken of as sanctified learning would be forfeited, and all its hallowed associations destroyed.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, that having had the honour in a previous Session of bringing in a Bill almost precisely identical with that now brought in by the hon. and learned Member for Exeter, he desired to address a few words to the House. He had awaited with considerable curiosity the course which would be taken this Session by the opponents of the Bill, as it was clear they would not be able to carry out the same programme as last year. Last year their policy was simple enough; it was to represent the Bill as part of a general onslaught on the Church, to impeach the Churchmanship of its supporters, and to describe them as holding a misty and muddy religion, to raise bugbears about parents and guardians who would not send their chilrden to the Universities, and to represent the spirit of the Bill as hostile to the Church and to religious teaching, and the supporters of the Bill as secretly attached to the worst form of religious infidelity. But it was clear that the same programme could not be adopted on the present occasion, seeing that the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced the measure was one whose attachment to the Church could not be impugned. The House had had the advantage, therefore, of hearing the question discussed on its merits, and the issue had been very much narrowed. The hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) had opposed the Bill on the ground that it would effect no final settlement of the matter, but would lead to further demands on the part of Dissenters. Now, this was not the first time this Session that a measure had been objected to on the ground that it was not a complete settlement of the question, and he almost expected to see some hon. Member rise to move a Resolution declaring it inexpedient to discuss the admission of Dissenters into the Universities unless the question of the Colleges was also considered. The hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford objected both to the time at which the Bill was introduced and to the persons who had introduced it. He would have such measures brought in by the University representatives. Well, he (Mr. Goschen) thought those hon. Members for the University of Oxford would render an eminent service if they would consent to take charge of the Bill, but after what had taken place on previous occasions he could feel but little hope of their doing so. He really thought, however, that it might have been very properly introduced by the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Hardy), who represented not merely the tutors and lecturers of Oxford, but a large, influential, and dignified corporation, a body comprising the most cultivated intellect in the country. It was no small privilege to represent such a corporation, which was the only body possessing the elective franchise on the ground of education. Nearly all the arguments that had been used turned upon the point, whether the Universities were to be considered as institutions primarily designed for religious teaching; and the hon. and learned Member, speaking of the objects of the University, had pointed to the fact that in one of the statutes the University was declared to be established for the promotion of religion and learning; consequently, he said, the first point to be considered was the religious teaching. They had, therefore, narrowed the question to this point—whether or not the Universities were to be considered as distinctive institutions for instruction in religion. Now, no opinion had been expressed on his side of the House against the continuance of religious teaching, but what they contended was, that the religious teaching of the Universities need not suffer in consequence of the admission of Dissenters into the governing body. There were two kinds of religious teaching, and these must not be confounded—there were distinct lectures on religion, and there was the general religious spirit pervading the whole course of study. Now, which of these two kinds of teaching would suffer from the presence of Dissenters? Supposing Dissenters were admitted, there would still be as many orthodox Churchmen in the University as at present, and what reason was there for thinking that religious instruction would at once be stopped, or that the Church would suffer from the abolition of a compulsory test? Churchmanship was not produced by tests, and his belief was that there would still be as many men capable of teaching the doctrines of the Church and as many undergraduates ready to learn as there were now. But if the religious teaching of the Universities was to continue, notwithstanding the admission of Dissenters, then hon. Members opposite might, by their own admission, vote in favour of the Bill. He was persuaded that the best way of strengthening the Church element in the University was to rid the Church of these artificial supports. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) had referred to the religious controversies formerly carried on in Oxford, and suggested that they might have had a pernicious effect upon the minds of some of the undergraduates, but it must be remembered that those controversies had greatly stimulated religious thought and had produced a kind of religious revival. He had no fear of any ill effects from the admission of Dissenters to the University, and he hoped that the hon. and learned Member who had charge of the Bill would take care that it entitled them to all the privileges, without exception, which appertained to a degree.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: Sir, I think the supporters of this measure are enjoying a piece of good fortune in having secured so valuable a recruit as the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge), a gentleman having an eloquence such as was rarely heard within the walls of that House, and who also possesses the additional advantage of the advocacy of one whose Churchmanship is undoubted, and whose goodwill to the University to which he belongs is equally free from all possibility of doubt. But though the hon. and learned Member for Exeter is not to be looked upon as a dangerous enemy to the Church in his intention, he may be dangerous in effect. I think the right hon. Gentleman is quite right to make the most of the hon. and learned Member's Churchmanship; it is a great thing for people of his opinion to say, "Look here, we really have got a live Churchman among us at last!" But, of course, eccentricities of opinion are to be found in the most respected and the most able Members, and I quite feel that the hon. and learned Gentleman is likely to be all the more dangerous and all the more injurious to the Church, inasmuch as the dangers which he threatens and the injuries which he will inflict will be against his own intention and without his own consciousness. I see that the enthusiastic Gentlemen in the opposite corner are delighted to have the hon. and learned Member on their side; but I have no doubt when they come to discuss other questions affecting the Church they will find out that they have not such cause to congratulate themselves as they at present imagine in the accession of one whose attachment to the Church is as undoubted as their detestation of it. The hon. and learned Member for Exeter has read all the speeches delivered here last year upon this subject, and I am sure I sincerely commiserate him; but as he says he has been unable to discover a single argument against the Bill, I will compress into ten words my objection to this measure. It is, that it is really a Bill for the abolition of religious education in the Universities. But the objection usually urged is, that it is a Bill for the abolition of church rates—church rates and Church principles are closely connected—a Bill for the abolition of religious education of all kinds in the University of Oxford. We have been told that the Universities are lay corporations. This has never been disputed; but I cannot see how that is any answer to the argument that the Bill will undermine religious education in the Universities. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Goschen) asserted broadly that a distinctly religious teaching could only be necessary in a University devoted to the education of the clergy. I am sure, however, that the eminent Churchman of whose support they are so proud will never endorse such a sentiment as that. Another argument which we have heard in the next degree of importance is, that this Bill will only admit a small number of Dissenters to the governing body of the University. The hon. and learned Member for Exeter said that only four or five Dissenters would be admitted; other speakers said the number would be very small. Is this, I want to know, in the Bill? If so, some of my fears will be removed. If not, will the hon. and learned Gentleman propose a clause in Committee limiting the number to four or five? I must confess I have a very great objection to the introduction of large measures on the pretext that they would only affect infinitesimal results. If you wish a great change, draw your clause accordingly; if you only want a small change, then calm our fears, and draw your clause so as to limit the change. Many hon. Gentlemen present are familiar with the illegal depredations of poachers. What would they think if they met a poacher with a large blunderbuss well loaded, who assured them that the weapon was intended only for sparrows, or larks, or rats? If the instrument which you are asked to accept is one that will produce great and dangerous changes, you are not to be lulled into security by the assertion that the authors, who will have no control over its operation when it is once passed, intend nothing large, but that, on the contrary, the change is minute and infinitesimal. We are told that even if a large number of Dissenters are introduced into the governing body of the University, they will not affect the religious teaching of the University. The right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) said they could not affect the religious teaching unless they absolutely form a majority. I am surprised to hear such an opinion from any Gentleman familiar with the constitution of this House, and with the influence of various bodies on its legislation. Are the Roman Catholic Members in this House a majority of the House? Yet, I do not think anybody will tell me that the Roman Catholics have not had a great influence on the legislation of the last thirty or forty years. Are the Dissenters a majority in the House? Yet, I think Dissenters have had a considerable influence on our legislation. The fact is that the power of a particular section, especially if it is a coherent section, working well together, and taking advantage of the differences among its opponents, is not to be measured simply by its numbers, and I maintain that a good brigade of Dissenters in the governing body of the University would be able to throw so many obstacles in the way of religious teaching, they would lead their opponents such a life, and would take such advantage of every accidental circumstance in their favour, that sooner or later they would make the continuance of that teaching impossible, even though they might never command an actual majority. This is the point to which all my fears are directed. I have no wish to deprive Dissenters of any honours which they may gain at the Universities, or to deny them the merited fruit of their learning and labours; but I maintain that the University of Oxford is intended to teach everything which it is important for a citizen of this country to know, and of all the things it is important for a man to know, the first and foremost is religion. I maintain, too, that if they admit Dissenters into the governing body, that most essential part of University education must sooner or later be abandoned. We are told, however, by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) that religious teaching is of two kinds—distinctive teaching and general teaching. Now, this is very similar to the statement made last year by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, that throughout his life the conviction had grown upon him that dogma was of very little importance, compared to the great essentials of the Christian faith. The belief seems to prevail widely among hon. Gentlemen opposite, and among educational theorists, that there is some kind of religion which is independent of all belief, independent of all creed, which can enforce morals, without offering any motive as a stimulus for them, and which can be taught by persons who entirely differ as to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. This opinion is commonly known by the catching but not very intelligible appellation of "unsectarian religion:" and it appears destined to play an important part in educational questions. No one ventures to say "Get rid of religion in education altogether;" but when asked to make provisions which shall insure the teaching of religion in the only shape in which mankind has hitherto understood it, they declare that they abhor dogma, detest sectarian differences, and wish to teach an "unsectarian religion." Now, I should like to urge hon. Gentlemen opposite to perform the first duty of philosophical reasoners, by defining their terms before they use them, and making clear to their own minds at least what they mean by unsectarian religion. The hon. Member (Mr. Roebuck) has suggested a Committee. I should like to see a Committee appointed in order to inquire into the nature and meaning of unsectarian religion, with directions to report to the House a full description and definition of it. I would even venture a step further, and nominate the Committee. I would begin with the hon. and learned Member for Dundalk (Sir George Bowyer). Then I would select the single Liberal Churchman, the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge). After that I would take the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), and the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck), both of whom represented, I believe, different shades of religion. Next we might add the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines), and the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill), and to insure an absolute indifference and neutrality, I would give them the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Butler-Johnstone) as their Chairman. One thing I would stipulate —that their proceedings should not be private—for I venture to say that a more amusing discussion has never been heard than that which would be provoked in trying to define unsectarian religion upon the basis of general good feeling without any creed or basis of belief. The Committee I have thus sketched out would be, I fear, but a poor and inadequate representation of the heats and quarrels which would be carried on in the Convocation of the Universities were they reformed according to the wishes of the promoters of this Bill. To bring together from every quarter of the religious compass those who are unaccustomed to Parliamentary self-restraint, and are keen for the propagation of their own opinions, and tell them to sit down and devise some scheme of religious teaching which they could combine to impose on the University, would excite a scene of controversy, compared with which all those controversies to which allusion has been made would "pale their ineffectual fires." I fear that there would be only one result from the introduction of such an innovation—namely, that religious teaching at the University would be altogether abolished. The teaching would be reduced to a secular system, and that which is acknowledged to be one of the most essential features of University education would be entirely got rid of. I have no wish to interpose and to force on a division against the wish of hon. Gentlemen who hoped that a settlement of the question might be agreed to. I, however, am afraid that no such arrangement will be entered into, and, therefore, I feel that we must go on, and either conquer or die.

MR. MORLEY said, the question had been treated as though the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were originally instituted in direct connection with the Established Church, whereas most of the Colleges were founded before the Reformation. No declaration of belief was required before that period, and the institutions were in the highest and strictest sense national establishments. This was not simply a Dissenters' question, as large bodies of Churchmen called for the relief prayed for. The great middle class of this country had within the last ten or fifteen years been growing up in wealth and social influence. In that class lay the strength of Dissent, and large bodies of Dissenters had been endeavouring to obtain for their sons a higher class of education than heretofore — a privilege from which they were now debarred. He asked the House to deal with this question in a generous spirit. It was to the interest of the country that the question should be settled in a broad and generous spirit, and he hoped that after the second reading of the Bill means might be found for meeting some of the difficulties which had been referred to by the opponents of the measure, and that a way would be found for meeting the views of all parties.

MR. COLERIDGE, in reply, said, before the House went to a division he wished to say a word or two in order that the real meaning of the promoters of the Bill might be clearly understood. He was extremely thankful for the courtesy and kindness with which hon. Gentlemen opposite had listened to him; but he should be untrue to his own convictions, and perfectly untrue to those hon. Gentlemen who had allowed him to be their unworthy spokesman, should he hold out any hope that he could accept any compromise. Such a course would be opposed to the very principle of the Bill, which was to make the University a truly national institution—free in the widest sense to all the subjects of the Queen. He was sorry to find that this branch of the subject appeared so small and contemptible a matter in the eyes of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe). He did not pretend that his mental stature was such as would enable him to grasp the very large measures suggested by the right hon. Gentleman; he was content with introducing a short and small measure that was not beyond his understanding. When the right hon. Gentleman had by means of agitation roused the popular enthusiasm to the necessary pitch, let him then by all means bring his larger measure forward. The objection of the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) to the Bill was short; he said that it would destroy the religious character of the teaching at the University, and that in that case all manner of religious controversies would arise. The answer to that objection was equally short—namely, that the distinctive religious teaching in the University, if it now existed, had not prevented religious controversy, and that if such distinctive religious teaching existed under the present law that law would not be altered by the present Bill. Feeling strongly upon the matter, he must respectfully refuse to hold out any hope, so far as he himself was concerned, that the principle of the Bill would be altered.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER declared that the "Ayes" had it.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to call attention to the fact that the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) called with the "Ayes," and afterwards challenged your decision.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The vote would be given in accordance with the last voice.

MR. FAWCETT: I beg the noble Lord's pardon. I am quite certain I cried "Ayes" and that the word "No" never escaped my lips.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: You challenged the decision.

MR. FAWCETT: I only said "Aye."

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 217; Noes 103: Majority 114.

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* 16th May.

AYES.

Adair, H. E.
Adam, W. P.
Agnew, Sir A.
Akroyd, E.
Allen, W. S.
Anstruther, Sir R.
Armstrong, R.
Ayrton, A. S.
Aytoun, R. S.
Baines, E.
Barclay, A. C.
Baring, hon. T. G.
Barnes, T.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bass, A.
Bass, M. T.
Baxter, W. E.
Bazley, T.
Beaumont, H. F.
Biddulph, Colonel R. M.
Blennerhassett, Sir R.
Bonham-Carter, J.
Bouverie, rt. hon. E. P.
Brand, hon. H.
Brecknock, Earl of
Bright, J.
Bruce, Lord C.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, rt. hon. H. A.
Buller, Sir A. W.
Buller, Sir E. M.
Butler-Johnstone, H. A.
Buxton, C.
Buxton, Sir T. F.
Calcraft, J. H. M.
Candlish, J.

Cardwell, rt. hon. E.
Carington, hon. C. R.
Castlerosse, Viscount
Cavendish, Lord E.
Cavendish, Lord F. C.
Cavendish, Lord G.
Chambers, T.
Cheetham, J.
Childers, H. C. E.
Clifton, Sir R. J.
Clinton, Lord E. P.
Cogan, W. H. F.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Colvile, C. R.
Cowper, hon. H. F.
Cowper, rt. hon. W. F.
Craufurd, E. H. J.
Crosland, Colonel T. P.
Crossley, Sir F.
Davey, R.
Dawson, hon. Capt. V.
Dering, Sir E. C.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dilke, Sir W.
Doulton, F.
Duff, R. W.
Dundas, F.
Ellice, E.
Enfield, Viscount
Esmonde, J.
Evans, T. W.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, H. E. Crum-
Fawcett, H.
Fenwick, E. M.
Fildes, J.
Foley, H. W.
Forster, C.
Forster, W. E.
Foster, W. O.
Fort, R.
Fortescue, hon. D. F.
French, Colonel
Gaselee, Serjeant S.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gilpin, C.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gower, G. W. G. L.
Graham, W.
Greville, Colonel F.
Gray, Sir J.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Gridley, Captain H. G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Grove, T. F.
Gurney, S.
Hadfield, G.
Hamilton, E. W. T.
Hanbury, R. C.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, J. D.
Hartington, Marquess of
Hay, Lord J.
Hay, Lord W. M.
Hayter, Captain A. D.
Henderson, J.
Henley, Lord
Hibbert, J. T.
Hodgkinson, G.
Hodgson, K. D.
Holden, I.
Hutt, rt. hon. Sir W.
Ingham, R.
Jervoise, Sir J. C.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Kearsley, Captain R.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Kinglake, A. W.
Kinglake, J. A.
Kinnaird, hon. A. F.
Labouchere, H.
Layard, A. H.
Lamont, J.
Lawrence, W.
Lawson, rt. hon. J. A.
Leatham, W. H.
Lee, W.
Leeman, G.
Lefevre, G. J. S.
Lewis, H.
Locke, J.
Lowe, rt. hon. R.
Lusk, A.
Mackinnon, W. A.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, D.
Marjoribanks, D. C.
Marshall, W.
Martin, C. W.
Mill, J. S.
Miller, W.
Mills, J. R.
Milton, Viscount
Mitchell, A.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Monsell, rt. hon. W.
Moore, C.
Morley, S.
Morris, W.
Morrison, W.
Neate, C.
Nicol, J. D.
Norwood, C. M.
O'Brien, Sir P.
Ogilvy, Sir J.
Oliphant, L.
O'Loghlen, Sir C. M.
Onslow, G.
O'Reilly, M. W.
Otway, A. J.
Owen, Sir H. O.
Padmore, R.
Peel, A. W.
Pelham, Lord
Peto, Sir S. M.
Philips, R. N.
Pim, J.
Platt, J.
Pollard-Urquhart, W.
Portman, hon. W. H. B.
Potter, E.
Potter, T. B.
Price, R. G.
Price, W. P.
Pryse, E. L.
Pritchard J.
Pugh, D.
Rebow, J. G.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roebuck, J. A.
Russell, A.
Russell, H.
Russell, Sir W.
Salomons, Alderman
Samuda, J. D'A.
Samuelson, B.
Schneider, H. W.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, H. D.
Sheridan, H. B.
Sheridan, R. B.
Sherriff, A. C.
Simeon, Sir J.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, J. B.
Smollet, P. B.
Speirs, A. A.
Stacpoole, W.
Stansfeld, J.
Stone, W. H.
Stuart, Col. Crighton-
Sullivan, E.
Taylor, P. A.
Torrens, W. T. M'C.
Tracy, hon. C. R. D. H.
Trevelyan, G. O.
Verney, Sir H.
Villiers, rt. hon. C. P.
Waldegrave-Leslie, hn. G
Waring, C.
Warner, E.
Watkin, E. W.
Weguelin, T. M.
Western, Sir T. B.
Whatman, J.
Whitbread, S.
White, J.
Whitworth, B.
Woods, H.
Young, R.

TELLERS.

Coleridge, J. D.
Duff, G.

NOES.

Adderley, rt. hon. C. B.
Arkwright, R.
Baggallay, R.
Bagge, W.
Baillie, H. J.
Baring, T.
Barnett, H.
Bathurst, A. A.
Beach, Sir M. H.
Beach, W. W. B.
Beecroft, G. S.
Bentinck, G. C.
Bovill, W.
Brooks, R.
Buckley, E.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir P.
Campbell, A. H.
Cartwright, Colonel
Cave, S.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Cooper, E. H.
Cranbourne, Viscount
Dawson, R. P.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. W. E.
Du Pre, C. G.
Dyke, W. H.
Dyott, Colonel R.
Edwards, Colonel
Egerton, Sir P. G.
Egerton, E. C.
Egerton, hon. W.
Fane, Lt.-Col. H. H.
Farquhar, Sir M.
Feilden, J.
Fellowes, E.
Fergusson, Sir J.
Fleming, J.
Floyer, J.
Forester, rt. hon. Gen.
George, J.
Gladstone, W. H.
Goodson, J.
Gore, J. R. O.
Greene, E.
Gray, Lieut.-Colonel
Grey, hon. T. de
Griffith, C. D.
Hardy, G.
Hardy, J.
Hervey, Lord A. H. C.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hogg, Lt.-Colonel J. M.
Holford, R. S.
Hope, A. J. B. B.
Howes, E.
Hubbard, J. G.
Humphery, W. H.
Jolliffe, rt. hn. Sir W. G. H.
Ker, D. S.
King, J. G.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knox, Colonel
Lacon, Sir E.
Laird, J.
Lefroy, A.
Lindsay, hon. Colonel C.
Lindsay, Colonel R. L.
Lopes, Sir M.
Miller, S. B.
Mordaunt, Sir C.
Mowbray, rt. hon. J. R
Neville-Grenville, R.
North, Colonel
Northcote, Sir S. H.
O'Donoghue, The
Paget, R. H.
Parker, Major W.
Powell, F. S.
Robertson, P. F.
Sandford, G. M. W.
Schreiber, C.
Sclater-Booth, G.
Scourfield, J. H.
Selwyn, C. J.
Seymour, G. H.
Smith, S. G.
Stanhope, J. B.
Stuart, Lt.-Colonel W.
Surtees, H. E.
Taylor, Colonel
Thorold, J. H.
Tottenham, Lt.-col. C. G.
Turner, C.
Tyrone, Earl of
Walpole, rt. hon. S. H.
Walrond, J. W.
Westropp, H.
Whiteside, rt. hon. J.
Woodd, B. T.
Wynn, C. W. W.

TELLERS.

Henley, rt. hon. J. W.
Packe, C. W.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE said, with reference to the decision that had just taken place, he wished to explain that in the course of the day he had told a great many Gentlemen on that side of the House that he did not intend to press the matter to a division, and they had left the House under the impression that there would be no division upon the question. Under those circumstances, he could not accept the division as an expression of the feeling of the House upon the principle of the Bill. He did not know what course the hon. Member for the University (Sir William Heathcote) would take with regard to the Amendments to be moved in Committee, but he regarded himself as absolved from any promise he had made upon the subject, as he did not think that the House had yet had an opportunity of expressing its sense as to the principle of the Bill.

Mr. COLERIDGE said, that if the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford had a right to make such a remark with regard to the number of votes given in favour of the Amendment, he had a right on the other side to say that a large number of Gentlemen on his side of the House had also left under the impression that their votes would not be required. He was quite satisfied with the present state of things, and of course the hon. Member for the University would be at full liberty to do exactly as he pleased when the Bill came before the Committee.

BOSTON ELECTION.

House informed that the Committee had determined—

That Thomas Parry, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Boston.

That Meaburn Staniland, esquire, is duly elected, and ought to have been returned a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Boston.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed that the Committee had altered the poll taken at such Election by striking off the names of James Harvey, Robert Jackson, John Anderson Stocks, Henry Darley, Edwin Clarke, John Torfleet Sneath, and Benjamin Booth, as not having had a right to vote at such Election:

Also of John Hewison, Michael Cammack, William Green, Solomon Brummett, Zachariah Hipkin, Joseph Wharf, and Richard Kirkham, it having been proved that they had received money for the purpose of influencing their Votes at such Election:

House further informed, that the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

That it was proved to the Committee, That the said John Hewison had been bribed with the payment of £7:

Michael Cammack, Solomon Brummett, Joseph Wharf, and Richard Kirkham, with the payment of £5 respectively:

Zachariah Hipkin with the payment of £6:

And William Green with the payment of £1 before and £4 after the Election; but that it was not proved that such bribery was committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Thomas Parry, esquire, or his Agents.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Clerk of the Crown to attend *To-morrow*, to amend the Return.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

Mr. Walpole *reported* from the General Committee of Elections; That they had selected the following six additional Members to be Members of the Chairmen's Panel, and to serve as Chairmen of Election Committees for the present Session:—Acton Smee Ayrton, esquire; William Edward Baxter, esquire; Gathorne Hardy, esquire (Oxford U.); Edward Howes, esquire; Right honourable Robert Lowe; Stearne Ball Miller, esquire (Armagh).

Report to lie upon the Table.

CONTAGIOUS DISORDERS PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir George Grey, Bill to amend the Act of the eleventh and twelfth years of Her present Majesty, chapter one hundred and seven, to prevent the spreading of Contagious or Infectious Disorders among Sheep, Cattle, and other Animals, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir George Grey and Mr. Baring.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 86.]

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Adam, Bill to amend the Acts relating to Lunacy in Scotland, and to make further provision for the care and treatment of Lunatics, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Adam, The Lord Advocate, and Sir George Grey.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 85.]

INNS OF COURT BILL.

Bill "to enable the Benchers of the Inns of Court to appoint Judicial Committees in certain cases, and to give the necessary powers to such Committees," *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 83.]

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, March 22, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Several Lords took the Oath.

PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—County Courts* (55); Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment* (56); Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Act (1860) Amendment* (57); Exchequer Bills and Bonds* (58); Masters and Operatives (59); Attorneys and Solicitors (Ireland) 1866* (60).

Second Reading-Consolidated Fund £19,000,000.*

Third Reading-Consolidated Fund £19,000,000.*

MASTERS AND OPERATIVES BILL.

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

LORD ST. LEONARDS rose to lay upon the table a Bill to establish Councils of Conciliation for the purpose of ending disputes between Masters and Operatives. Their Lordships might recollect that in 1860, when a Bill on the subject came up from the House of Commons, their Lordships did not receive it with much favour: it was sent to a Select Committee upstairs, and, as the Session was considerably advanced, the Bill was allowed to drop. He took no further steps with respect to it, though he felt a very great interest in the subject, until he should have an opportunity of consulting with masters representing capital to the amount of hundreds of thousands, and also with the men. In the course of time he found that the operatives generally were discussing the Bill and expressing their desire that such a measure should pass. That induced him last Session to lay on the table a copy of the Bill, and to ask their Lordships to read it a first time. He then stated it was not his intention to ask to have the Bill read a second time unless both masters and operatives desired it. His object was to obtain circulation for the Bill throughout the country, so that masters and operatives might be able to express an opinion upon it. So matters remained until this year; when the operatives of London generally took the Bill deeply into consideration; they had a great many meetings upon it; and about ten days ago deputies from bodies representing, he was told, something like 100,000 operatives, all in favour of the Bill, met; a resolution in support of the Bill was put, and one of the delegates moved an amendment to the effect that they should not accept the measure; but the amendment was rejected, and the resolution in favour of the Bill passed by an almost unanimous vote. A deputation was appointed by the meeting, and they did him the honour to go down and wait upon him. He (Lord St. Leonards) found that these men thoroughly understood the matter, they thoroughly understood their own interest, and they were earnestly desirous—at least as far as he could judge from their expressions—to conciliate the masters. As the great body of the operatives in London were in favour of the Bill, that circumstance had induced him to take the matter up, and he now desired to ascertain whether the masters were in favour of it; for unless both masters and operatives expressed their approval of the Bill he should not attempt to carry it into execution. He rather expected that the masters would approve, because in the year 1860 at a large meeting the great London builders were all in favour of the Bill, and many of them and of the great contractors, who were themselves Members of the other House, supported the measure. His object, therefore, now, in laying this Bill again upon the table, was that the masters might meet and express their opinions upon it. If the masters expressed themselves favourable to the Bill, he would then venture to take their Lordships' opinion upon it; if unfavourable, he would take no further steps in the matter, for it was not his intention to do more unless with the approbation of both masters and operatives. He begged to move the first reading of the Bill.

A Bill to establish Equitable Councils of Conciliation to adjust Differences between Masters and Operatives—Was *presented* by The Lord SAINT LEONARDS; read 1ª. (No. 59.)

RECORD OF TITLE OFFICE (IRELAND).

PETITION. MOTION FOR PAPERS.

THE EARL OF BELMORE in *presenting* a Petition from the grand jury of the county of Sligo praying for greater facilities under the Record of Title and Land Debentures (Ireland) Acts, 1865, by reducing the Court fee of 10*s*. per cent now levied on all Conveyances and Declarations of Title issued by the Landed Estates Court, and in moving for certain Papers, said, that the petition he had presented to the House, and to which he begged to call the attention of Her Majesty's Government, was similar to two or three others which had been already presented on this subject, and as it related to a matter of considerable importance to the landed interest in Ireland, he would give a short explanation of it. When the Incumbered Estates Court was established in 1849, the expenses of it were defrayed by the public. In 1858 it was thought advisable to extend the benefits of that Court to all land in Ireland whatsoever, and an Act was passed converting the Incumbered Estates Court into the Landed Estates Court, and means were adopted to make it self-supporting by imposing a Court fee of 10*s.* per cent on properties passing through it of a less value than £10,000, and of £1 per cent if in excess of that value. By an Act of 1861 this was afterwards reduced to a uniform fee of 10*s.* per cent; but the Commissioners of the Treasury had the power to vary this fee in an upward direction, in case the fee of 10*s.* did not pay one-half the expenses of the Landed Estates Court. And it was also provided that by an arrangement with the Bank of Ireland the balances of purchase-money lying in the Bank pending distribution should be invested, and the interest thus made available to assist in supporting the Court. At first the whole, and by a subsequent modification of the Act half the expenses of working the Act were to be thus defrayed. The Landed Estates Act conferred indefeasible Parliamentary titles, but made no provision for continuing them, or for conferring fresh ones with respect to subsequent dealings, such as re-sales, mortgagees, or leases. An association was formed in Ireland, presided over by the Duke of Leinster, which promoted an Act to supply this deficiency. The late Lord Chancellor last year took charge of the Bill, which was prepared and introduced by the Government, and became law as the "Record of Title Act." The "Land Debentures Act," to which he would presently refer, was ultimately made dependent upon it. But both these Acts presupposed a conveyance or declaration of title under the Landed Estates Act. Only about one-sixth of Ireland had passed through the Court, and it was complained that the heavy Court fee deterred persons from obtaining the preliminary conveyance or declaration of title which was required before taking advantage of the Record of Title Act. In England the Land Transfer Act, 1862, conferred Parliamentary titles, and also provided for subsequent dealings with those titles; and the fees for both these purposes were fixed by the Registrar of the Court with the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor. In Ireland the Judges of the Landed Estates Court had adopted a like low scale of fees for recording Parliamentary titles and subsequent dealings therewith; but it was the heavy fees on the first issuing of Conveyances or Declarations of Title which were complained of. To show the difference of the state of things in the two countries, he would state the following facts: In Ireland the fees on an estate worth £5,000 would amount to £25 against £9 5*s.* in England; on one worth £20,000 the figures would be £100 against £25; and on one worth £100,000, £500 against £68 10*s.* Thus it would be seen that whilst in Ireland the fees were in direct proportion to the value of the estate, in England they varied in an inverse proportion to the value; and were also much lower than in Ireland. It was also stated that the heavy fees had tended to decrease the business in the Landed Estates Court, as shown by the following figures: The aggregate sales in the last year of the Incumbered Estates Court (1858) amounted to £2,985,230. The average balance in the bank was £573,000, producing under the arrangement above referred to a revenue towards the support of the Court of £6,576. Last year, on the other hand, the aggregate sales amounted to £992,856 only, and the average balance was £114,000, producing nothing. There was also a minor complaint with respect to the Office being only opened two hours a day, and being supplied with only one clerk. As to the Land Debentures Act, the petitioners complained that instead of there being a fee of 2*s.* 6*d.* per cent on each debenture issued under it and a distinct duty on each transfer, by a supposed oversight in a clause introduced by the Treasury a composition of 10*s.* per cent was rendered necessary; whereas, under the English Debenture Act, 16 & 17 *Vict.* c. 59, s. 14, the composition was optional. They further complained that there was also a sum of £1 15*s.* payable on each certificate of charge, irrespective of the amount declared chargeable, and that the owner must pay 2*s.* 6*d.* per cent on each debenture, although he could only issue to himself. The petitioners prayed, with respect to the first part of their petition, that they might be placed by the Treasury in exactly the same position with regard to this taxation by Court fees as persons in England now are in the English Land Registry Office. He begged to present the petition, and make the Motion of which he had given notice.

Moved, That there be laid before this House—"Copies of the Correspondence between the Lord Chancellor of Ireland and the Judges of the Landed Estates Court and the Treasury with reference to the appointment of clerks in the Record of Title Office, of the Report of Messrs. Huggessen and Law (if any) on this subject, and of a memorial forwarded by the Registration of Title Association to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the above-mentioned Court Fee and certain alterations required in the Land Debentures Act (Ireland) 1865."—(*The Earl of Belmore.*)

LORD DUFFERIN said, it was perfectly impossible for Her Majesty's Government to give an immediate reply on the subject to which the Memorial referred. That Memorial, indeed, had only just been brought under the notice of the Treasury, and it would of course be impossible to arrive at a decision respecting it until further time had been allowed for consideration. The Government was most anxious to give all possible attention to the Memorial. With regard to the Papers moved for, he was afraid he could not promise that they should be produced, inasmuch as the correspondence had not yet terminated, and it would not be desirable to lay it upon the table of the House in an incomplete state. With regard to the copy of the Memorial, there would be no objection to lay it upon the table.

THE EARL OF BELMORE said, he would withdraw the first part of his Motion, and only move for the Memorial.

Motion *withdrawn:* Then copy of a Memorial from the Registration of Title Association and others, Inhabitants of Ireland, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, *ordered* to be laid before the House.—(*The Earl of Belmore.*)

STREET ACCIDENTS.—QUESTION.

THE MARQUESS OF WESTMEATH inquired of Her Majesty's Government, Whether it is in contemplation to introduce any Measure to give greater Security to Foot Passengers in the Streets of the Metropolis against the reckless driving of Carts and other Vehicles therein? It was high time that something should be done to prevent the numerous accidents that were daily occurring in the streets of the metropolis. In the year 1858 he brought the subject under the notice of the House; and he found that from the 1st of January, 1858, to the 1st of March, 1860, there were 134 persons killed in the streets of London, and 1,827 maimed. From the 1st of January, 1862, to the 1st of May, 1863, there were 138 persons killed, and 1,497 maimed. These figures ought to have attracted the attention of the Home Secretary to the subject, with a view to finding a remedy; but, notwithstanding these Returns, the right hon. Gentleman had not paid the slightest attention to it, or had shown any disposition to do anything to prevent the recurrence of these accidents. He supposed the reason was that latterly the right hon. Baronet's attention had been called to the possible reform of the patriotic borough of Morpeth, for which the right hon. Baronet sits, and had caused him some uneasiness of mind, and also to the subject of the pole-axe, which had of late engaged so much of his attention. Now he (the Marquess of Westmeath) thought that the pole-axe might be directed to the right hon. Baronet and his borough, and no very great public inconvenience would arise. ["Oh, oh!"]

EARL STANHOPE: I appeal to your Lordships whether such language ought to be tolerated in your Lordships' House. I call the noble Marquess to order.

THE MARQUESS OF WESTMEATH said, he was excessively sorry if he had made use of any expression which was disrespectful to their Lordships, but he must say that in adverting to that right hon. Gentleman and his conduct in the office which he held he could not use any language too strong; while he was desirous not to make use of any language which might be contrary to the rules of their Lordships' House, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman had laid himself open to any remarks which could be made in reference to this subject. He felt very strongly on the subject, and could not pretend to give up his feelings of humanity. This was a matter which ought not to be lightly treated. See how it stood. In the year 1865 no fewer than 180 persons were killed, and 1,075 maimed. If the right hon. Gentleman had evinced the slightest disposition to take this question up, he would not have brought it under the notice of their Lordships. He would now mention what, in his judgment, would tend to alleviate the evil. When, on the previous occasion, he introduced the subject to their Lordships, he suggested that the majority of the cases which were then taking place arose from reckless boys, such as butchers' boys and costermongers' boys driving vehicles. It did not appear that many persons were killed by cabs and omnibuses; and he had drawn attention to the fact, that the owners of one-horse carts, which were the chief causes of street accidents, did not affix their names on a conspicuous part of their vehicles, but on their shafts, so that, in case of an accident, the person who was to blame had a very large chance of escaping without any notice being taken of the name. In one case the driver of a cart, while trying to force his way between an omnibus and the kerbstone, knocked a man down, and the death of this poor man was the result. For that offence the driver was sentenced to only three months' imprisonment. He was of opinion that very many of those accidents and offences might be prevented if mounted policemen were employed to follow and take into custody persons driving or riding at a dangerous speed. He hoped the Government would seriously entertain the idea of changing the sex of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, which one must infer would be an improvement for the public service. [" Oh ! "] The noble Marquess concluded by inquiring of Her Majesty's Government whether it is in contemplation to introduce any Measure to give greater Security to Foot Passengers in the Streets of the Metropolis against the reckless driving of Carts and other Vehicles therein ?

Earl GRANVILLE submitted that it was too much to attempt to make the Government responsible for all the accidents occurring in the streets of the metropolis. He really thought that if there was any advantage in Ministerial responsibility in the present instance the attempt had been reduced to an absurdity by the noble Marquess, who, in most improper and un-Parliamentary language, had attacked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and had been most properly called to order by the noble Earl on the cross-benches. The noble Marquess sought to make the Home Secretary responsible for accidents resulting from the very great increase in the population and the enormous increase of traffic in the streets. [The Marquess of Westmeath: I did not say that the Secretary of State was the cause of these accidents, but that he had not shown the slightest disposition to check the evil.] The noble Marquess had suggested that a force of mounted police should be employed; but in the only case brought forward by him the person was killed in consequence of the police having failed to catch the driver in time. He should not offer any opinion on the remedy proposed by the noble Marquess further than to say that if mounted police were to be riding about the streets in the way suggested their movements would be likely to add very much to the existing difficulties of street traffic. It occurred to him that the noble Marquess could not have considered the practical effects of such a plan. A Bill had been introduced in the other House of Parliament for regulating the traffic of the City, and that Bill had been referred to a Committee of gentlemen competent to deal with the question. He hoped they would receive valuable suggestions, because the inquiry really was one of very considerable difficulty. It was impossible for any one to ride through the streets of London in a Hansom without witnessing providential escapes of persons who almost threw themselves under vehicles. It had been proposed to make bridges on which foot passengers could cross the roadways at a high level. He questioned very much whether persons would avail themselves of such bridges to any important extent. There was also a suggestion of subways, and these, perhaps, would be used more than bridges. A gentleman whom he had seen that morning, suggested that there should be brought into use in the streets something like the semaphore signal now used on the railways. The idea was that the speed of vehicles might be regulated by means of this signal, and that there might be an indication to vehicles to stop in order to allow foot passengers to cross. He did not know whether this was a practical suggestion; but he hoped that some means would be found to render the streets more safe for foot passengers. He believed that the greater number of the accidents did not occur in the narrow streets of the City, along which the traffic went in two lines; the great difficulty was felt in large spaces, where carriages came up rapidly from different directions, and met in points at which streets were crossed by foot passengers. The Government were of course anxious that the best means of preventing death and injury in the public thoroughfares should be adopted; and there was not the slightest foundation for the assault made on his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary by the noble Marquess who had introduced the subject.

THE WELLINGTON MONUMENT IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.—QUESTION.

THE EARL OF CADOGAN rose to ask the Lord President of the Council, Whether any, and, if any, what Progress has been made towards the Completion of the Monument to the Memory of the late Duke of Wellington in St. Paul's Cathedral, and which was voted by both Houses of Parliament in the Year 1856? The noble Earl said, that in putting this Question he was afraid he should render himself liable to a similar rebuke to that administered to the noble Marquess who was sitting near him, as his object was not only to elicit the very scanty amount of information he was afraid he should receive, but to bring the pressure of public opinion to bear on that Department of the Government to which those matters belonged, so as to induce Her Majesty's Board of Works to exercise the authority which they undoubtedly possessed to compel the artist who was charged with the execution of this work to hasten its completion. He was induced to put the question because the artist to whom the work was intrusted had already occupied an unreasonable time upon it, and had, he believed, received a very large sum of the public money in advance, while he had treated with apparently the most contemptuous indifference all the remonstrances that had been addressed to him on the subject, forgetting the obligation he owed to the public as well as to those who employed him. If he required any justification in introducing this subject to their Lordships' attention, he trusted it would be found in the fact that had he put this question a short fortnight since his noble Friend would have been in the unenviable position of having to rise in his place in the House, and to state that he had no information upon the subject to give, and that he was as ignorant of every thing relating to it as any of their Lordships or any one out of doors. Since that time, however, he had heard from a private authority upon whom he could rely, that there was a dawn of better things. His informant was an eminent person connected professionally with the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of St. Paul's, and also with the Board of Works; who had stated to him (the Earl of Cadogan) that after a series of ineffectual attempts which he believed had extended over nearly five years, he had at length obtained the consent of the artist, Mr. Stephens, to enter his studio; further, Mr. Stephens had stated that the model was in a forward condition, and that in the course of a very few months, provided he retained his health, he hoped he should be able to allow the work to be inspected by his right hon. Friend in the other House, in company with any other Gentleman whom he might select to accompany him. Now, that certainly was something; but he trusted that their Lordships would be of opinion that that was not enough, and that something more was required. He hoped that that something more would be an assurance, on the part of his noble Friend, that every possible means would be resorted to, and every possible pressure put upon the artist in order to induce him to bring this work to a completion within a reasonable time. He had often heard this subject discussed in private; he did not think it had ever been thoroughly discussed in either House of Parliament. He had heard various reasons given—he could not say excuses—to account for the delay. He was told that Mr. Stephens, the artist, was of a peculiarly sensitive temperament, and had two idiosyncrasies—one of which was that he never could bring himself to the continuous labour requisite to complete any work on which he was employed, and the other was that he was most intolerant of anything like observation, criticism, or interference. He should be the last to object to extending indulgence and forbearance to an artist charged with a work like this; but there was a certain amount of consideration due to the relatives, friends, and admirers of the illustrious man to whom that monument was to be erected, and whose feelings of reverence for his memory if it had not been outraged had been much wounded by the delay attending the prosecution of the work. The noble Earl concluded by asking the Lord President of the Council whether any, and if any, what Progress had been made towards the Completion of the Monument to the Memory of the late Duke of Wellington in St. Paul's Cathedral, which was voted by both Houses of Parliament in the Year 1856?

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, it would be most unreasonable on my part to make any complaint of the noble Earl, as I felt myself bound to do of the noble Marquess opposite. I am bound to admit that I think the noble Earl has got an admirable case, and, further, that he certainly stated it in the most courteous and temperate manner. I do not know whether the House is aware of the circumstances attending the ordering of this monument. Mr. Stephens was selected for the task by Lord John Manners as a man of great genius, and I believe there is no doubt whatever on that point. Since then, it is quite true that years have elapsed. I have myself gone through the correspondence, and I am bound to say that it has certainly not been wanting in the most urgent appeals, written in the strongest language—language calculated to excite the deepest regret on the part of any artist that he had not fulfilled his contract, and to stimulate him to the utmost exertion. But the state of things is as follows:—There have been delays and consequent remonstrances on the part of the Board of Works. Sometimes want of money was pleaded—a difficulty which was met by the Department; sometimes his state of health was pleaded, and this has been the general excuse; but I cannot say I consider them sufficiently valid. At the same time, as the noble Earl is perhaps aware, the monument has been placed under the superintendence of Mr. Penrose, the architect to the Cathedral. This gentleman has seen the model within the last few days, and he reports that it promises to be a work of very great importance and very singular merit. Under these circumstances, although I quite admit they would not warrant unlimited delay, considering that large sums have been already disbursed, and that an assurance has now been given, I hope for the last time, that about the month of August the model will be in a fit state to be inspected by the proper authorities, it has been felt right to give to Mr. Stephens, whose genius, I am happy to say, was not controverted by the noble Earl, the opportunity of finishing the work which has been so long in hand.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE—FRESH OUTBREAK IN LONDON.—QUESTION.

The Earl of LICHFIELD asked his noble Friend the President of the Council, Whether it is true that the Cattle Plague has been re-introduced into several parts of the Metropolis by means of a cargo of animals imported from Holland?

Earl GRANVILLE: I am sorry to say there is no doubt whatever that within the last day or so a cargo of Dutch cattle arrived, affected as the noble Earl has stated. I am told that the disease was not sufficiently visible, being only in a state of incubation, and that the Custom House authorities did not detect its existence, but admitted the cattle into the metropolis. I may add that information having been received yesterday by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that proper precautions were not taken in Holland for the prevention of diseased cattle coming to this country, Her Majesty's Ministers have asked Her Majesty to appoint a Council to be held this week with a view to the issue of an Order prohibiting the importation of Cattle from Holland until further notice.

Lord DENMAN had been anxious to address a few words to their Lordships on this subject. He observed that the clause in the Cattle Plague Bill to prevent the removal of cattle by railway was the best part of it, for he was sure that the "Plague"—

> "Mobilitate viget viresq: acquirit eundo."

He had read, in the morning of the day on which he spoke, all the Orders in Council from 1745 to 1756, and he found that whenever the precautions taken were relaxed, that the disease broke out again. He thought the late Orders in Council inconsistent in varying the definition of the word animal, which, however, at the season of the year when it took place, was not of much importance. He hoped that the Government would have the firmness to establish a dead-meat market and a quarantine of fourteen days for store-stock, and immediate slaughter at the port of disembarkation for fat stock imported from abroad.

ATTORNEYS AND SOLICITORS (IRELAND), 1866, BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Laws for the Regulation of the Profession of Attorneys and Solicitors in Ireland, and to assimilate them to those in England—Was *presented* by The Lord Chelmsford; read 1^a. (No. 60.)

House adjourned at a quarter past
Six o'clock, till To-morrow,
Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, *March* 22, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Supply—*considered in Committee* —Army Estimates.

Public Bills—*Ordered*—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) *; Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland) *; Cattle Assurance.*

First Reading—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) * [88]; Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland) * [89]; Cattle Assurance * [90].

Second Reading — Land Tax Commissioners' Names * [71]; Contagious Diseases [78].

Referred to Select Committee—Contagious Diseases [78].

Committee— Labouring Classes' Dwellings (*re-comm.*) [67]; Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man) * [80].

Report—Labouring Classes' Dwellings (*re-comm.*) [67]; Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man) * [80].

Third Reading—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer * [75], and *passed*.

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

BOSTON ELECTION.

The Clerk of the Crown, attending according to Order, amended the Return for the Borough of Boston, by substituting the name of Meaburn Staniland, esquire.

BRIDGNORTH ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Sir John Emerick Dalberg Acton, baronet, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Bridgnorth.

That Henry Whitmore, esquire, is duly elected, and ought to have been returned a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Bridgnorth.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed that the Committee had altered the poll taken at such Election by striking off the name of William Edwards, as not having had a right to vote at such Election; also of Mark Philip Lee, it having been proved that he had received money for the purpose of influencing his vote:

House further informed, that the Committee had agreed to the following Resolution:—

That it was proved to the Committee that the said Mark Philip Lee had been bribed with the payment of £4 by Charles Selby Bigge, under the pretext of travelling expenses; but that it was not proved that such bribery was committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Sir John E. D. Acton or his Agents.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Clerk of the Crown to attend forthwith, to amend the Return.

The Clerk of the Crown attending, according to Order, amended the said Return accordingly—namely, by substituting the name of Henry Whitmore, esquire.

GREAT YARMOUTH ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Sir Edmund Henry Knowles Lacon, baronet, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

That James Goodson, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed of Resolutions agreed to, by the Committee reporting that certain parties had received several sums of money as bribes, and that it was not proved to the Committee that any of the aforesaid acts of bribery were committed with the knowledge, authority, or consent of the said Sir Edmund H. K. Lacon and James Goodson, esquire, or either of them, or of any of their Agents:

That the Committee have reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last election for the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

Report to lie on the Table.

BRITISH MUSEUM.—QUESTION.

Lord HENRY LENNOX said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Her Majesty's Government have had under their consideration any scheme for the improvement of the constitution and administration of the British Museum; and, if so, whether they will lay upon the table of the House the Correspondence which has taken place on this subject between Her Majesty's Government and the Trustees of the British Museum; whether it has been decided to fill up the post of Secretary Librarian under the same conditions as it was recently held by Mr. Panizzi; and whether the Government will lay upon the table of the House any Correspondence that has passed between the Trustees of the British Museum and the various Departments of the Government respecting the removal of the Ethnographical Collections to the east of London?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, in reply to the hon. Member's question, I have to state that there is no correspondence between the Government and the Trustees of the British Museum, and no decision has been taken as to filling up the post of principal Librarian under the same conditions as it was recently held by Mr. Panizzi. There was some time ago certain communications with the Trustees, but they were not embodied in a correspondence; and although they might be made the subject of explanation when they came to deal practically with the case, they could not be presented separately to the House. In the view of the Government, the first step to be taken is to submit to that House the Vote which they have given notice of their intention to propose for the erection of a building at Kensington; and we can take no other step of a definite character until the House has decided on that. If there is any correspondence respecting the removal of the Ethnographical Collections to the east of London it will be produced.

LORD HENRY LENNOX: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the Question with reference to the other correspondence.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: All I can promise is that when the Government moves the Vote to which I have referred they will fully state their views with regard to the whole subject.

EXPENSE OF ELECTIONS.—QUESTION.

MR. WENTWORTH BEAUMONT said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, having regard to the additional cost of Parliamentary contests arising from the proposed increase of Electors, Government will introduce Clauses in their Reform Bill—1. To render illegal the conveyance of Voters to the Poll at the expense of candidates, and to multiply polling-places; 2. To defray out of local rates certain Election charges connected with Returning Officers, Polling Places, &c., and generally to reduce the costs of contests?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, the two propositions which are mentioned by the Question of my hon. Friend are propositions of very considerable importance, with an object which we are very desirous to promote by every means in our power—namely, the cheapening of elections, especially as regards the candidates. They are, therefore, matters which it would certainly be our duty to consider. But we must take the several parts of the subject relating to a reform of the representation of the people in what we think is their natural order; and, undoubtedly, as far as we are able to judge, it would be our duty to consider those questions which relate to the boundaries of towns, and especially to the re-distribution of the seats, before we come to the revision of the law connected with the machinery of registration and the expenses of elections.

INSURANCE OF CATTLE.—QUESTION.

LORD GEORGE MANNERS said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce any measure for the purpose of placing existing local Mutual Cattle Insurance Associations on a sound and legal basis?

MR. BARING, in reply, said, he hoped to obtain leave that evening to bring in a Bill to afford to Mutual Cattle Insurance Associations additional facilities to recover subscriptions from members of those societies. He also proposed to allow persons to insure in those societies for more than they can at present.

THE RIVER COMMISSION.—QUESTION.

MR. NEATE said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the River Commission are likely to make their Report, and whether they are not now prepared, if called upon, to make a Special Report on the River Thames; and whether it is not desirable that they should be called upon to do so, as that River is now the subject of legislation in this House?

MR. BARING, in reply, said, the Report of the Royal Commission was now in the press, and would be presented to Parliament before the recess. That Report related to the River Thames, to which the hon. Member's Question alluded.

FENIAN PRISONERS, &c., (IRELAND.)

QUESTION.

THE O'DONOGHUE said, he rose to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether he does not think it would have a good effect upon the state of Ireland, and whether he sees any objection to releasing from custody those persons arrested under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act who can procure bail; whether it be true, as reported in the papers, that the Catholic Cathedral at Armagh was searched, and even the vaults entered; if so, whether this was done by direction or with the approval of the Government; if it was not done by direction or with the approval of the Government, whether he does not think the matter ought to be made the subject of inquiry, with a view to giving redress to the Catholics, and of preventing the recurrence of such an act; and whether he will state if the Land Bill which the Government was going to introduce differs in principle from the Bill introduced by Mr. Cardwell; and, if so, what is the difference?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) said, in reply to the hon. Member's first Question, he had to state that a careful investigation was made in the case of every person arrested under the Act, and no person was retained in custody unless the Government were clearly satisfied that he had been actively engaged in promoting the objects of that conspiracy. In his opinion it would have a very bad effect indeed if they were to release upon bail the persons who were so engaged, and to permit them to travel through the country carrying on their designs. With regard to finding bail those persons would have no difficulty in doing that, because it would only be necessary for them to indemnify the sureties for any breach of their recognizances. But if amongst those in custody there were persons who had come from America to promote the objects of the association, he would be disposed to give a very favourable consideration to any application which they might make if they wished to leave Ireland and to return to the place they came from. With respect to the hon. Member's second Question, as to a search in the Catholic Cathedral at Armagh, he (Mr. Lawson) had written to Ireland for full information on that subject, and directed that it should be procured. He had not yet, however, received it, and if the hon. Gentleman would be good enough to repeat his Question he should be in a position to give him the fullest information on the matter. [The O'DONOGHUE: To-morrow?] He could not answer for that, but thought it was extremely likely. With respect to the hon. Gentleman's third Question, as to the Land Bill which the Government were to bring in, and as to the principle of that Bill, he was sure the hon. Member himself and the House would see that it would be extremely improper for him then to anticipate the statement which should be made upon the introduction of that measure. He had reason to hope, however, that the proposal of the Government would be one that would be likely to lead to a satisfactory settlement of a very difficult and vexed question.

LOSS OF THE "LONDON."—QUESTION.

MR. GRANT said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, If he considers the late inquiry into the loss of the *London* steamer a satisfactory one; and, if so, to state what, in his opinion, are the causes alleged in the Report of the Court of Inquiry as having occasioned the said wreck, by which so large a sacrifice of life took place?

MR. MILNER GIBSON: Sir, the inquiry was so far satisfactory that every one who could give any information and who was competent to form an opinion as to the cause of the loss of the *London* was fully examined. I think that, although the mode in which these investigations are generally conducted may be improved, it is very improbable that in this case any proceedings different from those pursued would have enabled the Court and the public to arrive at any more positive conclusion on the subject than that stated by Mr. Traill and the assessors. With regard to the second Question of the hon. Member, I can only reply by referring to the Report itself, which states that the immediate cause of the loss of the *London* was entirely owing to the sea getting into the engine-room and extinguishing the fires; but it is not clear from the evidence, whether the water came in through the hatchway or from some unobserved injury which the ship had received in the gale.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE—THE FRANCHISE.—QUESTION.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he wished to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer a Question arising out of the statement made by him with reference to the Reform Bill. He wished to ask, Whether it is the intention of the Government to give a qualification to Copyholders and Leaseholders within Cities and Boroughs, or within Counties or Divisions of Counties within which such Cities and Boroughs are situated; and, if so, what addition to the County constituencies will be made by such provision?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: With respect, Sir, to the first part of the Question of the hon. Member, I may say that I thought my intention was declared with perfect clearness in the Bill. In reply to the latter part of the Question, the answer is, we have no means of forming anything more than a judgment of our own upon the matter, which does not admit of being made the subject of a Return. All county votes the subject of a claim depend upon the parties coming forward to make known precisely what is the state of their property, and we have no means of getting a Return in reference to it. With regard to the judgment we have formed, it is this—we look to the number of copyholders and leaseholders upon the actual register, we compare that with the number of freeholders upon the actual register, and then take into view the very large number of the copyholders and leaseholders within the limits of Parliamentary boroughs who must be disqualified from claiming for the county by the fact that they are in the occupation of their own holdings, and if they are in the occupation of their own holdings they cannot be claimants for a Parliamentary vote in respect of them. Our opinion, therefore, is that the number of persons who would be in a condition to make a claim would be a decidedly small number.

MR. NEWDEGATE: I desire to know what is the estimate of the number of voters that will be added to the County constituencies?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I thought that was the very question I answered. I replied that the subject admitted only of the formation of an opinion respecting it.

THE TOTNES ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That John Pender, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Totnes.

That Alfred Seymour, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Totnes.

That the last Election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of John Pender, esquire, is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:

1. That John Pender, esquire, was guilty of bribery at the last Election:

2. That it was proved to the Committee that an offer of a place or employment was made by the said John Pender, esquire, to Robert Harris:

3. That it has been distinctly stated by some witnesses, and the general tenor of the evidence given leads the Committee to believe that a system of gross corruption prevailed at the last Election for the Borough of Totnes, and also on former similar occasions:

4. That there is reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed in the said Borough.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee to be laid before this House.—(*Mr. Bouverie.*)

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

MILITARY SAVINGS BANKS.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. DISRAELI: Sir, I rise for the purpose of bringing before the House, as briefly as possible, what would appear to be a great grievance, and of making inquiry of the Secretary for War in reference to it. Though this grievance has been experienced by persons of a very humble position, I am sure the House of Commons will not attend to it less on that account, and it affects a considerable class of Her Majesty's subjects. The facts of the case are these:—Some years ago a Buckinghamshire lad, by name Sadler, enlisted into Her Majesty's service, and shortly afterwards was ordered to India. In August, 1863, his father, who was an agricultural labourer, received intimation of the death of his son. It so happened that a very brief time before this intimation reached the father he received a letter from his son, written not at all in the contemplation of approaching death, for he was not even suffering from any illness: the son informed him that he had deposited £15 in the military savings bank. It was, therefore, very natural that the father, on receiving the sad announcement of his son's death, should make some effort to obtain the money; and he therefore wrote to the Department over which the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) presides. For some considerable time he received no answer; but at length he received a communication enclosing an order for the sum of £1 0*s.* 1*d.*, with the notification that that sum was all the father need expect. I would here say that I do not complain of the delay in answering the man's letter, for I can easily conceive that there may have been circumstances which prevented an immediate answer. In the letter there was no savings bank book or any voucher enclosed, or any official document of any kind. The father was very naturally disappointed at such a result, and he accordingly went to the person who is often the poor man's only friend, the parish priest. The vicar of the parish drew up a letter which stated the whole case in a lucid manner, which was afterwards copied by the father and forwarded along with the son's letter to the War Office. No answer was ever received to this epistle, and even the son's letter, the only voucher for the money deposited in the savings bank, was not sent back, although it was particularly requested that it should be returned. A period of two years and a half then elapsed, during which the father died. A very short time after this event a letter arrived from the War Office, addressed to the father as the representative of the young soldier, enclosing an order for 2*s.* 2*d.*, as the balance of his account. The case appears to be one of great injustice. We hear night after night of the difficulty which is experienced in finding recruits for our army; we see that it is necessary to hold out inducements in order to get men to enlist—and here is a youth who gave his youth and his life to his country, who would seem to have been of a provident and moral turn of mind, and at a great distance from his home, guided by those principles which we cherish in England. There can be no doubt that the possession of such a sum of money is of great importance to a labouring man, and yet of this sum only a very inconsiderable part came to the father's hands. Nearly three years have elapsed, and such would appear to be the conduct of affairs on the part of the War Office that it is impossible not to suspect, and almost to believe, that this is not a single and exceptional case, but an instance from a variety of cases of oppression and hardship which do occur. Under these circumstances, I have deemed it my duty to bring the subject before the House, and I feel satisfied that the noble Lord at the head of the War Office if he should not have it in his power to give a satisfactory explanation on the points to which I have referred will take them into his serious consideration. This, when we are about to be asked to vote the public money, is, I think, the proper occasion to bring such a matter forward, and I should be happy to learn from the Government that there was some chance that those on whose behalf I speak should obtain redress for the loss to which they have so long and so unjustly been subjected.

Mr. FERRAND said, that he had not the slightest idea that his right hon. Friend was about to bring forward the subject to which he had just called attention, but he would now take occasion to say that a similar instance had come under his own notice. A short time ago a widow in a village near where he resided received a letter from her son stating that he was travelling down the coast with his discharge on his way home; adding that he had saved £30 or £40, which he had placed in a savings bank, and with which he hoped to start in some trade and contribute to her support. The next account of him, however, which reached her was conveyed through a paper which was forwarded to her from the army agent in London, authorizing her to receive a sum of about 20*s.*, but not saying a word about the money in the savings bank. He had laid the matter before the War Office, but had never got any satisfactory reply with respect to it, and he was afraid there was something radically wrong connected with the management of the affairs of our soldiers in India, otherwise no such circumstances as those to which attention had been invited would have occurred.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I must express my deep regret that my noble Friend at the head of the War Department (the Marquess of Hartington) is not in his place to reply to the Questions which have been put by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The subject, I may add, has been brought on out of the ordinary course of the business for the evening, as set down in the Notice Paper; and even if my noble Friend were present he could hardly give an immediate answer to the statements of the right hon. Gentleman, inasmuch as he could only address the House once on the Motion before it, and the next subject for discussion also relates to matters connected with the War Department, on which he would have to speak. I, of course, can offer no satisfactory explanation as to a case with the circumstances of which I have been made acquainted only within the last few minutes. At the same time, I may say, that it is a case which seems to demand explanations on both sides. It happened to me to have to apply to the War Office with respect to the affairs of soldiers coming from India, and I must say that the accounts for which I asked were given with the utmost promptitude. I quite agree that this is a case which calls for careful inquiry; but I would remind the House that it does not appear that any depositor's book was sent to the War Office, and the letter of the soldier was obviously no voucher at all. I do not like to make a suggestion that the papers should be produced, nor can I exactly say what would be the right course to take, until I have some further knowledge of the particulars of the case. I, however, agree with the right hon. Gentleman that these matters ought to be looked into with the utmost punctuality, otherwise an injurious effect may be produced.

Mr. DISRAELI: The right hon. Gentleman, owing, no doubt, to some fault of mine, has entirely misapprehended my statement. There was no controversy in this case as to the title to the property. The War Office recognized the title by making two remittances. The savings bank books, I may add, necessarily remain in the hands of the Government. A peasant in Bucks could not well have in his possession the savings bank books of a soldier in India. The books, and all the other property of the man were, directly he died, taken into the hands of the authorities in India, by whom and the War Office the disposal of the assets is effected.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he rose to a point of order. According to the rules of the House, Motions on going into Committee of Supply should be brought in regular succession, in the order in which they stood on the Notice Paper. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks, however, interfered with that arrangement by bringing on before any of those Motions were disposed of a subject with respect to which there was on the Paper no notice whatsoever, and the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Ferrand), who had announced it to be his intention to bring on another question on the Motion for going into Committee of Supply, had been entrapped into sacrificing the privilege of doing so, inasmuch as he had already spoken once. It was productive of great inconvenience, in his opinion, that the rules regulating the conduct of public business should thus be departed from.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that the hon. Member was correct in point of order; but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks had been enabled to make the statement which he had made by the consent of the House.

Afterwards—

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, he wished to take that opportunity of expressing his regret that he had not been in the House in the early part of the evening, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire had put a Question respecting the effects of a deceased soldier. The right hon. Gentleman had privately given him notice that he would ask that Question; but he had expected that the right hon. Gentleman would not have done so until the other Notices on the Paper previously to their going into Committee of Supply should have been disposed of. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to have stated that the relatives of a deceased soldier of the name of Sadler had been unable to recover the sum of £15 which he had placed in a regimental savings bank. But the War Office had been informed by the commanding officer of the regiment that that soldier had not for a considerable period before his death had any account in that bank. He could not account for the circumstance, but the testimony of the commanding officer was conclusive that there was no such sum in the savings bank, and the soldier's friends were informed of that fact.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

IRELAND—ESCAPE OF STEPHENS.

QUESTION. MOTION FOR PAPERS.

Mr. WHITESIDE, in rising to call attention to the circumstances of the escape of Mr. Stephens from Richmond prison, and to move for Papers, said: Sir, the subject on which I wish to address the House for a short time relates to the escape of Stephens from Her Majesty's gaol at Richmond, in which he was detained. It is not my intention to enter into the large and general question which awaits discussion, as to the principle or the policy which led to the Fenian conspiracy. It has not been deemed judicious until the prosecutions which have been undertaken are completed to submit to the House the views which are entertained by some, and amongst others by myself, of the policy which led to the sad events which have disgraced and damaged Ireland. The particular question which I now wish to submit to the attention of the House is a short one compared with that of the Fenian conspiracy, and well deserves the attention of those hon. Members who wish to ascertain the true condition of the country, and the state of the departments and the morals of certain officials who are intrusted with the execution of the law. Sir, the question relates to Mr. Stephens, and the first question that might naturally be asked is—"Who is Mr. Stephens?" I became acquainted with him—but not personally—during the trial of the late Mr. Smith O'Brien, in 1848. I was engaged for Mr. Smith O'Brien and General Meagher. When I first heard of Mr. Stephens he was aide-de-camp, I believe, to Mr. Smith O'Brien; and, together with Mr. O'Mahoney, he got into conflict with the police. Mr. Stephens was wounded, and then, with his accustomed dexterity, he managed to quit Ireland, and fixed his abode with O'Mahoney at Paris. There, I am informed, he studied French and other revolutionary accomplishments, and everything which a gentleman undertaking so serious a matter as the overthrow of the Irish Government ought to acquaint himself with prior to embarking in so perilous and desperate an effort. He afterwards returned to Ireland and was introduced to many respectable families as a teacher of the French language, and I have heard that he was esteemed and admired for his qualifications. Towards the year 1858 or 1859, a Conservative Government being then in power, the Earl of Eglinton, the Lord Lieutenant, from his habit of reading the police and magisterial reports, perceived plainly the beginning of a conspiracy in Ireland, and after some time it was found to be connected with persons in America. My noble Friend the Member for Cockermouth (Lord Naas), who was Secretary for Ireland, recommended that a faithful agent should be despatched to America, to discover whether there was any reality in the truth of the statement that the conspiracy had a connection with persons in that country; that person returned and reported that it had, and that in his judgment there was a dangerous confederacy in America in connection with the movement in Ireland. After a time it was discovered that Stephens was the person who had organized this second conspiracy, and in the case for the Crown, prepared by a most efficient officer (Sir Matthew Barrington), the following facts, which were afterwards proved in evidence, were stated—

> "It further appears that the members of this treasonable confederacy have bound themselves by oath to carry out their designs; but no trace of pass-words or secret signs has been discovered. The earliest fact which has been ascertained appears to be that a person, named Stephens, and who was also known by the soubriquet of 'Shuke,' and who was implicated in the insurrectionary movement of 1848, was in this country last summer, and that he traversed the localities mentioned, organizing this society, and giving to certain persons the form of oath which they were to administer to others for the purpose of extending the operations of the society."

That oath was proved on evidence, and the terms of it will give the House to understand what an unhappy event has been the escape of Mr. Stephens. The oath, which these persons took, was in the following terms:—

> "I, A.B., do solemnly declare, in the presence of God, to renounce all allegiance to the Queen of England, and do my utmost endeavours, at every risk, to make Ireland an independent democratic Republic; and that I shall take up arms and fight, at a moment's warning, and shall yield implicit obedience to the commands of my superiors; and that I will preserve inviolable secrecy with regard to brotherhood; and finally, I take this oath without any mental reservation—so help me God."

Two or three witnesses proved the connection of Stephens with these proceedings; and to show the character of his friends, who acted with him to the last moment of his arrest, and were so properly prosecuted lately by the Government (and I admit that from the time the Government acted we have reason to be thankful for the conduct of the officers, magistrates, juries, and Judges) I will read a short extract from a letter of one of the conspirators—

> "Dear Sir,—I am ever ready to do my utmost to promote the cause and achieve the reality of nationality; I am, therefore, your servant in any undertaking to obtain that result; but I differ with some sentiment expressed in the seventh paragraph of your prospectus, inasmuch as I do not believe that the Saxon will ever relax his grasp except by the persuasion of cold lead and steel. No, never! cold steel: to that it must come at last, nor quake to hear it spoken; by the blow alone which we strike can the chains of the despot be broken; and, if I take the liberty to offer another remark, I would say that too much is said

about the divinity of our own creed, and when a principal object is to promote union among Irishmen. Excuse the liberty I have taken, and wishing God speed to the cause."

I should mention to the House that the following statement was made by myself as Attorney General in 1859 as to Mr. Stephens:—

> "It appears that a person, who I deeply lament to say has escaped the hands of justice, who was known by the name of 'Shuke,' but whose real name was Stephens, appeared about a year ago in this county, sometimes in Skibbereen, sometimes in Bantry, sometimes in Kenmare, sometimes at Killarney. He is described as one of the patriots of 1848, and therefore more qualified than another to guide the movement of 1858. I will prove that this man Stephens was the person through whom it was understood the Americans would come over to Ireland, aided by the French, to conquer the country; that the conspirators were to have money from America and soldiers from France. This man 'Shuke' you will find constantly referred to as the person through whom foreign aid was to be obtained, and that bears directly on the overt acts laid in the indictment."

The result of the trials in 1859 was that the man who was tried at Killarney was convicted, and the judgment, which was not severe, considering his offence, was ten years' penal servitude. A motion was made for the discharge of certain persons who were not tried in Cork, which I thought it my duty to resist, believing them to be all guilty of high treason, and the Court of Queen's Bench refused to discharge them. Accordingly they were left in custody until the Government of Lord Derby was obliged to retire. The right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Cardwell) then became Minister for Ireland, and I will ask him hereafter to explain his policy. The first thing that occurred was the discharge from custody of all those persons who, after pleading "not guilty," had withdrawn that plea and pleaded "guilty," and among them the writer of the letter I have read; and then Mr. Stephens, who had fled the country, returned to Ireland for the third time. I do not make any charge of motives against the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies. My belief is that he failed to comprehend the character of these men. The right hon. Gentleman is amiable and courteous, accustomed to live among plausible politicians, and could not comprehend the character of Mr. Stephens. In one sense I have a respect for Mr. Stephens. He is a daring revolutionist and enthusiastic Republican, and the right hon. Gentleman was no more qualified to deal with such a man than a child. These men had a policy and a conviction, and I do not understand how the right hon. Gentleman could have dreamt that they had abandoned their opinions because they had been discharged from prison. We did not hear anything of Stephens for some little time afterwards; but after the right hon. Gentleman had been the Minister for Ireland, for about fifteen months, a grand demonstration was got up in honour of the memory of M'Manus, who had been convicted of high treason in 1848 with Smith O'Brien, and who was described as having risked his life for his country. That procession did take place—it was said that there was no human body in the coffin—but whether that were so or not, no prayers were said; but they did not want prayers; what they wanted was revolutionary speeches, and these were delivered at the place of interment without any interference on the part of the Government of the day. The next thing we hear of Mr. Stephens was the formation of the present conspiracy which dates from the Chicago Convention in 1863. Stephens was there. He must certainly be a man of considerable ability, because he influences the masses with more success and secresy than any man who has been in Ireland since Wolfe Tone. But it does also appear that by means of passes he got access to the troops in America; he addressed himself to the regiments of the American army, to a great extent composed of Irishmen, and he held out to them the prospect of paying us a visit and those compliments, the result of which would be so very agreeable to themselves and so very disagreeable to us. Then we have an account of what he did in Ireland. A remarkable paper was produced at one of the trials in Ireland, which gave a description of Stephens, from his own lips. It said, "I dined at the tables of the rich; I slept in the cabins of the poor; I traversed the country from end to end"—and I wish I could say I disbelieve him, when he adds, "I enlisted," that is, brought into the Fenian conspiracy, "about 60,000 men." He accomplished that in about two years, from 1863 to 1865. He paid several visits to America. He organized a conspiracy there, said to consist of 250,000 men; and then he founded in Dublin what the hon. Member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray) so well described as the revolutionary journal, *The Irish People,* every line that appeared in which during the two years of its existence was treasonable; but the fact that Stephens was the real conductor of it was quite enough to explain this. For two or three years he was the ostensible manager of that journal. When I say "ostensible manager," I mean that he directed all those persons whose names have been heard by the House. The Government of the country most properly placed a detective to watch Stephens. He followed him in April, 1865, to Cork, where he stated that Stephens had no fewer than seventy visitors in one day, some from America, engaged in the concoction and development of one of the most detestable conspiracies that ever existed in our own or any other country. While the conspiracy was thus developing itself every day, it did occur to the Government, I believe, in September, 1865, to act. I quite agree with the statements made by the Judges and Law Officers, that there was overwhelming proof of a general conspiracy among certain classes in Ireland—not, as in our time, confined to parts of Cork or Kerry, but a general conspiracy, composed of persons of a certain class—quite distinct from the middle class and the substantial farmers—but a very large and effective class, complaining of no particular grievance, but organized, controlled, and influenced by Stephens for one object—the overthrow of the British Government in Ireland. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite may talk as they please of the fiddle-faddle of Reform to those men—they may offer them any reduction of the franchise; but what they want is the country, the redistribution of the land, the abolition of landlordism, and the establishment of a system of Republicanism similar to what exists in the United States. Well, when Government began to act, they acted vigorously; and when the agitations connected with the election had subsided, on the 15th of September, they made a seizure of everything that could be found in the office of *The Irish People.* That office is within two minutes' walk of the head police-office, and within three minutes' walk of the Castle. It was a weekly journal, and had a circulation of 8,000. It occurs to me here simply to say that I think, as the seizure of Stephens would have been more advantageous to the country than that of 10,000 peasants, it does appear somewhat remarkable that when the Government had detectives on his motions it never occurred to them to arrest him first; because he was really the head-centre and leading man of the whole movement. Mr. Justice Keogh is reported on the trial of Moore to have said of him—

> "They had heard a great deal about a person named James Stephens, and he thought there could remain little doubt in the mind of any one that he was the heart and soul of this confederacy; that he was even the prime mover—that he was, in fact, its great executive officer; and as it struck him that those who were acting in America, even J. O'Mahoney himself, were acting under the suggestions and under the control of this very James Stephens."

That is the description which was given of him by the learned Judge, and there can be no doubt of its accuracy. On the day on which *The Irish People* was seized Stephens was in a house in Denzille Street; and when told of the seizure he said he had always anticipated that would occur, but that it would not interfere with the movement. He then pocketed his six-barrelled revolver and walked quietly out of the house, and for six weeks or two months nothing was heard of him. Diligent search was made for him, but he was nowhere to be found. Three times had this man been engaged in insurrectionary movements against the Queen, and while they had seized I do not know how many of his confederates the great chief and head of this conspiracy was for a considerable time unheard of. He was arrested and lodged in Richmond Prison in November; and here I may be allowed to pay a passing compliment to the admirable officer who conducts the Dublin police, a force whose conduct has been most exemplary; and I take great pleasure in saying so, because eleven-twelfths of them are Roman Catholics, and their fidelity has never in any instance been shaken. One morning in November Colonel Lake surrounded a villa about a mile from town, and Stephens was seized. Three or four other persons were in the house with him. I do not believe there was any cowardice in the case. Everything was done so suddenly that the whole party was taken as by surprise. There was a knock at the door. Stephens, who had expected some one, came down in his night dress. He was told if he did not open the door it would be broken in. He knew his position, and accordingly he surrendered. I suppose the House never heard of such a scene as occurred when he was brought before Mr. Stronge, the magistrate. Stephens denied his magisterial authority. He told the Justice with the utmost composure he could not recognize his jurisdiction, because the Queen had been deposed. Every word he used that day would have convicted him on his trial. The magistrate warned him the officials would take down his revolutionary statements ; but he met them with courteous defiance. He turned round to the detectives and told them what he thought of them and their schemes in arresting him, and under the circumstances with a defiant air he maintained his position. He was committed for trial. I think with such evidence as they had of his own language no jury would have hesitated one instant in convicting him—for the conduct of the juries in Ireland deserves more respect and praise than they have yet received. In every part of the country their verdicts have been discriminating and firm. Stephens is lodged in Her Majesty's prison, and he was as safe in Richmond Prison as Her Majesty in Windsor Castle. I have I think sufficiently described the character of Stephens. He had been three times engaged in insurrectionary movements, and having been brought before the magistrate, the responsibility of the executive Government now began. That responsibility is not to be fixed on any inferior or subordinate person. The executive Government cannot escape the responsibility of explaining to the House what was their conduct in the matter, and how it happened that Stephens escaped. He could only escape by a combination of three circumstances ; first, that no military guard had been sent to the prison ; second, if there was a sufficient guard of police, it must have been withdrawn ; and third, the inmates of the prison—I mean the officials—must have been greater traitors than the rebels they were intended to guard. These three circumstances must have concurred. Did they concur ? Some of his confederates had been imprisoned in September ; he was arrested in November. The Richmond Prison is supported chiefly by the ratepayers of Dublin, and in a weak moment—I say it with great respect—Lord Clarendon, as if to do the popular thing, gave to the Board of Superintendence, which is elected by the Dublin corporation, the power of submitting to him the names of the officials who were to be appointed on the staff of Richmond Prison. In point of fact, the appointments rested with the Crown, and up that time the Crown only allowed the authorities to announce the fact that a vacancy had occurred, and then filled it up by appointing some fit and proper person—by which I mean a person of fidelity—one who would not take the pay of the State in order to betray the State. We have all our failings, and a corporate body is not indisposed to possess a little patronage. The corporation of Dublin, therefore, on an address to Lord Clarendon in 1851, obtained this patronage. They continued to exercise it, and I freely admit that Lord Wodehouse had no more to do with the appointments than I had. That, however, is not the point. Two or three Reports have been laid before Parliament, in which it appeared that prisoners' escapes had been made from the Richmond Prison. Mr. Stephens is lodged there by the act of the executive Government. They might have lodged him in another prison, or they might have placed a guard of soldiers there, or have added to the number of the constabulary, or have taken any step they thought fit. If they had said to Colonel Lake, "We have succeeded in arresting this dangerous revolutionist, guard him until his trial," I do not believe he would have escaped. In 1848, when a number of conspirators were confined in the same prison, a military guard was sent down, and the prisoners were kept in safe custody until they were tried and convicted. But on this occasion no military guard was sent down, and, to the astonishment of every loyal man in Ireland, Mr. Stephens escaped. It was a very extraordinary occurrence, and as the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth (Sir Robert Peel) was then Secretary for Ireland, I suppose he will be able to explain the matter to the House. It is said that some of the officials were suspected of being Fenians. It is also said that there was a guard of twenty-five policemen, and that twenty-two of them were removed. I wish to ask if that is the fact ; and, if so, whether they were removed after the great head of the conspiracy was lodged in the prison, or immediately before it ? Secondly, I want to know whether the executive Government were aware of what passed between the Board of Superintendence and the Governor whom they had appointed. It seems that the Board got up a discussion as to who was to bear the expense—the expense of a few pounds—of maintaining the extra police sent to the prison ; their argument being that the ratepayers ought not to keep State prisoners, and that persons about to be tried for high treason should be maintained by the State as was done in 1848. I think a more miserable dispute under the circumstances cannot be conceived. The Government, however, must have had notice of the fact; they must have received an intimation that the Board declined to pay for the extra guard. But the result was that they were removed, only three extra policemen remaining; and I have been told by a military gentleman that it requires at least three soldiers to make one sentry; so that in this large prison there were only three additional policemen, of whom one would be the sentry, and he was carefully locked off at a spot where he could neither see nor hear Stephens should he attempt to escape. As to the military, it has been stated—and it is to the credit of Lord Wodehouse—that an order was written or sent for a military guard to be despatched to the prison. Now, we are fortunate in Ireland in having one of the best soldiers of the British army in command of the troops there—I mean Sir Hugh Rose, and I venture to say that if any such order had reached him it would have been promptly obeyed. It is asserted, however, that the number to be despatched was only six; so that if it had arrived it would have sufficed only for two sentries. But it did not arrive, and that, therefore, is the second event essential to secure Mr. Stephen's exit. There were plenty of soldiers and plenty of police to be had, but no precautions were taken for the safe custody of a man who had thrice already committed treason, and whose life was forfeited if the Crown choose to try him on that charge. The consequence was, that, to the unspeakable alarm and indignation of loyal people in Ireland, this extraordinary individual disappeared from the Richmond Prison. Now, the question arises, when did he quit it?—for I do not believe he was in any hurry, but that he left just when it suited his purpose. Some say that in the dusk of the evening of the 22nd or 23rd of November a cab drove up to the door, and that this gentleman who had committed high treason descended and drove away. It was sworn, however, when a particular warder was tried as an accessory, that he was in custody on the morning of the 24th. One feature in this extraordinary case was, that two tables—too heavy to be carried by one man — were carried and placed against the wall, one on the top of the other, evidently with the intention of leading to the conclusion that he had got over the wall. That, however, was found to be perfectly absurd, and was a mere sham, in which nobody believes. What is believed is that false keys were provided by some of the officials, who, though paid by the State, shared the same opinions, and who assisted Stephens at the moment he thought fit in making his exit from that prison, into which he has never been recommitted. But who is responsible for his escape? It has been said that the Board of Superintendence are responsible, or that the Inspectors of Prisons are responsible; but, Sir, I maintain that nobody is responsible but the executive Government. The inspectors are not magistrates; they have not the care of prisoners; they simply make an annual Report on the state of the prisons which they visit. The Government of the country had to prosecute these conspirators; they had got possession of the leader of that conspiracy, and they had him in their prison; there was a guard of police, but it was removed; a guard of soldiers was intended to be sent down, but it never arrived; and then with the assistance of persons within the prison, and by means of false keys, artistically made, and which therefore could not have been procured in a moment, the chief of the revolutionary party walks abroad and is now, notwithstanding the very large reward, amounting to several thousand pounds, offered for his arrest, in perfect safety. I have only stated what has appeared in the public press, for of course I do not know the exact facts of the escape as they are known to the Government; but I say it is one of the most disgraceful transactions that have ever taken place in Ireland, and that it reflects discredit upon the department in which it occurred, and fills the mind of loyal people with suspicion as to the efficiency of other departments. For what are we to expect if in the capital of the country, with a large garrison, with an ample force of police, a revolutionary character of this kind, who has organized a great confederacy against the Crown, walks out of prison just when it suits his convenience? How can we expect the law of the land to be administered with integrity if such a transaction as that can occur, and can occur with impunity? For I deny that the inspectors of prisons were responsible: I deny that the corporation of Dublin were responsible: I deny that the magistrates were responsible:—I assert that the then Irish Secretary, who had authority in the name of the Lord Lieutenant to command the whole military power of the country, ought to explain to us under what circumstances it was that no guard of a military character was placed in the prison, that the civil guard was removed, and that Mr. Stephens is now at large. I think the circumstances are deserving of an investigation on the part of this House, and I wish to know whether any inquiry has been ordered, or any Report made to the executive Government, and whether there will be any objection to lay such Report on the table of the House?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON): It would be idle for me, Sir, to attempt to follow the right hon. Gentleman through the very long statement with which he has favoured the House upon a very small matter—["Oh, oh!"]—small, I mean, in point of relative importance. The event of which he calls for an explanation—namely, the escape of Stephens—occurred in November last; but the right hon. Gentleman has commenced with the year 1848, and has given the House a long narrative of events from that time down to the present. The right hon. Gentleman is always amusing, always entertaining, and never more so, I think, than when he gives range to his fertile imagination, as he has done to a great extent upon this occasion; because the transactions which he has been narrating are based upon hearsay, and not upon personal knowledge, and a great many of them, I am in a position to state, rest upon no solid foundation. The right hon. Gentleman began by commenting on the policy which led, he says, to these sad events. He brings forward no definite charge against the executive Government of having failed in their duty; but he takes the opportunity of moving for papers in relation to a particular transaction to bring charges and insinuations against the conduct of the executive Government, and announces his intention of calling attention on a future occasion to the policy of the Government as having led to those lamentable events. Now the Government, I beg to tell him, challenges inquiry into that policy. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he had been waiting for the close of the prosecutions; but I must remind the House that the Special Commission at which those men were tried concluded early in the month of February, and Parliament has been sitting from that time to the present, yet the right hon. Gentleman has brought forward no Motion impeaching the conduct of the executive Government in relation to the proceedings:—if ever he does so, the Government will be prepared to meet him. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman complained of the late period at which the proceedings were instituted against *The Irish People,* which, he says, had been circulating treason for a considerable time, and he stated that these proceedings were not taken till the month of September, 1865, after the turmoil of the general election. What is the meaning of that? Is it worthy of the right hon. Gentleman? Does he mean to impute unworthy motives, and to say that any Gentleman intrusted by the Crown with the conduct of a prosecution in Ireland, having in his possession evidence sufficient to convict a prisoner for treason, would from political motives shrink from instituting those proceedings in order that he might not prejudice the Government of which he was a Member on the eve of a general election? I think the House must be surprised that the right hon. Gentleman, who has filled the office of Attorney General for Ireland, should venture to throw out insinuations against the Irish Law Officers of the Government which are without the slightest foundation. Sir, until the very eve of the period when these proceedings were instituted, and which proceedings even my right hon. Friend is obliged to confess were fairly and successfully conducted, Her Majesty's Government had not in their possession the evidence necessary to enable them to take action; and without that evidence, failure, and not success, would have followed. The right hon. Gentleman gave the House a report from his own instructions of what took place in 1848, and then he brings forward a story of what took place in 1858, which was never proved in a court of justice. The only evidence he could give the House was reading from the brief given to him in 1859, when he was at Cork to conduct a prosecution. No fact was brought forward to prove the connection of Stephens with the conspiracy of 1858. That was a miserable affair, and was confined to a few corners of Cork and Kerry. The right hon. Gentleman seeks to magnify himself by casting a halo around Stephens. That proceeding, conducted by the right hon. Gentleman, had a very singular result, for he being Attorney General, and the hon. and learned Member for Wexford (Mr. George) being Solicitor General, they had fourteen or fifteen prisoners to try in the gaols of Cork and Kerry. In one case tried in Kerry the jury disagreed, and the right hon. Gentleman did not try any other prisoners there. He then went to Cork. There were a number of men in Cork gaol, but the right hon. Gentleman, without giving any reason whatever, flung up his case and retired, leaving all the prisoners untried. The Solicitor General was sent back to Kerry, and put on his trial again the same man he had tried before. He was the only prisoner found guilty, and the only result of the prosecution which the right hon. Gentleman has described with so much pomp was, that the jury disagreed in one trial and he convicted one prisoner. The right hon. Gentleman then went out of office, without having tried any one else. The right hon. Gentleman charged the present Secretary for the Colonies, who was at that time Chief Secretary for Ireland, with great impropriety in having allowed some of these persons to be set at liberty. But the Secretary for Ireland had nothing to do with that. The liberation of these persons was in the department, and was done under the advice of the Attorney General of the day; and having regard to the manner in which those prisoners were left in gaol untried, the only rational proceeding which the Attorney General could take was to advise the Crown to discharge them. The right hon. Gentleman also referred to the funeral of M'Manus in 1861. He gave us a perfect romance about Stephens having gone to America and organized a convention at Chicago. Now, I am aware, from documents in the possession of the Crown, that Stephens was not there at that time, or until March, 1864. I should trespass too much on the patience of the House if I travelled through all the statements which the right hon. Gentleman has made, most of them resting on no better foundation. He says that Stephens was the ostensible proprietor of *The Irish People* newspaper. [MR. WHITESIDE: I said he was the director.] So far from that, he never appeared in any way as connected with that newspaper; and it was not until the fortunate action of the Irish Government in seizing the papers and documents in *The Irish People* office that it was shown he was secretly the organizer and promoter of that journal. To the eye of the world, and even to the police, he was utterly unknown as being connected with it. Then, the right hon. Gentleman complains that the Government did not arrest Stephens at that time. But on the night on which the seizure was made Stephens was in Dublin, and, a friendly person having probably brought him the news, he most judiciously retired, and was not found until two months afterwards. Then, the right hon. Gentleman comes to the most important matter—and I quite agree with him that it was a most unhappy and unfortunate event—the escape of Stephens. The question is—are the executive Government responsible for that escape? Did they neglect any fair precautions, or any care in the custody of the prisoner? If they did they deserve the censure of the House and the country. The government are perfectly willing to meet the charge whenever it is brought forward. But what does the right hon. Gentleman do? Moving for papers and for the Report of the Inspector General of Prisons, which he knows perfectly well has been presented to the Irish Government, and which will be laid upon the table of this House, the right hon. Gentleman takes the opportunity of making charges against the Government without taking the precaution of seeing how far those charges are sustained, as he might have done if he had only waited for the production of those papers. Is it worthy of the position of the right hon. Gentleman in this House to take this course, to go back for years, and throw out insinuations against the Government which no one would ever have the hardihood to put into form and shape? The right hon. Gentleman was acquainted with the earlier prosecutions of 1848 and 1858, but his services were not called into requisition on the occasion of the more recent trials.

MR. WHITESIDE: Those persons to whom my right hon. Friend refers did ask me to defend them; but I declined to do so, because I had prosecuted them before.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON): I am quite aware of that. The right hon. Gentleman was not engaged in these proceedings. He had no personal knowledge of them, and all his information was derived from reading the newspapers. He told the House with great pomp that Stephens was committed to Her Majesty's prison—by which he conveyed to the House that the Richmond Prison at Dublin is under Her Majesty's control, and that Her Majesty could order anything she pleased to be done in that prison. My right hon. Friend ought to be aware that that prison, like others of its class, is governed by a Board of Superintendence, and that it was under their rules and by-laws. It is the legal prison for persons taken into custody for offences committed in Dublin, and Colonel Lake had no right to keep Stephens in his custody. He could not supersede the

Board of Superintendence, and the Governor of Richmond Bridewell was the person responsible for the safe custody of Stephens. The right hon. Gentleman goes back to 1851, and finds fault with Lord Clarendon because he assented to a proposal made to him by the corporation of Dublin, that, although he legally had the nomination of these officers, he should delegate to the corporation the appointment, upon the condition that the persons nominated should undergo a certain probation, and if found qualified that they should then have the appointment. Upon that statement the right hon. Gentleman founds a charge against Lord Clarendon, but he forgets that that arrangement was confirmed by several successive Lords Lieutenant, and that Lord Eglinton, who was twice Lord Lieutenant, and under whom the right hon. Gentleman was Attorney General, expressly confirmed that arrangement. That will give the House an idea of the sort of foundation upon which these charges rest. He then tells us that there was a dispute about the expenses of the additional police employed to guard these men. I have only to say that the Board of Superintendence met and said that if extra men were required, it was only reasonable that the Government should pay for them. That question, however, was never decided one way or the other. But the fact remains that the Governor, who had been in charge of this prison, since 1848, having represented to the Government that he required the services of additional police in order to secure the prisoners, his application was at once granted; and when he represented that he required a military guard Government sent directions to the military authorities to place an ample force at his disposal. The military authorities, having ascertained that there was accommodation for the troops at the prison, directed the town major to send a military guard there; but the Governor, without communicating with the Government on the subject, informed the town major that he did not want the guard at that particular time, and that when he required the services of the troops he would send for them. Now, I contend that the Government did all that in them lay. They placed the troops at the disposal of the Governor, and they remained under the belief that he had accepted, as he should have done, the services of a military guard, and they never knew that he had refused that assistance until after the escape of Stephens. They directed an extra police force to be sent to the prison, and they were not aware that the Governor had, without communicating with them, reduced that force. Having done all in their power to render the custody of the prisoners secure, various charges were now brought against them because an officer who had long had the control of the prison had, unknown to them, acted improperly and negligently, and had intrusted the prisoners to persons who were treacherous, and who had been bribed. The Governor has paid the penalty—he has been punished for his misconduct by being removed from his office; and the power of appointing the officers of the prison, which since 1851 was intrusted to the corporation, has been resumed by the Executive since this unfortunate and calamitous event took place. The right hon. Gentleman asks if there has been any Report made to us upon the subject. Why, he is well aware that such a Report was made, and that it was circulated in every newspaper in Dublin. That Report we are perfectly ready to lay upon the table, together with all other papers relating to the subject; and when they are laid upon the table of the House I defy the right hon. Gentleman to found any charge upon them against the executive Government. What more could the Government have done? They have crushed this conspiracy and incipient rebellion without shedding one drop of blood, and they are in a position to point out that by the exertions they have used every one of the persons immediately engaged in the conspiracy has been brought to justice. But surely the right hon. Gentleman should have some sympathy with those placed in a position of such great and serious responsibility. He who has himself filled the office of Attorney General for Ireland should have had some sympathy, some generous feelings for us when we were discharging our difficult task, and even if his critical eye detected a few shortcomings on our part, surely his generosity should have induced him to overlook them. But I am happy to say that there is nothing in our conduct requiring forgiveness at the hands of the right hon. Gentleman. We ask not for the indulgence, the sympathy, or the generosity of the right hon. Gentleman. We are here ready, willing, and able to defend ourselves from any charges he may think fit to bring against us. I ask the right hon. Gentleman what more he could have done to prevent the escape of Stephens than was done by us? Would he have authorized Colonel Lake to enter the prison at the head of the troops and to turn all the officers out of it? Would he have kept guard at the door of Stephens' cell, occasionally relieved by my hon. Friend the Member for Wexford? I believe the duty of the Law Officers of the Crown is to prosecute those prisoners who are proceeded against, and that duty we were willing, and I may perhaps say, able, to perform. I feel I have left a great deal unanswered, but I have said enough to show that the charges made against us by the right hon. Gentleman do not rest upon any sure or solid foundation. I repeat that we are quite ready to lay upon the table of the House any Paper that has come into our hands upon this subject, and to challenge the right hon. Gentleman to found upon them any charges against the Government in respect of the escape of Stephens and the conduct of the prosecutions of the prisoners. We court the fullest possible inquiry into the matter, and we are not afraid of the result.

Mr. GEORGE said, the right hon. and learned Member who had just sat down (Mr. Lawson) had attempted to show that the Conspiracy of 1859 and the present disturbances were utterly unconnected; but, as one who had been engaged in the trials which took place at the former date, he (Mr. George) ventured to differ altogether from the right hon. and learned Member on this point. The conspiracy which existed at the present time under the name of Fenianism was identical with that which existed in 1859 under the name of the Phœnix Conspiracy. Many of the witnesses who were examined on the trials in 1859 referred expressly to Stephens, under the name of Shuke or Power. It was then stated that aid in men and money was expected from America—he was speaking in the presence of the Solicitor General for Ireland, to whose candour he appealed to corroborate his statement—the only difference between the Conspiracy of 1859 and that of the present time was a difference of degree. At that time a large number of Irish emigrants went to America, many of whom entertained bad feelings towards this country, and they openly expressed a desire to return and aid in getting up a treacherous conspiracy in Ireland. The Conspiracy of 1859, therefore, was identical with that now in existence, only the latter had attained a greater power and strength in consequence of the hundreds and thousands of men who had been disbanded at the termination of the American Civil War. With reference to the Phœnix trials of 1859, it was true, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman had stated, that he (Mr. George) had himself conducted the trial of one of the prisoners; and he believed he was correct in stating that ten of the jurymen were in favour of a conviction, and only two could not be brought to agree to a verdict of guilty. On that occasion the remarkable expression was uttered in open court—

> "That the Crown might thank itself for the acquittal through having allowed those two men to go into the jury box who were no better than the prisoners themselves."

Again, at the trials which took place at Cork, the counsel for the Crown, after consultation, came to the conclusion that the then constitution of the jury did not warrant them in proceeding with the prosecutions, and the trials were accordingly adjourned. In consequence of the unavoidable absence of his right hon. and learned Colleague (Mr. Whiteside) in London, the whole conduct of the second trial at Tralee fell upon himself, and he might state that every effort was made to defeat the administration of justice. Demurrers were taken at different stages of the proceedings, the juries were challenged, and then one of the counsel—one of the ablest men at the bar—refused to proceed with the defence of the prisoners, and the case was left in the hands of the junior counsel. Under these circumstances, after the evidence had been given, and after the most humane charge ever heard in a court of justice had been delivered by the most able, the most humane, the most acute, and the kindest hearted man that ever graced and adorned the bench—he alluded to Baron Greene—the jury, after due consideration, brought in a unanimous verdict of guilty. He referred to these facts in answer to the observation of the Attorney General for Ireland, that the Phœnix Conspiracy of 1859 was of a trifling nature. The learned Judge who presided over those trials, after going through all the facts and circumstances of the case, was clearly of opinion that the evidence given proved the existence of actual treason. He could not help saying that the conduct of the Government in discharging from custody one of the most dangerous members of that conspiracy was open to grave censure. That discharge was made, he believed, without the concurrence of Baron Greene, shortly after a change had taken place in the Government, that learned and humane Judge being, as he understood, not even consulted in the matter. Had he been so consulted he was convinced that Baron Greene would never have approved that discharge. On both these trials allusion was made to this Stephens, who had so successfully evaded the grasp of justice. Thus, there could be no doubt that this Fenian Conspiracy was one and the same as that which was carried on in 1859; the sole difference was, that at present it had attained dimensions more gigantic and more dangerous than those which it had reached in 1859. The two movements were identical in all respects—identical in the transmission of men and money from America, and identical, above all, in the possession of that very leader whose many disguises and aliases had always rendered his detection a difficult matter. It should also be borne in mind that an application was made on that occasion to the Court of Queen's Bench to let the prisoners out on bail, but the request was refused by the Court, which decided that the Crown and the Crown Officers had acted justifiably in this matter, and that the facts then proved amounted to the actual crime of high treason. His right hon. Friend the Attorney General for Ireland need scarcely have taken the trouble to defend himself from charges which had not been brought against him. It was admitted on all hands that the conduct of his right hon. Friend in relation to the present prosecutions had been extremely able and judicious. If he were asked, however, whether the conduct of the Government was entirely justifiable with respect to the choice of the time and manner of instituting these proceedings, he felt bound to reply that they were not. The Government had known for a long time of the nocturnal trainings which were being conducted in every part of Ireland, the attention of the Irish Government had been drawn to the matter from time to time; and though he was not prepared to say that there were no special or particular reasons why the trials should be delayed, the fact undoubtedly was that they were, as was stated by his right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside), postponed until after the general election. He had already stated that, though no actual criminality or guilt attached to any particular party, there was much to lament and deplore in a great deal of the language which had fallen from high and influential quarters in Ireland at a time when such a state of things existed in the country as had since transpired. If there ever was a time when the promotion of peace and tranquillity should above all things have been sought by the employment of language tending to that result, such a time existed two or three months prior to the general election; and yet on every hand speeches were made which, objectionable at any time, were doubly so at a period when Ireland was on the very brink of a volcano, from the danger of which she was even yet scarcely secure. He believed, then, that it was the deliberate conviction of every man of common sense in the three kingdoms that, with a conspiracy of such magnitude, it was the bounden duty of Her Majesty's Government, having captured prisoners of such importance, to have carefully guarded their safety. They should have sent a military guard to the gaol, and not have permitted the Governor to presume on his own authority to send the guard back. If a precedent for such a course were necessary, it would be furnished by the proceedings of 1848, when, under somewhat similar circumstances, the Government placed a military guard over prisoners confined in this very gaol. His right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland had said that it was not his duty to go and watch at the door of the prison one hour and that of the Solicitor General to watch another, but that was trifling with the subject. He could not help saying that the Government exhibited great laxity in allowing this man to escape, although he was bound to repeat that, in his opinion, with regard to the actual prosecution of the conspirators, everything that was necessary and advisable had been done. He trusted that, under these circumstances, the production of the papers asked for would not be refused.

Sir ROBERT PEEL: Until the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside) rose I was not aware that I should be called upon to address the House upon this Motion; but, as it will be in the recollection of the House that the right hon. Gentleman alluded in pointed terms to the position which I lately occupied in Ireland, I may perhaps be permitted to say a few words. I am glad that my remarks follow those which fell from the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Wexford (Mr. George), because I have, through the hon. and learned Gentleman, the assurance from the Law

Officers of the Crown in Ireland under Lord Derby that the course pursued by the present Law Officers of the Crown in that country during these grave and serious investigations is regarded as exceedingly creditable, and has been received with perfect confidence by the country at large. There can be little doubt that scarcely anything throughout these trials can be more harassing or more difficult to deal with than the subject which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin has treated with such levity—I may say unseemly discretion. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Government had postponed their action in a matter involving a conspiracy against the Government of Ireland and the Sovereign of that country until the conclusion of the general election. Now, Sir, I never heard a more mean and paltry assertion; one, indeed, which is utterly unworthy the character and credit of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. WHITESIDE: I must call the right hon. Baronet to order, and request Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the words which have just been uttered may be taken down. I understood the right hon. Baronet to say that the statement which I made was a mean and paltry one, and I request that you, Sir, will state whether such language is Parliamentary or not.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: Before an answer is given to the question of the right hon. Gentleman, I may, perhaps, be permitted to say that my statement was that the charge made by the right hon. Gentleman, that the Government had postponed action in a matter involving matters of such magnitude until the general election should have been got over, is a mean and paltry way of dealing with a grave and serious question. I put it to the House whether I am not justified in using expressions of that kind. Now—

MR. WHITESIDE: I again rise to order, Sir, and must still request that the right hon. Baronet will conform to the usages of the House. I still require your decision upon the expression used by the right hon. Baronet—an expression employed not in the sense just stated, but conveying the opinion that what I said was mean and paltry. ["No, no!"] I still wish to know, Sir, whether such language is Parliamentary.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The right hon. Baronet has already stated that the application of the words was not intended to convey the meaning to which the right hon. Gentleman objects.

MR. DISRAELI: I rise, Sir, to order. I understood the right hon. Baronet to disclaim the use of the words of which my right hon. Friend complains in the sense which my right hon. Friend attributes to them. I distinctly understood the right hon. Baronet to state to the House that the words he used were of a general application, and in that case I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend will see that no charge in reality is made againt him.

MR. WHITESIDE again appealed to the Chair, whether the right hon. Baronet's words were not un-Parliamentary.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that as he understood the right hon. Baronet's expression he was not prepared to say that, although strong, it was un-Parliamentary; but the right hon. Baronet's subsequent words remove any doubt on that point.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: Having, Sir, before the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire rose, qualified the expression which I used, I do not think it necessary to enter further into that point. Still, I thought the right hon. and learned Gentleman's charge that the prosecutions were postponed until after the general election was not worthy of him. But I wish to refer to a few points to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman alluded. He said he did not wish to anticipate a future debate that was likely to take place in this House on the Fenian conspiracy. Now, I am sure that the Government do not shrink from meeting the fullest investigation and discussion of their conduct in regard to this whole subject, and I should say that the sooner the subject is brought forward the better. Let the right hon. Gentleman therefore give notice of his intention to bring forward after Easter his accusations against the Government. I am convinced we shall be able to lay before the House a case that will not only exculpate the Government from the charges which the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. and learned Member for Wexford have made against them, but that will prove that the Govermment have acted with great judgment, discretion, and firmness in the manner in which they have performed their duty. The right hon. Gentleman said that this prison was Her Majesty's prison. My right hon. Friend (the Attorney General for Ireland) showed that these prisoners were confined in the city gaol, that that goal was under the superintendence of the City Board, that there were local Inspectors, and Inspector Generals to report to the Government any occurrences connected with these prisoners. But does the right hon. Gentleman opposite mean to say that the Government, with all the burden of current events on their shoulders, could go to these gaols and see that the officials properly discharged their duties? We must first know who was charged with that duty. I do not less regret the escape of Stephens than the right hon. Gentleman; but I say, throw all the blame you please on the Executive, but the Government, when there was treason within the walls of the gaol and treason without, could not by any possible foresight have prevented the escape of that prisoner. The right hon. Gentleman stated that Lord Clarendon, in a weak moment, gave over the management of that prison to the Board of Superintendence in 1851. It is perfectly true that the Government did then hand over to the Board of Superintendence the management of the prison, the interior regulation of which had previously devolved on the Irish Government. But Lord Eglinton twice, when Lord Lieutenant, and the Irish Government on every subsequent occasion, deputed those functions and powers to the Board of Superintendence; and I believe I am justified in asserting that the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has revoked that authority, and that for the future the Government, and the Government alone, will be directly responsible for the appointment of the officers who will have the management of this prison. The right hon. Gentleman contends that this Fenian Conspiracy dates as far back as the year 1858, and says it has a clear connection with a conspiracy which existed in Ireland at the time when Lord Eglinton was Viceroy. I do not think that the Law Officers of the Crown will bear out that statement. I believe, from the information in the hands of the Government, that it will be found—and if the right hon. Gentleman had only waited until the papers had been laid upon the table he would also have found—that the origin of this conspiracy is clearly to be traced to the year 1862—that is, to about the time of the establishment of *The Irish People* newspaper. No doubt, when the right hon. Gentleman opposite was Attorney General for Ireland, during Lord Eglinton's Viceroyalty, there were a series of disturbances going on in that country. In fact, there has been a chronic state of disturbance prevalent in Ireland for many years past; but each successive Government have done all they could to arrest and control that evil. But I will put the matter on the right hon. Gentleman's own ground. He says that in Ireland we now have a conspiracy existing—he fears it is so, but hopes it is not the case—he says that there are in Ireland some 60,000 men enrolled under the banner of the fugitive Stephens, with 250,000 more in America. Well, with this serious state of things staring us in the face, I ask is it right to treat a case of such gravity in the way that the right hon. Gentleman has done? Without waiting for the Report, in the absence of all papers to correct him, he blames the Government upon *ex parte* statements, making serious accusations, which the Attorney General for Ireland has shown to be unfounded. If the right hon. Gentleman had urged the Government to produce all the papers bearing on these matters, I would have cordially supported him in that. Then he would have found that many of his assertions were not based upon fact. As to the escape of Stephens, as I have said, no man deplores it more than I do; but the right hon. Gentleman at a very critical conjuncture in the history of Ireland endeavours to draw an amusing and very fanciful sketch of that event, which was not consistent with the real facts of the case. The Government had a very anxious time, but no precaution of theirs could have prevented Stephens' escape. It is a fact that we believed at the time that there were a guard and extra police in the prison where he was confined; and if the Government were deceived who, I ask, were to give them that information but the local Inspectors or the Inspector General? Sir, I state—what is notorious—that the Irish Government were under the impression that the military guard which they ordered to go to the prison walls were there, and had not been sent back by Mr. Marquess, the Governor of the gaol. I myself individually regarded the conduct of the Governor of that gaol as so serious that I implored the Lord Lieutenant immediately to take from him the custody of the prisoners there. My advice was followed in that respect, as also in regard to the suspension and dismissal of one of the chief wardens of the prison. Immediately when information of the escape reached the Government, I went myself, with Colonel Lake, to the prison at the request of the Lord Lieutenant; and that very night the Government met at the Castle, and instantly decided on ordering the removal of every one of these prisoners from the Richmond Bridewell to Kilmainham Gaol, lest anything more should occur which might imperil the character of the Government. If the right hon. Gentleman had only waited until the Report was laid on the table, he would have seen that the facts are as I am now stating them. He has praised the conduct of certain authorities in Ireland, and I wish to bear my testimony—for I was there at the time—my most willing testimony, to the energy and zeal of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. This conduct on their part is an answer to the imputations which have been very unjustly cast upon many of our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen in that country—namely, that they are siding with this treasonable movement. That conspiracy—as was well stated the other day in another place—although it is, nevertheless, very formidable, is a quite contemptible movement as regards the character or the intelligence of those who are mixed up with it. That does not, however, make it the less serious. And I must say that, as far as we were concerned at the time when I left that country, we did conduct all the matters connected with this most unfortunate conspiracy in a manner which, when it comes to be fully discussed in Parliament, will, I believe, meet not only with the approbation of this House, but with the confidence of the public at large. Sir, I only rose because the right hon. Gentleman opposite so pointedly alluded to me. And when I refer, by the way, to the Dublin Metropolitan Police, I wish also to bear my testimony to the praiseworthy conduct of the constabulary of Ireland in this matter, for they have had a very arduous duty to fulfil. There have been Fenian emissaries in all parts of Ireland. The men of the Irish constabulary have been scattered in small detachments of four and five all over the country, at many hundreds of stations; and yet I am justified, I think, in saying that there has not been a single instance of a station being in any way tainted with the prevailing conspiracy in the whole country. That fact speaks highly for the constabulary; and I do hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer—I know the question is now before him—will accede to the very last appeal which I made to the Government while I was in Ireland, and re-consider the pay of that force. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: It is done.] It is done; I am very glad to hear it. They were certainly underpaid. They discharged their duty efficiently, and were always ready to perform whatever was required of them. I rejoice, therefore, to learn from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that their claim has been favourably considered. And I hope, too, we shall no longer hear of those very considerable reductions of the force far below the quota which the country is entitled to have under the existing regulations. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has likewise referred to another subject, with regard to which I also desire, as having been connected with the Government of Ireland at the time, to bear my willing testimony—I mean the impartial manner in which the juries have performed their duties. At the outset there might have been considerable difficulty in securing the conviction of Fenian prisoners; but it has been demonstrated most conclusively, when the guilt of the accused can be satisfactorily proved, that the juries of Ireland are as determined as the juries of England to deliver a verdict in accordance with the evidence before them. I am glad that an opportunity has been afforded me of making these few observations. I am also gratified that the Attorney General has promised the papers that have been referred to. Although the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman were rather superfluous, in my opinion, yet I maintain that the Government can lose nothing by a full and fair, and even a premature discussion of this subject. It will ultimately be shown that the Irish Executive has acted in a manner which merits the approbation of all persons interested in the welfare and stability of that island.

LORD NAAS said, he wished before the discussion closed to offer a few remarks to the House in reply to some observations that had fallen from the Attorney General for Ireland with reference to some circumstances that occurred while he (Lord Naas) was Chief Secretary for Ireland. He had not understood from the notice given by his right hon. Friend that the question now under discussion would have been brought before the House. But when the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland chose to make a contrast between the conduct of the Government of which he was a Member and the conduct of the Government in office in 1858, he (Lord Naas) felt bound to offer a few remarks upon what transpired during that year. He admitted that the policy of the Government in 1858 was entirely different from that pursued by the present Government during the last year or two. In the former period a formidable conspiracy was inaugurated in Ireland; but it was dealt with at once. Within two months after communication was made to the Government that a conspiracy, originating in America, and supported by American money, by men interested in the events of 1848, was being formed, the leaders were in gaol and awaiting their trial. The result was that, through the resolute action of the Government, within three months the conspiracy was completely extinguished. The right hon. Gentleman shook his head as if incredulous on this point. He (Lord Naas) was perfectly aware that in 1858 many charges were brought against the Government—not in the House of Commons—but by the press and political opponents of the Government, stating that the Government were making too much of the Phœnix movement, and were endeavouring, to use the words employed at that time, to get up a "sham rebellion." He, however, took a totally different view of the conduct of the Government. In dealing with conspiracies Government had two duties to discharge, the first was their paramount duty to the Crown, and the second was their duty to the people. When it came to the knowledge of the Government of Lord Eglinton that emissaries were going throughout the length and breadth of the land sowing treason and spending large sums of money to further their designs, we considered that it was our duty at the earliest possible moment to employ every means in our power to arrest the movement. That policy in 1858 was completely successful. As Secretary for Ireland he (Lord Naas) took the responsibility upon himself of directing the arrests. He was told by many people that he had not sufficient evidence to warrant those arrests; but he did not care for that, his object was to stop the movement, and the movement was stopped. The policy pursued at that time merited and obtained the approval of every loyal man in the country. The present Government, however, had taken another course with regard to the Fenian conspiracy. For two years treason had been allowed to spread throughout the length and breadth of the land and with an audacity scarcely ever equalled; to establish its head-quarters within a stone's throw of Dublin Castle; the ringleaders were men who had participated in the conspiracies of 1848 and 1858, one of whom was actually liable to be called up for judgment for seditious conduct at a former period. The Government might have had good reasons for the policy they had pursued, and their motives might have been good; but he believed they were mistaken motives. Whenever the policy of the Government in this matter should be discussed at length he was persuaded that it would be shown that the Government were mistaken in allowing the Fenian conspiracy to proceed to the extent it had gone, and that if they had followed the example of the Government of 1858 they would have crushed it at a much earlier period. It was not possible to overrate the value of early action in a matter of this kind; and he (Lord Naas) believed that the conspiracy ought to have been dealt with a great deal earlier than it was. So much for the events of 1858. With regard to the matter immediately before the House—the escape of Stephens—he (Lord Naas) was astonished to hear the Attorney General for Ireland state that Her Majesty's Government had no direct control over the prisons of that country. It was very well known that in 1848, and long before that time, when political prisoners were confined in the gaols of Ireland, the Executive took precautions for their security other than those which were thought necessary in reference to ordinary prisoners. If the right hon. Gentleman were to inquire he would find that on many occasions long previous to 1848 it was the common practice that whenever prisoners of political importance were committed to gaol, an extraordinary force of military and police was ordered to the gaol for the better security of the prisoners. The right hon. Gentleman would lead the House to believe that the Government had no control over the prison authorities; but the fact was that in addition to having a veto upon their appointment, they had also an absolute power of dismissal in reference to every one of them; and he thought that it was a matter of very great regret that this power had not been exercised long before with regard to some of these officers. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to convey that the Government could not have exercised that power; but he (Lord Naas) found that in a Report made by the Inspector General to the Government in 1862 it was stated that the very officer who had been taken up but not convicted for complicity in the escape of Stephens was entirely unfit for his place, and a serious complaint was made by the Inspector General to the Government on account of this man being kept in office after repeated reports as to his incompetency and misconduct. He asked was it not wonderful that, with a full knowledge of his incompetency, this person should be one to whose care the prisoners should have been committed, and this without any special or extraordinary means being taken for their safety. It seemed to him that the Government never took the slightest trouble to find out whether any extra precaution was taken with regard to these men; and he thought there was an amount of neglect and carelessness on the part of the Government that was a very fit subject for comment in that House, and that was also very deeply to be regretted. Nothing showed the necessity for these precautions so much as the precautions which had been taken since; for he believed that in every gaol in which Fenians are now confined, not only the constabulary, but also military form part of the prison guard. So serious did the Government think the matter, and so defective were the arrangements suddenly discovered to be, that soon after the escape of Stephens, the whole of the prisoners were removed from Richmond to the county prison in the middle of the night, because it was thought that there was danger in keeping them in the former place. He asked the Government why such precautions were not taken earlier? The escape of Stephens was a great misfortune. And when the right hon. Gentleman told the House that the Government were not directly responsible for the escape of that man because, in ordinary times, the Executive did not directly interfere with the management of the prisons, he thought the right hon. Gentleman was calculating upon a large amount of credulity and ignorance on the part of hon. Members as to the real state not only of the law, but the practice in such matters. He did not wish to throw any blame upon the Government for anything that had occurred since the arrest of the Fenians. The trials had been well managed, and the conduct of the Judges, the counsel, and the juries in the recent trials had been all that could have been desired. He adhered, however, to the opinion that the policy of the Government in delaying its action for so many months was most unfortunate, and that it was owing to a serious neglect of duty that Stephens effected his escape.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. SULLIVAN) said, he thought it somewhat curious that the right hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside), and the hon. and learned Member for Wexford (Mr. George), should feel it incumbent upon them to justify their conduct in dealing with the prosecutions in 1858, seeing that nobody had made any charge against them for the course which they on that occasion pursued. But it was not only curious, but unwarrantable, that they should now, after the lapse of four or five years, assail the conduct of his right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Colonies, when Chief Secretary for Ireland, and of the Attorney General of that day, Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, whom they had never ventured to attack for the course which he had pursued while he was present in his place in Parliament to defend himself, and had it in his power to give them the most decisive answer. As an analogy had been drawn between the conspiracy of 1858 and that of 1865, he could only say that no two things could be more entirely different in every point. Indeed, no two movements could in point of magnitude, as well as in other respects, be more distinct; and if the prosecutions in the case of the latter had broken down as completely as in that of the former — if seventeen or eighteen men had been able to walk out of court, the Attorney General standing by and refusing to try them, or to say why he did not, as happened at Cork in 1858—the result would have been disastrous in the highest degree. He now came to the question which had been raised as to the escape of Stephens, simply premising, in reply to the observations made by the noble Lord the Member for Cockermouth (Lord Naas), that the prosecution of *The Irish People* newspaper merely as a newspaper would have done nothing in the way of crushing Fenianism; the Government had selected the best time to grapple with the conspiracy, and the best proof that this was so was furnished by the fact that it had been perfectly successful in its efforts, which would not have been the case if it had taken action earlier in the matter without the aid of the mass of documents which ultimately fell into its hands. He was quite convinced that the noble Lord opposite (Lord Naas) when in office did what he considered best for the interests of the country, and he knew that the Government of 1865 had done the same. As to Stephens, he had been committed, pending his trial, to Richmond prison, the proper place of confinement for those who had been made, as he had been, amenable to the law within the city of Dublin. Over the officers of that prison the Government had no control. During the Lord Lieutenancy of Lord Clarendon, it was found that while in every other prison in Ireland the Board of Superintendence had the appointment of prison officers vested in it, the same rule did not prevail in Dublin; and that fact having been pointed out to Lord Clarendon, he seeing no objection to placing all the prisons of the country on a uniform basis, allowed the power of appointing the officers in Richmond Prison to the Board of Superintendence in Dublin. That, he thought, was a sensible and wise mode of dealing with the matter, and it had on two occasions been confirmed by Lord Eglinton. It was, therefore, no part of the duty of the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as he contended, without any cause shown, to alter a system which had been in operation in the prisons in Dublin for a period of fifteen or sixteen years; nor was there, he might add, any reason whatsoever to suspect the fidelity of the officers who had the charge of the Richmond Prison, when Stephens was committed to it, an additional police force to be stationed inside and a military guard were applied for, and granted by the executive Government. Against internal treachery, however, no Government that ever existed could provide adequate security. If an officer inside the prison determined to assist Stephens to escape, he could do so with every probability of success, however guards might be multiplied. And that internal treachery did exist could no longer be a matter of doubt, for with the man who had been taken up and tried for complicity in the escape of Stephens the Fenian oath was found. By some extraordinary accident which had never been satisfactorily explained by the Governor of the prison, a constable on duty on the night of the escape had been shut out from the corridor in which Stephens was confined. Mr. Marques, the Governor, however, could not be fairly said to have acted treacherously in the matter. He had occupied the position of Governor for a considerable time with credit, but undoubtedly he acted most incautiously on the occasion in question; but be that as it might, the circumstance which he had just mentioned, together with the false keys which were found, went far to account for the mode in which Stephens was enabled to get away. As to the allegation made by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) that he walked into a cab which was waiting for him at the door of the prison, he could only say that although he had heard every sort of rumour in reference to the escape, no such statement as that had ever come to his knowledge, nor did he believe that it had the slightest foundation. The executive Government had no option but to leave Stephens in Richmond Gaol in the hands of the Governor, whose prisoner he was, and therefore it was, he maintained, not open to the censure of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who, if he should at any future time bring forward the subject in a substantive shape, would find that it was quite prepared to meet any charges as to its conduct which he might think proper to make.

Mr. S. B. MILLER said, he was somewhat astonished to learn that the Government should have deemed it to be consistent with their duty to allow *The Irish People,* which was established in the autumn of 1863, to circulate its poisonous articles throughout Ireland from that time until the autumn of last year, when they might have prevented it from doing so by earlier and more vigorous action. From the end of 1863, during the whole of 1864, and for a great portion of 1865, the Irish Executive allowed matter of the most mischievous kind to be circulated in every direction throughout the country; thereby adding fuel to the flame which they found so difficult to quell, but which, had they taken active measures at first, they might have easily subdued. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Ireland had said there was no connection between the Phœnix conspiracy and this Fenian conspiracy; but they had the authority of Mr. Justice Keogh, who tried the prisoners, for saying they were one and the same; and the result of the proceedings in 1858, whether abortive or otherwise, was that the country was rid of the conspiracy for two or three years, and that was a state of things which might well bear to be contrasted with what took place between the end of 1863 and 1865. Then it was said that the Government were not in any degree to blame for the escape of Stephens. But he would take leave to say that it was the duty of the Lord Lieutenant to take care that a prisoner in custody for so serious an offence should be in proper keeping. That was his first duty; and his next was to see that, whether by means of soldiers or police, he was properly secured. It was not for the Executive to throw the responsibility of taking these precautions on the Governor of the prison. He came now to a matter which had been tried very lately—namely, as to the custody in which Stephens was on the night of his escape. He brought it home to the Government that the man who was subsequently put upon his trial for connivance at the escape of Stephens was the same Daniel Byrne, whom Mr. Corry Connellan, Inspector General of Prisons, had reported to be unfit to fill the post whether of night watchman or warder in 1863; and that Report he now held in his hand. Every effort to evade the subject of Byrne's unfitness was made by the Board of Superintendence; but the Lord Lieutenant had the power to dismiss the man or to confirm him in his employment. With the Lord Lieutenant alone, therefore, or his advisers, rested the responsibility. Besides, the Lord Lieutenant had the power to remove Stephens to any other prison in Ireland he thought fit. It was idle to say, then, that no blame attached to the Irish Executive on the particular point which formed the subject-matter of this Motion. He denied, too, in the most emphatic terms, that the Government had performed their duty when they allowed *The Irish People* to take its rise, to be registered, licensed, and circulated through the post office from the month of November, 1863, to September, 1865, when the very articles which appeared in the beginning of 1864 formed some of the subject-matter of the indictments at the late trials, and without the articles of that paper he rather thought the prosecutions would not have been so successful. He utterly repudiated the notion that a seditious paper was to remain in existence two whole years when the articles of that paper were of such a nature as to be made the subject-matter of indictment.

SIR GEORGE GREY: After the protracted discussion which has taken place, and after the complete answers which have been given by my learned Friends the Attorney and Solicitor General for Ireland to the charges against the Government as to the escape of Stephens, there is only one part of the subject with respect to which I feel bound to say a few words. The hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. S. B. Miller) has brought a direct charge against the Government for not having sooner interfered, and he expressed his opinion that the Government were to blame for not having instituted a prosecution against *The Irish People* at an earlier period, and thus effectually checked this conspiracy. The noble Lord the Member for Cockermouth (Lord Naas), however, said that possibly there might have been good reasons for that inaction. I feel bound to say in justice to Lord Wodehouse, who was in constant communication with me, that he took a course in the full responsibility for which Her Majesty's Government share; and it is a course the reasons for which the Government entirely approve. And now, looking back on the events which have occurred, I must say that if we had taken the line of action recommended by the hon. and learned Gentleman we might have succeeded in the prosecutions against the newspaper, but we should have failed in laying bare before the country the overwhelming evidence of the nature of the conspiracy, its extent, and the number of persons implicated, and in carrying with us in our proceeding the universal approval of persons possessing property in Ireland. The Government fully approved of the conduct of Lord Wodehouse, and they conveyed to him their entire concurrence in the reasons which he gave for the course he adopted.

MR. HENRY BAILLIE said, they had heard very eloquent speeches to-night from the Attorney and Solicitor General for Ireland, but the only thing they appear to have proved to the House was that things were done differently in Ireland from what they would be in any other country in the world. The House had been told that a seditious newspaper called *The Irish People* had been published weekly for two years in Ireland, that it had a circulation of no less than 8,000 copies, which were every week distributed over every part of the country, and that the Government thought it no part of their duty to put a stop to those proceedings. They knew that the editor of this newspaper was one of those men who ought to be proceeded against, and whom they might any day have called up for judgment and thereby put an end to his treason. But the Law Officers said that they knew better—that there were State reasons why these things should be allowed to go on for two years, and that then they made a grand *coup* and put it all down. But was it not true that at this very time the conspiracy was going on just as if they had never had recourse to these proceedings? That was generally admitted. All he could say was that if that was the mode in which the Government of Ireland was conducted it was a mode which was not adopted in any other country in the world.

THE NEW COURTS OF JUSTICE.

RESOLUTION.

MR. BENTINCK, in rising to move that in the opinion of this House it is not expedient that the competition for the building of the New Courts of Justice should be limited to six architects only, said, that if he wanted an excuse for taking up this question it might be found in the fact that he was a Member of the Committee which sat upon the Law Courts in 1860. He might also allege in excuse the petition which had been presented by an hon. Friend of his (Mr. Beresford Hope) in the name of that illustrious body the Institution of British Architects against the Government proposal. Now, either from the want of commanding architectural talent or from some other cause which he could not pretend to state, competitions in matters of this kind had become a necessity. For the last few years at least, whenever great works were about to be executed either in England or on the Continent, the competitions invited for designs were generally of an unlimited character. The competition for the Houses of Parliament was unlimited; so were the competitions for the Cartoons, for the Foreign Office, and for the Wellington Monument. Nor had the result of these competitions been otherwise than successful. No man could say, however he might condemn the style of the Palace of Westminster, that Sir Charles Barry was not a man of great ability. The unlimited competition for the Cartoons had brought out the talents of Mr. Herbert, of Mr. Watts, and of many other artists; while in the case of the Foreign Office the result had been equally satisfactory. Unlimited competitions could not therefore, from any of these instances, be said to have operated prejudicially to art. He would not quarrel with limited competition if the three following conditions were attached to it:—First, that the number of architects competing should be sufficient to afford to the tribunal which was to decide on their merits a full latitude of choice; secondly, that that tribunal should be thoroughly protected from any charge of favouritism; and thirdly, that its members should have such a knowledge of the subject that their decision should command the respect, not of artists only, but of the artistic world in general. The arrangement with regard to the proposed competition for the New Courts of Justice failed in every one of those particulars. First of all, there were to be only six competing artists. In the days of Sir Christopher Wren, or of the great architects of the 16th century, it would have been possible to make a choice out of four or five architects; but in the present time, he must say, without wishing to detract from the merits of existing architects, there was no such towering genius as existed in days past, and therefore it was necessary to invite a large number of architects to compete. In answer to a question he asked the other night, the names of six architects were mentioned as those who were to compete, but he had heard that four of them had vanished from the arena. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Four more have been added.] Still there were only six, and it was for the Government to show what advantage there was in limiting the number to so few. Among the names of the six first appointed he failed to observe architects who obtained prizes in previous Government competitions. Again, if any hon. Gentleman went to the City and walked down Lombard Street, Cornhill, Broad Street, and other great thoroughfares, he would see buildings designed by architects worthy of following Sir Christopher Wren; indeed, in Carey Street, opposite the site on which the Courts were to be built, was a new bank of considerable artistic merit, and the public had a right to demand that the gentlemen who had produced these works should, if they thought fit, be included in the list of competitors. The condition that the tribunal deciding on the merits of the competing architects should be protected from the charge of favouritism was essential; and he might mention he had heard a report, which, however, he did not credit, that it was the pre-conceived intention of the Commission to select Mr. Waterhouse, the architect of the Assize Courts in Manchester. He did not believe that there was any idea of that kind in the minds of the Commissioners, but the fact of the competition being so limited had given rise to that very unpleasant report. A properly defined statement of the conditions of the competition would, if the number of competitors was allowed to be sufficiently large, put an end to such scandal. As to the tribunal which was to judge of the merits of the competitors, it was important that it should be a competent one. The Commission was to consist of five persons only. The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Cowper), the Attorney General, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Chief Justice of England, and the hon. Member for Perthshire (Mr. Stirling). He did not find fault with the nomination of the hon. Member for Perthshire, whose taste in literature and art was so well known, and he had not the slightest objection to officials being on the tribunal, provided they had some knowledge of art. With regard to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper), he doubted whether he possessed that architectural knowledge which would enable him unassisted to decide upon the designs of the competing architects. The right hon. Gentleman had often addressed the House on subjects of art, and had some times made remarks showing that he had not paid much attention to that matter, and leading to the conclusion that in a competitive architectural examination he would probably be plucked. He (Mr. Bentinck) was inclined to think that the learned Attorney General, under a similar test, would share a like fate. What were the qualifications of the other Members of the Commission he would not say, but he trusted that the Government would think twice before submitting this important question to the decision of a body so constituted. It had been said that the money for the building was raised from a source connected with the law, and that the public had nothing to do with the matter; but he maintained that the money to be raised was quite as much public money as any other. It was calculated that £900,000 would be raised by the sale of Three per Cent Stock at 90; and, as the funds had fallen to 87, perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer would explain how the difference was to be met. What he wished to urge was that the competition ought to be unlimited, or limited to so many as would afford a fair chance of a satisfactory selection, and that there should be constituted a tribunal for selecting the design to be adopted in which the public could have confidence.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is not expedient that the competition for the building of the New Courts of Justice should be limited to six architects only,"—(*Mr. Bentinck,*)

—instead thereof.

MR. BERESFORD HOPE, in the name of the architects who did him the honour to appoint him the President of their Institute, thanked the hon. Member for bringing forward the Motion, which was one rightly made by a Member who was independent in the sense of having no connection with architecture, and which, therefore, neither he nor the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Tite) could have made. When the competition for the Law Courts was first announced, it created an intense interest among the architectural profession. These Courts were to form a magnificent building, which would be a glory to the architect and to the metropolis if he succeeded, or a misfortune and disgrace if he failed. When the list of architects first appeared, it included six eminent names. A feeling prevailed that the list ought to have been larger; but still no question was raised, and it seemed as if the number was a foregone conclusion. But then name after name dropped off, and other names were added, until only two of the first six names remained on the list. It was clear that a screw was loose somewhere; and where that screw was it was the object of the present Motion to discover. Report said that certain unusual conditions were imposed after the architects had been invited to join in the competition. Now, whether these conditions were right or wrong, or whether it was wise or unwise to limit artistic freewill, at any rate it was not right to induce men to suppose that they were entering into competition on the usual terms, and when they had, as it were, committed themselves, to call upon them to sign unusual agreements, introduced for the first time into similar competitions, and of which they had received no previous intimation. It was no answer to say that an architect ought not to engage in more work than he could honestly exercise his intellect upon. That was very true in itself, but the Government ought to have let it be known early enough that it intended to alter the general terms of competition, so that architects might not have been placed in a false position by declining so honourable an engagement in reality on account of things which did not concern the artistic side of the matter. The imposition of such conditions would almost necessitate unlimited competition, which would allow of more stringency in the terms imposed than limited competition. A limited one assumed the honour, ability, and industry of those selected, on account of their being known to possess such qualities; while unlimited competition might admit impractical scene-painters and dreamers, and the first prize might fall to a clever scamp, or an artist totally innocent of finance. While in his opinion unlimited competition would be theoretically the best, he was bound to add that in the present condition of art-politics it was impossible, and it was not asked for. The petition of the Institute of Architects which he presented, though applying technically to the competition for the National Gallery, was in spirit meant to cover this case; and as rumour said it had been effectual in the manner of the National Gallery, he hoped it would be the same in this one. The Motion of his hon. Friend afforded an opportunity for saving repentance on the Treasury Bench, and he only hoped there would be no faltering between two opinions. He did not believe that those on the Treasury Bench were altogether guilty. There was a grander and more august commission behind them, a commission whose behests they were, perhaps, only serving. He had approached a very dignified and influential quarter in the name of the Institute of Architects, and the reply was that six architects were too many. He trusted that the First Commissioner of Works thought differently, and would extricate his friends from their dilemma. The reason why unlimited competitions were not asked for was that they had been made ridiculous, and almost dragged through the dirt by the absurd mismanagement of the Foreign Office competition nine years ago. The story was an old one, but it was worth recalling. The Government wished to build two public departments, a Foreign Office and a War Office, which might and ought to have been two wings of the same structure, and ought to have been jointly competed for with designs including both. Instead of one there were three graduated schedules of prizes. One was for a block scheme for laying out the whole space at Westminster about the public offices, which, by the consent of every one, turned out a perfect failure. The first prize in that was won by a speculative Frenchman, who came full of a scheme for improving the smoky capital of perfidious Albion off the face of the earth. He need say no more of that branch of the matter. With respect to the other two schedules, it was forgotten to be settled whether competitors were to take prizes in one only or in both. Some went in for a War Office only, others for a Foreign Office, and some for a compound building, lodging both offices under the same roof, while others stuck two distinct houses side by side. But when the judges came to consider, they were in the same difficulty as the public to understand the meaning of the terms of competition, although men of avowed accomplishments. Amongst them was that accomplished Gentleman the hon. Member for Perthshire, who, he was happy to say, was also in the present list of judges. Lord Eversley and the Duke of Buccleuch, though named, were prevented from taking part in the practical work; but the rest who acted were, Mr. Brunel, to represent the engineers; Mr. Roberts, the great pictorial dreamer of architecture; Mr. Burn, the able and common-sense architect; and Earl Stanhope, the representative of high literary refinement. Mr. Burn thought that the same man might get the prize for both designs, but the majority said otherwise, and the result was a compromise schedule of prizes, which meant nothing, and such confusion and complication that no one knew what was to be done. Mr. Coe got the first prize for a Foreign Office, which could not grow into a War Office; and Mr. Garling for a War Office, which could not grow into a Foreign Office. So the matter, as it were, lay on the floor of the House. Nobody would touch it there with a pair of tongs. Nobody knew what was to be done. At last, in 1858, he (Mr. Beresford Hope) took it up, and obtained a Select Committee. In looking into the matter, that Committee found it could make nothing of the formal award of the judges, and it fell back upon Mr. Burn's individual list, based as that was upon the non-exclusive principle. By that list it turned out that Mr. Scott, though first for neither office, was first in the general sum total of merit, being placed second for both buildings, and so he got the commission for a Gothic design. But how Mr. Scott, who thus got a prize for a Gothic building, was now engaged with Mr. Digby Wyatt in erecting an Italian design, it was not necessary to state. He had gone through this narrative to show why unlimited competition now stinks in the nostrils of the House. He was sorry it should be so. It was against the spirit of the age—it was against the idea of free trade in art; but so it was. It would simply be a waste of time to move that there should be unlimited competition. What they demanded was a larger limited competition, and a little more variety in the composition of the judges. He did not wish to strike out the name of one legal or financial member of that body. They were all very useful elements, but he did plead for a larger infusion of the artistic element in the shape of architects, as well as for the educated amateur element; because, after all, the painter and the engineer were amateurs, as much as the well-educated country gentleman might be, and ought to be represented on the list of judges. Above all, he asked that the competition should really be competition—not to lead afterwards to a pretty show, or exhibition in Westminster Hall, but to have just so many designs and no more, and just so roughly done as would enable competent judges to decide who was the best man; for the competition was not meant to enable them to decide on the building in all its details, but to discover the man best competent to create the final structure. It was absurd to ask for finished drawings of every particular, such as the head of Edward I. peeping round the corners, or cornucopias standing out, or hall-door chairs in the style of the 14th century or the Augustan era. What was wanted was the master-mind to design the general idea, and the details might be worked out year by year, in concert between employer and architect. The abominable thing was the grand exhibition up to which everybody worked, with the art critics of the press and of the House, and the fine ladies and the fine ladies' daughters, and the constituents from the country, who came up to town ravening, like monsters of the deep, for something to see, whom hon. Members took by the hand and led to Westminster Hall. He would let them into a secret of the trade. There was an exhibition of designs; at length one was pitched upon; it seemed uncommonly fine. It was a magnificent building. There was a beautiful sky-line, plenty of trees, and an officer of the Horse Guards was prancing by—everything, in short, that made it very effective to the innocent mind of an uneducated amateur judge. Who produced it? The talented architect to whom they meant to give the prize? No; but some member of a very respectable but hybrid profession—an architect's artist; in fact, a water-colour painter, who has acquired just such an amount of architectural proficiency as may enable him to take the drawing of the architect, and out of that to concoct the pretty seductive pictures they saw at exhibitions, and to which the prizes were awarded by judges who very likely had no idea whether it indicated an elevation of 200 feet or 500 feet in length. This is what made these competitions distasteful; it showed also the incompetency of the judges, and could only lead to work which was untrue and meretricious. To prove that this was not his opinion only, he would read extracts from two letters he had received from eminent architects—

> "As regards the necessary drawings for a competition, it is certainly a great drawback to all architects who compete that they should be compelled to send in so many drawings, which really are unnecessary for the purpose of selecting the architect. The great point, of course, is for him to give the general scheme and style of his design. This can be very effectually done by sending the principal plans and elevations, and one main section with perspective views. These would be quite sufficient to form a correct estimate of capability of the architect to carry out the design well without putting him to the trouble and expense of needless sections and constructional detail. We know, from architects' experience, that in nine cases out of ten the latter are never even glanced at. You would be doing architects great service it you could prevail upon those who have to draw up particulars to practically consider this important question."

The second communication was from a gentleman whom he had asked whether he would compete—

> "I may say that I should certainly have accepted but for two reasons—first, the shortness of time. There will be, I understand, from sixty to seventy drawings required. These sixty or seventy drawings will have to be got up within some eight months from the present time—that is, an average of about four days to each drawing. In addition, the whole subject has to be got up, which always takes more time than the mere drawing. I therefore think that the time is far too short, and near a year, at least, should have been allowed to the other competitors. The second objection is the absence from among the judges of professional men."

Rumour, with its many tongues, has given as a reason for the limited competition that the lawyers were afraid lest their courts should be beset with architects studying the judicial procedure. But surely architects had some idea of business, and had some *à priori* ideas to work upon, and knew what a bar meant—and that a room constructed to suit a Tower Hamlets' Vestry would not be unfitted for even the High Court of Chancery. He hoped that so groundless a panic would not palpitate under the horsehair of their wigs. Here, then, was their grievance. It was a grievance to the judges as well as to the architects. It was a grievance made up of the fewness of competitors, the shortness of time, and the unnecessary number of drawings asked for from each man. Even if the judges looked conscientiously at the sixty or seventy designs they would not derive much benefit from them, but rather confuse their own judgment. If the number of drawings asked for from each candidate were reduced, it would be as easy for the judges to look at those of twenty, as at the half-dozen more ponderous sets they now required. What they wanted was, not the tricked-out, burnished pictures of architects' artists, but clever pen-and-ink sketches, the virgin ideas of the architects themselves, the work of their own hands. The honour and credit of the country demanded that the artistic, as well as every other element should be kept up at its due level in the body politic. There was a point of honour, a high and ennobling ambition, with architects as with all other professions, and this it was right and needful that those in authority should respect and encourage. No such means for encouraging it existed as liberal competitions. The architectural character of London should be a glory, and not a disgrace, to the age; and it was stingy and selfish to grudge a little trouble to help that by opening public competition somewhat more. All had an interest in this question, in order that our metropolis, with its wealth and pomp, bustle and business, should not fall behind the pretty capitals of foreign despots. Under all the circumstances, he hoped that success would follow the Motion of his hon. Friend, and that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) or the Attorney General would gracefully yield a bloodless victory, and assure the House that the matter would be considered, and justice done in this case, and that their moderate and respectful petition would meet with that favourable reception to which it was entitled.

Mr. COWPER said, he was not surprised to find that the hon. and learned Gentleman who had made himself the champion in that House of architecture, and was particularly zealous for one particular style of architecture, should affect to despise those who appreciated any other than the Gothic style. [Mr. Bentinck said he did not.] At all events, he was not surprised that the hon. and learned Gentleman should be anxious to express an opinion upon a matter so interesting to architects; but he certainly was surprised at the form of the present Motion, because it so happened that although it might be interesting to know the opinion of the House on the subject, yet that opinion was not called for on the question now under discussion. The House had agreed to the "Courts of Justice Building Act," by which the decision as to the plans and the modes of apportioning the building was left to the Treasury, with the advice and concurrence of such persons as Her Majesty might name for the purpose. Therefore, the House having by adopting that Act placed the responsibility on the Treasury and the Commissioners, it was hardly proper that it should now resume the power thus transferred. He hoped, therefore, that the hon. and learned Member would not think of pressing the Motion. [Mr. Bentinck said, he certainly should.] The Courts of Justice Commission consisted of persons representing every branch of the law, as well as Members of Her Majesty's Government, and they had seriously to consider what advice they could give to the Treasury on the subject. It was very foreign to their instructions that they should endeavour to develop rising talent among architects, and to secure such an exhibition of architectural drawings as might be interesting to the public, and beneficial, possibly, to architecture, but which could have no perceptible results in regard to the building which it was the duty of the Commission to watch over. The object of the Commission was to secure the means of getting the best Palace of Justice they possibly could; and the House had authorized the expenditure of a million and a half of money for the concentration in close contiguity of all the Courts of Law and Equity, of the Probate and Divorce Courts, and of all the offices, because it believed that such an arrangement would be attended with most material and beneficial results on the administration of the law; and would prevent many of the delays which were the opprobrium of our legal procedure. Indeed, it was generally allowed that the dispersion and distribution of the Courts and offices were the means of impeding very many of those reforms which would tend to promote the fusion of law and equity, which some very learned gentlemen advocated and desired. But, whatever might be the benefits that would result, it was quite clear that the internal construction and apportionment of this building was a very important affair, and it was one to which the Courts of Justice Commission had specially directed their attention. They had to consider how they could find a man of the greatest eminence in his profession and of the greatest practical experience, and who had also minutely and carefully studied the whole subject, which was one that did not come under the ordinary cognizance of an architect. Now, if there were any architect of sufficient eminence to make it certain that he would adequately and satisfactorily discharge the task of erecting such a Palace of Justice as was required, it would have been better to select an architect than to invite competition. The most eminent architects, however, were not men who had paid special attention to this subject; there were men who had built courts of justice, but these had not that wide reputation that would justify their appointment, and therefore it was not possible to make a satisfactory choice. Under the circumstances, it was considered the wisest course to select a small number of men who might safely be intrusted with the building, and invite them to compete with one another. But then it was necessary that these architects should study for at least seven months the minute details of the required building. Arrangements had accordingly been made that the selected architects should have access to the present courts and offices when they pleased in order that they might be enabled to see how the business was transacted, and thus by their own eyes and their own judgment ascertain what kind of building would be best adapted for the business carried on. The Courts of Justice Commission had prepared a very elaborate schedule, showing in great detail all that the Committees appointed by the Commission thought necessary to be provided. The hon. Member who last spoke, and who so worthily represented the Institute of Architects (Mr. Beresford Hope), had given good reasons against unlimited competition. It might succeed in some ordinary cases, but it would have been the worst method that could have been adopted in this case, for such a careful study of the subject was required during the busiest time of the year that scarcely any of the most eminent men would have given their time to an unlimited competition. The Commission had, therefore, decided that not more than six architects should be invited to compete, and those architects were to be properly remunerated for all the labour and expense incurred by them in getting up the drawings and studying the question. Now it was quite true, as his hon. and learned Friend had said, that out of the six architects originally appointed four had retired. He thought, however, that the very fact of their retirement justified the view he had taken of the great difficulty of getting architects of the highest standing to give their attention to a question of this sort. One of those who had retired stated that he had enough business on hand, and that, consequently, he could not undertake so laborious a task. Another had stated that, if more time had been allowed, he might have been enabled to compete, but in this busy time of the year he was already fully occupied, and could not undertake to give the time and attention necessary for the study of the subject. The other two objected to one of the clauses in the agreement proposed by the Treasury, to the effect that the architect finally selected should not be allowed to undertake any new work except with the consent of the Treasury. Of course, the Treasury would not have pressed that condition in any undue way; but the clause was intended to secure that an actual and personal superintendence should be given to the building by the architect employed. [Mr. POWELL asked, whether any time were mentioned.] Three years was the time specified. The vacancies which had occurred had been filled up, the resolution of the Commission being that six architects should be asked to compete. He was not one of those who felt so strongly against unlimited competition as the hon. Member who had just sat down. It was true that in the present state of public opinion unlimited competition was not acceptable; but in cases it ought to be adopted. His opinion was, that if a building were required which the education and ordinary practice of an architect would enable him to design, it was advantageous to have the competition open to all the world. That was the plan adopted last year, when a new building was wanted at Kensington Gore. The result was, that an admirable design by Captain Fowke was selected—a design which probably would not have been attained if the competition had been limited. The present case, however, differed entirely from that. The object was to get the very best Palace of Justice in the world. There must be arrangements under which witnesses might be separated from the public and the legal profession; while the public might have the opportunity of hearing, and yet not be able to attract the attention of the Judge, the jury, and the witnesses. They believed that a great number of improvements might be made in the outer halls and in the disposition of the courts. They would not be content with a design which would merely give a handsome façade: they wished that the entire building should be admirably adapted to the uses intended. Altogether, he believed that the method of competition which had been recommended was the one most calculated to attain the desired object. He could not admit that because a man gained a prize nine years ago in a particular competition he therefore had a right to have a share in the present competition. What was desirable in such a competition was not merely to get men who had succeeded in making a pretty drawing or sketch and obtaining a prize from judges who might or might not have been competent to award it, but men who had achieved celebrity by actual work, and could show their talent in stone, brick, or mortar. The hon. Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Bentinck) had spoken of a rumour that there was a desire to show special favour to Mr. Waterhouse; but this was a groundless and unjust rumour. The Commission had abandoned the idea of appointing him architectural clerk, lest any suspicion of advantage should arise; and the schedule of dimensions would be as open to the other competitors as to that gentleman. As to the selection of the judges, they represented the different classes interested in the building, two of them being eminent Members of the legal profession, two being Members of the Government, and the fifth being the hon. Member for Perthshire, who represented the general public. This was analogous to the ordinary practice, that those who were to be the occupiers should determine the kind of building they wanted; and it was quite open to the judges to call in professional assessors in examining the drawings, as was done in the case of the Foreign Office and the War Office.

Mr. POWELL quite agreed that the first object of the Commission should be to select the best man, and when this had been done they should insist on his devoting to the work his best faculties and energy, at the same time supporting him with their countenance and kindly courtesy. There was great difficulty attending a work of such magnitude, on account of the details. In the case of the Houses of Parliament, the designs were under consideration for a long time, and then four architects were appointed, from which a selection was to be made. But the work now contemplated was of a much more complex character. In the case of the Houses of Parliament no estimates were required, and no one could tell their ultimate cost; and, consequently, there arose a controversy between Sir Charles Barry and the Government on the subject of commission, which must have been very painful to both parties. He thought there could not be a doubt that 5 per cent was a high commission for such a sum as £750,000; but there was a good deal to be done by the architect during the progress of a building, and much must be left to the architect's honour. It had been suggested to him that the better plan was to pay the architect a salary while the work was going on. He hoped that, though the Government might not feel bound to obey a Vote of the House in this matter with the same strictness as they would obey a Vote in Committee of Supply, they would feel desirous of working with the House, and of keeping on the side of public opinion. He also trusted that before the close of the discussion the House would receive a distinct statement as to the names of the six architects admitted as competitors. Rumours were going about to the effect that a preference had been given to Mr. Waterhouse. These were to be regretted, inasmuch as he believed there was no ground for them. It would have been an injury to Mr. Waterhouse himself, as well as to the profession, if any preference had been shown him; and therefore it was desirable that there should be a distinct contradiction of the statement to that effect.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER apprehended, that although Parliament might delegate to certain parties to perform certain duties, it was always open to the House to interpose, and express its opinion if those duties were not performed in a manner consistent with the public interests, and that was especially the case with regard to the expenditure of public money. With respect to the question of competition, his own opinion was favourable to unlimited competition, for which so many precedents could be found in this country, for it gave an opportunity to unknown men of showing their capabilities, gave a general stimulus to talent, and was advantageous to the cultivation of taste in the nation. Considering the great number of able architects in the metropolis he thought the number of competitors ought not to be limited to six. He thought the practice of requiring or accepting very elaborate plans of buildings was a bad one. The production of such plans required a great deal of time, and the Government had to compensate unsuccessful candidates for their labour. A ground plan showing the distribution of the different parts of the building, and plans showing the distribution of the different chambers and stories, with sections and elevations, ought to be quite sufficient. If they asked more they did mischief. There were instances of architects who had withdrawn from competition because they had not time to finish drawings of an elaborate character. It was most desirable that some practical man should define the exact nature of the drawings to be sent in; and they ought to be as simple as possible. From them a selection could be made just as well as from the most finished drawings. In one of the drawings for the Houses of Parliament the Queen's state coach with the eight cream-coloured horses were introduced. Such a thing would be scouted at the present time. Everything beyond a simple plan was productive of expense, and did more harm than good. It appeared to him that the public would not and ought not to be satisfied if the choice for the new buildings was to lie among six architects, who were invited to compete at the discretion of the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works. The Government, instead of adopting a plan that would bring upon them a great deal of odium and discredit, ought to open the doors as wide as possible. And first, it would be necessary to decide whether the building was to be of Gothic or Italian architecture. To do fair justice to what Lord Palmerston used to call the great Italian question it would be necessary to employ more than six architects. What magic was there in the number six? Twelve with Englishmen was supposed to be a much more sacred number. The right hon. Gentleman apparently thought that a man who had gained a prize nine years ago would no longer be the same man, and should not be allowed to compete. But it was much more natural to suppose that in the meantime he would have gone on improving. A distinction was sought to be established between a building intended for a court of justice and buildings not of a special character; but in reality there was no such distinction. Whatever the building, either there must be open competition with regard to it, or else none at all. Had we a man like Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, or Palladio in this country, he should not desire competition. But we had not; and competition, being indispensable, ought not to be a mockery, but a fair stand-up fight, open to all the best men.

MR. TITE said, he had been appealed to once or twice in the course of the debate, and more out of the House than in it, in consequence, he supposed, of having once occupied some position in the profession, and of having filled the office of President of the Institute of British Architects, in which his hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Beresford Hope) had followed him. He supposed he was the only man in that House who had gone through a public competition of a somewhat similar character to that which they were now discussing, and he felt bound to say that much of his success in life was due to the fact of having been brought forward as a young man by public competition. In the very House in which they were assembled, though he did not agree with its style of architecture and much of its decoration, they had in its wonderful arrangement, and in the fact that so little alteration had since been necessary, another signal instance of the good results of public competition in the person of Sir Charles Barry. It was not through the desire of that eminent artist that the building was covered all over with sprawling dragoons and apocryphal lions; the style was dictated to him, and, *doctus utriusque linguæ*, he had shown himself as great a master of one style of architecture as the other. The merits of any design consisted not in a mere decorative drawing, but in the arrangement of plans, rooms, and courts; and he could conceive nothing more difficult than the details which had to be carried out in the distribution of both Houses, the Committee-rooms, and all that belonged to them, preserving at the same time the central features of the great hall and approaches, all of which had been so happily managed. As regarded the present competition, he did not at all wonder that suspicion had been excited by the small number of competitors. Of course, with the six gentlemen who had been selected for the Committee of adjudication all idea of jobbery was out of the question; but the number of six architects was so extremely limited that it certainly created in the minds of the architectural profession an impression that, to a great extent, a foregone conclusion had been arrived at. There was obviously no difficulty in increasing the number, for four of those who were originally named having withdrawn, four others were nominated in their places. Had ten or twelve gentlemen of the highest eminence been nominated in the first instance, he ventured to think that the time of the House would never have been troubled with this discussion at all. The same observations might apply to another competition now under consideration—that relating to the National Gallery—and the observation of two or three practical rules would tend very much to set such questions at rest. In competitions wisely conducted there should be no ornamental drawing, or, at most, but one, consisting of a single colour, Indian ink, or sepia, or something of that kind, so as to prevent the ornamentation and frippery and misleading details so often brought forward to influence the decision of the judges. As to what had been said with regard to expense, he did not think it worth talking about. £800, he understood, was to be paid to each of these six gentlemen, and if that number were to be increased to ten, there would be a trifling increase of expenditure; but was that amount to be thought of when they were going to spend upon courts of law, a work of the greatest possible importance, a sum exceeding £800,000? It was a question for his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Bentinck) whether he would divide or not, but he ventured to ask him to leave the matter in the hands of the Government; if, however, the matter were pressed to a division he must affirm the principle that the number of competitors ought to be greater than that which had been selected, and to vote with his hon. and learned Friend. He wished the Government had courage sufficient to choose one man, and place the matter in his hands. At St. Thomas' Hospital, across the water, they were perfectly satisfied with their architect, and everything connected with the building would be done without competition, and done, he believed, ably and well. One gentleman had written to him saying, "Ought not I to have a chance?" He would not mention the name of that gentleman, but the list of his attainments was very striking. He had obtained three silver medals of the Royal Academy in 1850, the gold medal and life studentship of the Royal Academy in 1851, he was elected an associate of the Institute in 1852, obtained the medal of merit and an humble prize that he himself (Mr. Tite) gave the same year, passed the first examination in the next year, and obtained the Travelling Fellowship of the Royal Academy, with the Soane medallion of the Royal Institute of British Architects the same year: had since travelled, and was one of the best draughtsmen of the day; and yet, owing to the youthful position of that gentleman, unless he distinguished himself through some such opening as the present competition, he was likely to end his days as a mere surveyor or builder of ordinary dwellings. He felt bound by a sense of duty to the profession to which he once belonged to offer these remarks, and he hoped the Government would not refuse to increase the number of architects who were to compete.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE remarked, that the whole discussion showed how necessary it was that some one authority should be left to decide these things. He trusted that hon. Gentlemen who took that view would support him in a Motion he proposed to bring before the House with reference to the subject.

Mr. LOCKE said, the arguments of his hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Tite) led only to the conclusion that the competition should be altogether open. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen said "No, no!" That, however, was his opinion, and he was about giving his reasons for it. His hon. Friend had highly commended the Houses of Parliament; but would Sir Charles Barry have been one of the six or ten chosen out of the host of known and unknown architects if the course adopted then had been the same as the course it was proposed to adopt in the case under consideration? Most certainly not, because he was then unknown. It was reasonable to suppose that some unknown man might send in a design far superior to those of any of the six or ten it was proposed to nominate. The corporation of London had acted wisely in having open competition among would-be designers for their dead-meat market. If an open competition were thought necessary in so unimportant a case as that, how much more necessary must it be in a case where Courts of Justice were to be designed; for no court ever yet built had pleased all who had business to transact within it. The competition for the Houses of Parliament was sufficiently open to please all. The whole British nation had an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it, and the choice was unanimous. He recommended that it should be as open in the case under consideration; it was reasonable to hope that the result would be equally satisfactory.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, it would be extremely gratifying if the Commission should be able to meet the wishes of everybody on such a subject as this, and more especially if they could meet the wishes of a profession in which they all took so much interest as the very honourable profession of architects. He could also say for his own part that it would be a matter of deep disappointment to him if the building which would result from the Act of last Session should not be an ornament and an honour to the metropolis. It must not, however, be forgotten that with respect to such a building as this especially, use came before ornament, and that was so considered by this House in discussing the Act last year. They then bore particularly in mind the wants and requirements of the administration of justice, which were the whole cause of the Bill and the whole justification for it. In the matter of expense the Houses of Parliament ought to act as a warning. He felt bound to say that he had not always heard such general commendation bestowed upon them as had been the case that evening. He had often heard as much abuse as praise. Most of them thought the internal arrangements might have been better than they were; but even supposing that they had attained a high degree of perfection, it was only obtained by means of continual alterations, which involved a large expenditure. It was the duty of the Government to avoid repeating that process on the present occasion; and when the Bill was passed through the House last year a pledge was asked for and was given by the Government that it would insert a clause taking the matter in some degree out of the hands of the Government, by means of a Commission in conjunction with which it was to act, that Commission being composed of those persons who might be supposed to be best acquainted with the requirements necessary to be fulfilled in erecting courts of law and the necessary offices. The Commission met frequently, and occupied a considerable amount of time and labour in settling the arrangements, and they had, after much consideration, and with great care, drawn up voluminous instructions for the architects, describing in detail every accommodation which the Commissioners thought the building should contain. No building could be more special in its requirements, and he was glad to hear that all were agreed that designs showing completeness of internal arrangement were more to be desired than pretty drawings which would catch the eye. He did not think that there was any danger of their falling into the error of being taken with a few pretty trees in a drawing, and a carriage passing by, be it the Queen's or that of any one else, but he rather believed that they would look to the adaptation of the building to the purposes for which it was intended. Of course, it was desirable that the building should be characterized by as much beauty as possible; but in any case the work would be one of difficulty, and those who were intended to compete would find it necessary to visit the various offices where the business of the law was being conducted, in order that they might become practically acquainted with the wants for which they proposed to provide. But if the open competition desired by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southwark (Mr. Locke) were adopted, what would be the result? At the lowest computation 200 or 300 architects, the number who competed for the building of the Foreign and War Offices, would desire to make themselves acquainted with the courts of law and the various offices connected with them. It would be impossible that so large a number could have access to the various offices without interrupting the business. Disappointment and delay would necessarily have followed; for it would have been impossible to give access to some, without giving it to all; and the only course open to the Commissioners was to restrict the competition within very narrow limits. Accordingly, a numerously attended meeting of the Commissioners resolved, on the 21st of December, that the competitors must be limited. Shortly afterwards the Treasury proposed that the question as to whether the competition should be unlimited or restricted should be left to the judges. The Commissioners, on hearing this, recorded their unanimous opinion that the competition should be limited, and that the maximum number of competitors should be six. Whatever, therefore, had been done in the way of restricting the competition had been done by the Commissioners appointed by Parliament, independently of the Government. The Commissioners were partly guided to this conclusion by the feeling that the building should be erected as quickly as possible; because the longer the delay the greater the expense and the more prolonged the inconvenience attending the present state of things. As at present arranged, the plans would be given in by the 15th of October; and, considering that fifty courts and offices in various parts of the metropolis had to be inspected by the designers, that time would have to be extended if the list of competitors were added to. Virtually, however, ten of the very best men in the profession had been selected, but four of them had from their other engagements declined to enter upon the contest; and as they declined the number was made up to six. He did not say anything to the £800 that was to be awarded to each of the competitors. Of course, if the competition were quite open this sum could not be given; but the addition of one or two more competitors would not be a material consideration. [Mr. BENTINCK: What are their names?] Those who had consented to compete were Mr. Street, Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Darling, Mr. Deane, and Mr. Raphael Brandon. Mr. Somers Clarke had not yet given a reply; and the names of the gentlemen who had declined were Messrs. Barry, Scott, Hardwick, and Wyatt. It had been said some gentlemen had declined on account of a condition imposed—namely, that the successful competitor should not, in the three years during which he was engaged on the building, accept any other work without the consent of the Treasury: but seeing he was to be paid 5 per cent on the cost, and that his percentage would amount at that rate to £37,000, he did not think this so unreasonable a stipulation. The only other point he had to refer to was the allusion to some proposed preference given to Mr. Waterhouse, and it was suggested that he had been regarded with undue favour. But that was without foundation. That gentleman having built in Manchester some excellent buildings of a similar kind, his name naturally suggested itself; but he ventured to say no preference had been, or would be given, to that gentleman, and he did not believe Mr. Waterhouse was known otherwise than professionally to any Member of the Commission; he was only known by his work. As to the judges of the designs, he was not prepared to defend his own appointment; but the Treasury having agreed that the Commissioners should appoint two of the judges, that Commission had appointed the Lord Chief Justice of England and himself, assuming them to be able to form an opinion as to the requirements of a building intended for the law courts and offices. He could not but think that confidence might be placed in those who were associated with him—he said nothing of himself—in the performance of that duty. Of course, they would have due professional assistance whenever they required it; and they would earnestly endeavour to obtain the most beautiful building they could, while they would at the same time not be prepared to sacrifice utility to beauty.

MR. HIBBERT said, that having been on the Committee for the erection of the Assize Court at Manchester, he wished to say a few words. The competition for the design of that Court was open to all the world, and the result was that they had one of the best courts of justice that had ever been erected in this country. The Manchester Court was successful because those who were to use the court were consulted, and their views with regard to accommodation were carried out, and he thought that the same course should be adopted with regard to the new courts to be erected in London. He thought that with regard to the proposed court competitors should not be limited to six. For the Manchester Court 230 designs were sent in, but of these only about twenty were worth looking into, and of the twenty only twelve whose interior designs were worth looking into. He thought that if Government got ten or twelve of the best architects to compete, and told them what they wanted, they would get a building that would not only be beautiful, but would give all the accommodation that was required.

MR. HENLEY said, he could not help fearing that in spite of what had been said by the Attorney General, the Government had just taken the very worst possible course in this matter. There were two courses open to them. The first and possibly the best course was to have taken the whole responsibility upon their own shoulders, and to have appointed a fit and proper man to design the building according to their requirements; and the second was to have thrown the competition open to the whole profession. Neither of these courses had been adopted, and the result would be that the responsibility would rest nowhere. Of one thing they might be quite certain—namely, that do what they would, there was sure to be plenty of dissatisfaction with the courts when they were built. But what was wanted was, that in case there should be good ground for that disatisfaction, Parliament should know who were responsible for the failure.

MR. H. B. SHERIDAN remarked, that by the course the Government had taken they had excluded the architect who took a prize for the Foreign Office.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 70; Noes 101: Majority 31.

Words *added*: — Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to*.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, it is not expedient that the competition for the building of the New Courts of Justice should be limited to six architects only.—(*Mr. Bentinck.*)

Resolved, That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.

Motion made, and Question, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES.

SUPPLY *considered* in Committee—ARMY ESTIMATES.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) £212,800, Administration of the Army.

GENERAL PEEL said, that when the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) brought forward the Estimates last year he informed the Committee that a Committee had been appointed and had sat during the previous summer, and by repeated adjournments during the greater part of the winter, and that they had recommended several changes in the Department, and he said that these recommendations had relation both to its organization and to economy. He quite agreed with the hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) in the remark he made last year that as a general rule this House ought not to interfere with the organization of a Department of which the head of that Department was responsible for its working: and he was more inclined to follow that principle on the present occasion, because the noble Marquess had not been sufficiently long at the head of the Department over which he now presides to make him responsible for its working; and because he entirely relied on the noble Lord for the removal of those causes of dissatisfaction which, as he must know, now reigned throughout the whole of this Department. He did not intend to offer any opinion whether that dissatisfaction was based on just and reasonable grounds or not—all he knew was that it existed, and that it was admitted last year by the noble Lord when he brought forward the Estimates; neither would he offer any opinion on the memorial which had been presented by the clerks to the late Secretary of War expressing their dissatisfaction at the changes proposed by the Committee to which he had referred: but this he would say, that when the whole of a Department was dissatisfied it was impossible that it could work well. He hoped, however, that the noble Lord would endeavour to introduce zeal into the Department, and be able to substitute interest for the indifference which at present existed there. It was not, however, to that point that he rose to call the attention of the Committee, but to the result of the proposals which had been made for securing economy in the Department. The Committee had recommended certain changes with a view to economy, and the noble Lord told them on a former occasion that a great reduction would be made in consequence. So far, however, from this Vote having decreased, it had been gradually increasing, whilst the work of the Department had been decreasing. In 1859 the charge for the Department amounted to £185,000, and in 1864-5, when the Committee was appointed, it had reached the sum of £223,384. The Vote for the following year showed an apparent decrease of £10,584, and the noble Lord took credit for it; but he (General Peel) would show that, so far from its being a decrease, the expenses of the Department have, in reality, increased. The noble Lord said that there would be a decrease of £7,000 for this year, and within two years, with the existing establishment, it would be £15,000, and that if the number of clerks in the various branches were reduced as he anticipated, a considerable saving would be effected in a few years. But what was the fact? The Committee proposed to transfer the clerks for the Clothing Establishment, the Barrack Establishment, and the Engineer Branch, from this Vote to another. Now, these were very large branches—that for Clothing being £454,400, that for Barracks, £603,300, and for the Engineer Department, £842,200; and it was on the transfer of these clerks that the noble Lord last year calculated on a saving of £3,500 on this Vote; although he (General Peel) made it a much larger sum, notwithstanding that it was very difficult indeed to ascertain what was the amount charged for clerks in these various branches. He found that the Clothing Branch was increased by £2,000, and the Barrack Branch at head-quarters, which he took to be at the War Department, £1,300; but what the Engineering Branch was it was impossible to make out from this Vote. Taking, however, the total amount on the three Votes, as calculated by the noble Lord, at £3,500, it must be added to the present Vote of £212,800. But that was not all. The noble Lord stated also that one of the chief means of reduction would be the employment of clerks less highly paid than those at present employed; but how had that been effected? There had been, as they would find by reference to Vote 26, a sum of upwards of £10,000 transferred to another portion of the Estimates on account of the superannuation of War Office clerks. There were nine first-class clerks who received £4,692; eighteen second-class clerks who received £4,575; and six third-class clerks who received £1,400. In addition to this, there was an item for temporary clerks discharged. Many of these were very hard cases, for they had no retiring premiums, and they retired with gratuities. If, therefore, he took the £10,311 and the £3,500 and added it to the present Vote it would be seen that the charge was considerably higher than that of 1864-5, which amounted to £223,384. They had certainly got rid of many of the highly-paid clerks by putting them on superannuated allowances, but they had made no reduction in the cost of the Department. It was impossible to tell the number of clerks in the War Office. Last year the amount paid to the whole number of clerks was charged in a lump sum of £110,000, but neither the number of clerks was given nor was there any attempt at classification. It was then said in a note that a re-organization was going on in the Department; but this year we have the same thing. The amount of this year's Vote was, in fact, exactly the same as last year's, although superannuation allowances amounting to £10,000 were added to the Vote, and we had as yet no account of the number of clerks at the War Office. He did not complain of the amount given in individual cases, because the list included some of the best clerks in the Department; but how their places were to be supplied was more than he could find. He hoped, if it was the noble Marquess's fate to bring forward the Estimates next year, and he was sure the noble Marquess would do it better than anybody else on that side of the House, that he would be able to give a more satisfactory account than he (General Peel) had been able to gather from the Vote.

Mr. O'REILLY said, that when two years since he brought under the attention of the House what he considered the extravagant charge of this Department, and he was told that economy should be introduced into the Vote, he felt a little exultation at the thought that he had done some slight good to the country by drawing attention to it; but he confessed that after two years' experience he honestly believed that it would have been better and more economical if no one had called attention to it. The only practical result was an apparent reduction of £10,000, with an actual increase of at least £5,000. In 1864-5 the Vote was in round numbers £168,000, in 1865-6 there was a diminution of £10,500, but in 1866-7 the total for the War Office was about the same sum. Taking, therefore, the retiring allowances at £10,154, and the average ages of those who received them at forty-eight years, there was a prospective reduction of that amount at the end of ten or fifteen years. Such postponed economy he looked upon as very doubtful, for in all human probability the Vote would by that time have grown to its usual dimensions. In 1865-6 the amount of allowances to clerks amounted to £835; but this year, in consequence of the economy practised, it amounted to £2,240, and he confessed his utter ignorance to understand it, and asked for an explanation. The item of allowance to estimate clerks was set down at £300, and next to that £350 for compiling regulations; and on turning to the Superannuation Vote he found that Mr. W. O. Marshall, one of the first clerks, and who occupied the post nominally of *précis* writer and librarian, and who was returned as forty-eight years of age, and who was mentioned by the Committee referred to as a useful and distinguished clerk in the prime of life—that Mr. Marshall had retired on a superannuation allowance of £666 per annum. Compiling the regulations was part of Mr. Marshall's work; and he (Mr. O'Reilly) found that two clerks were now employed in performing part of his work, and who received altogether £730, and Mr. Marshall £666 retiring allowance. Under the head of accountant clerks and writers, a sum of £770, an entirely new item, appeared, and this was simply an allowance to new clerks for doing what ought to have been done by clerks who had been superannuated. The noble Marquess took credit for the War Office for economy in the Barrack Department, and that this would be carried out by diminishing the number of barrack clerks and supplying their places by barrack sergeants and a lower class of clerks. The whole of the item was an absolute increase as far as the items of "head-quarters" for the War Office were concerned. The economy in the administration of the army had also been supplemented in the Engineer's department. The head-quarters of the Engineers had been increased by several first and second-class clerks, the sum for whom was to be reckoned altogether at about £1,100. True, the total of that Vote did not show an increase; but the reason for that was that there were a number of temporary clerks employed at the out-stations in really doing the work of the administration of the army in London, which was formerly done by the superannuated first-class clerks. The number of the temporary clerks was raised from 106 in 1865-6 to 138 for the years 1866-7. Again, if they turned to the Estimates for 1865-6, they would find that for the first time in that year a Vote was taken of £2,000 for the Barrack Establishment in the War Office to meet that new economy. It was difficult for a mere outsider to track through the Engineers' Vote and the Barrack Vote those items of increase which more than balanced the diminution in the War Office; and he only hoped that the noble Marquess would direct his attention to them.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE said, that his right hon. and gallant Friend General Peel, and the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken (Mr. O'Reilly), had commented on the fallacies which they thought they had detected in connection with these apparent reductions; but still there remained one fallacy that had not been noticed. It was to be found in Vote 18 itself. The apparent foundation of the claim for reduction was to be found in the reduction of the salaries for clerks; but they were not informed as to the number and grade of the clerks who were employed. They were only told that the sum to be taken for clerks of various classes was £109,000; but it ought to be stated what was the number of first-class clerks, what was the number of second-class clerks, and so forth. Under the system of promotion followed in a public office, when a gentleman was promoted from one class to another he entered the higher class at the minimum salary of that class. One of these clerks of the higher class received from £670 to £800 a year; and if they pensioned off one who received £800, and engaged another at the £670 scale, they thereby for the time saved £130. By pensioning off a large number of the higher paid—the first-class clerks—they might in that way effect a considerable temporary and apparent saving; but, of course, that reduction would disappear again by that process of gradual increase which they always found would go on. It would be more satisfactory if they were enabled to get at the real economical value of these changes. They ought to be told what the permanent as well as what the temporary effect of their system of promotion was upon the salaries of the different classes of officers and upon the cost of their establishments. They always rejoiced at what looked like a saving, but some kinds of economy were penny wise and pound foolish. It was a very grave question whether it was desirable to reduce the staff of clerks at the head-quarters of that establishment for the purpose of employing in their place a body of lower paid men who were engaged in the Executive work of the barrack, store, and other departments. These men could not be expected to be as zealous for economy as officers at the head-quarters would be.

Captain VIVIAN said, he wanted to save the Secretary of State for War a very great amount of trouble. He wished the noble Marquess to confess what he himself, as well as many gentlemen both inside and outside of that House perfectly well knew—namely, that the whole of that great War Department was in a state of utter confusion. If the noble Marquess would re-organize the whole of the administrative department of the army he would be relieved from these long discussions. Complaints were made sometimes that the clerks were too few, and sometimes that they were too numerous. He complained of the want of system in the War Department, and the extraordinary manner in which the work was performed. He held in his hands a sample of War Office correspondence, which supplied a very good illustration of the present state of the military administration, and led him to consider what would be the result in a great emergency—such, for instance, as the commencement of a war with any country. With the permission of the House he would read the minute he had made from the correspondence to which he referred. It was correspondence of a most important character, relative to the supply of a pair of bellows to the camp at the Curragh of Kildare. After a lengthy correspondence, the local Commissariat officer at the Curragh camp on the 12th February obtained authority from the War Department to indent on the Royal Engineer Department for a pair of bellows, urgently required in the camp, and applied for them to the district Engineer officer; on the 16th the district Engineer officer applied to the Military Store officer at Dublin; on the 19th the Military Store officer at Dublin informed the Royal Engineer officer at Dublin that he could only supply the required bellows on requisition. On the 20th, the Royal Engineer officer at Dublin forwarded this information to the Royal Engineer officer at the Curragh; and on the 21st the local Engineer officer at the Curragh replied that he had no form of requisition. On the 22nd the local Engineer officer at the Curragh asked the local Commissariat officer if the proposed bellows would do. On the 23rd the local Commissariat officer replied, "Yes." On the 24th the local Engineer officer informed the local Commissariat officer that he must apply to the Royal Engineer officer, Dublin; and accordingly the local Commissariat officer applied to Dublin. The military stores officer at Dublin answered that he would supply the bellows on an order from the War Office. The local Commissariat officer then produced an authority from the War Office, and read it to the local Engineer officer. On the 1st of March the district Royal Engineer officer declined to have anything to do with a service which was not brought to his notice through the proper authorities, and local Commissariat officer referred the question to the Commissariat officer in Dublin. On March 2nd the Commissariat officer in Dublin referred the question to the Deputy Quartermaster General, Dublin; and the next day the Deputy Quartermaster General at Dublin referred the requisition to the Quartermaster General, Horse Guards. On the 5th, the Horse Guards referred to the War Office, and the War Office referred to the Commissary-General-in-Chief, London. On the 18th the Commissary-General-in-Chief asked the Director of Stores to give authority, which two days after was produced. The Director of Stores then stated that the Commissariat officer should include the bellows in the annual estimate; and on the 17th the Commissary-General-in-Chief wrote to the Horse Guards, and the Commissariat officer, Dublin. After all this correspondence, on the 20th of March the Commissariat officer at the Curragh was still bellowing for his bellows. If such a large amount of correspondence was necessary in procuring a pair of bellows, he asked again what would be the issues in a case of emergency? He hoped that his noble Friend would inaugurate his new position by saying frankly, "I have gone into a chaos of confusion—I am going to take these great administrative departments into consideration with a view of putting them into something like a system." He was sure if the noble Marquess would do so he would meet with the greatest possible indulgence from that House.

Sir WILLIAM JOLLIFFE stated, that the item for travelling expenses was very large, and that he would like to know the cause of the increased expenditure under this head.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) has said that this Vote has not shown the whole of the expenditure of the administration of the army, and, with one or two exceptions, that statement is correct. The right hon. Gentlemen has also stated that the apparent saving in this Vote is more than counterbalanced by the extra sums in other Votes. I think, however, that I can show that an actual saving has been effected through the re-organization which we have commenced but not yet completed. Up to the last year the expenditure of the War Office has been an increasing expenditure. Now, the War Office is comparatively a new office; and the system adopted with reference to the remuneration of the clerks is, that they receive progressive salaries till they receive the maximum amount paid to them in their several classes. Consequently, the expenditure in respect of the clerks would go on increasing until a certain number of them obtained their maximum salaries. I find that if no changes whatever had been made in the War Office that the charge on account of the clerical establishments would have amounted to £129,500; but this year the charge for the clerical establishment, as given in Vote 18, amounts to only £112,140. It is true that we have to add to that sum, as stated by the right hon. Gentleman, £2,240 on account of the barrack department, and £4,028 for the directors.

Colonel PERCY HERBERT: Can you state the number of clerks employed?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I shall come to that point presently. The comparison I have just drawn shows that a saving has been made with regard to the effective establishment amounting to £10,583. The right hon. Gentleman says that an increase has been made in the Vote for the effective service of £10,000; and I am quite willing to admit it, but at the same time it is necessary to state that the whole of the increase is not owing to the re-organization. The sum of £3,600 would have been added to the Superannuation Vote irrespective of the re-organization; and, therefore, the total increase of that Vote is only £6,400. On this calculation, therefore, there is a net saving on what the office would have cost under the former arrangement, of £4,100. I am not sure that when this statement was prepared that the increase in the item for allowance was taken into account or not. If it were not taken into account it would reduce the saving by £1,200. I now come to the number of clerks, and the statement in respect of them is more satisfactory than some other statements of a pecuniary character. The reason why we have not stated in the Estimates of this year, as was formerly done, the number of clerks in the establishment, is the same that I gave for its omission last year. The re-organization is not yet complete, and the clerks are distributed in different branches of the establishment. In the Estimates for 1864-5 the number of clerks was 479, but at this moment the number is 427; showing a reduction of fifty-two clerks. These numbers do not include temporary clerks. It is quite impossible that any reduction in the number of clerks can be made without entailing an increase of the Superannuation Vote; and were we to wait till we obtained vacancies without the assistance of the Superannuation Vote, we should have to wait a considerable time. It is, of course, quite obvious that the charge entailed on the Superannuation Vote will decrease year by year, while the decrease in the Effective Vote will, I hope, be permanent. The hon. and gallant Member for Longford (Mr. O'Reilly) referred to the number of clerks under Vote 14, but there is a statement connected with this Vote which, I think, requires correction. The number of 425 is not the actual number employed at present. That is the full establishment which some time ago was estimated for the Engineers' Department, but the third class of clerks of barracks was never filled up. I am far from saying that, although we have made some improvements in the arrangements of the War Office, those improvements are all that it would be desirable to introduce. As I before stated, there have been some delay and considerable difficulty in carrying out the system of re-organization so far as we have gone. Several of the alterations which have been made have, however, worked most satisfactorily—as, for instance, the division of the department of Accountant General into the departments of the Accountant General and Chief Auditor. The Chief Auditor is of opinion that the work of his office may be performed to a very great extent by soldier clerks. He has employed a large number of men in that way, and he has found them to be of great service. He has some arrears to make up, and he hopes that when they are completed, and when he is able to employ a still larger number of soldier clerks, he will be in a position to make still further reductions. In reply to the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Truro (Captain Vivian), I may state that I do not expect any considerable reduction can be effected by merely seeking to bring about changes in the War Office itself. I concur with him in the opinion that the most important reductions in connection with the administration of the army are to be made by the adoption of some system which would diminish the mass of correspondence which now takes place. That is the only way, too, in which improvements can be introduced likely to establish efficiency in our military administration. Both my predecessors and myself have made many efforts in that direction; but, I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon will bear me out when I say that it is a much easier matter to set about, than to accomplish these reforms. When it is suggested that upon a particular subject there has been a greater amount of correspondence than necessary, it was by no means difficult for the official concerned to point out that there would be great risk of loss to the public if any of the usual communications—generally termed checks—were omitted. I am, however, by no means prepared to deny that in some instances—as, for example, in the case of the bellows which had been brought under our notice to-night—the correspondence connected with army administration is carried to an absurd length. The present establishment at the War Office is, I feel, not much in excess of that which is necessary, and if we are to make a reduction in the future, it must, I think, be effected in the direction which my hon. and gallant Friend has indicated.

General PEEL said, that if he had made any mistake in computing the number of clerks connected with the clothing department, he must ascribe it to the difficulty which, not only all outsiders, but insiders also, experienced in arriving at an accurate comprehension of the Estimates. He found the charges for those clerks had risen from £1,900, which it was in the year 1864-5, to very nearly £3,900 in the present year, thus showing an increase of £2,000.

Mr. O'REILLY said, he thought the principle which should be adopted with the view to effecting a reduction in the expenses connected with army administration was to allow a certain freedom of action to men holding important situations as to the small details which came under their consideration, making them strictly responsible for the result of the exercise of their own discretion in those matters. Everybody was cognizant of the fact that although our soldiers were dying for want of beds in the Crimea they could not be obtained because a requisition for them had not been sent in in due form, until Miss Nightingale ordered a grenadier to knock in the door of the room in which they were. He also believed that it was on record that during the war in Africa, in the time of the Napiers, the General commanding the troops was obliged to pay for the great coats, which he took upon himself the responsibility of directing to be served out to them, because, the regulation being that great coats were to last for five years, he could not in the ordinary course procure them until that time had expired, although those which had previously been distributed were worn out owing to the extra services; and he recollected when he himself was in the army eleven signatures were required before the commuted allowance for coals and candles, which was 1*s.* 1*d.* or 1*s.* 11*d.* per week, could be obtained. He hoped under those circumstances the Committee would strengthen the hands of the noble Marquess in introducing and carrying out the principle to which he had at the outset of his remarks referred.

Mr. HENLEY said, he hoped the noble Marquess would be able to redeem the pledges to which he seemed committed. The correspondence with respect to the bellows to which the attention of the Committee had just been called was enough to make one imagine that he saw the late Mr. Hume coming among them from wherever he was, and reading the correspondence to which he used to treat the House about muskets. The noble Lord the Secretary for War had, he might add, made a statement that evening with respect to the efficiency of the administration of the army, which involved considerable responsibility, and on which he would find it necessary to act. But they must not forget that the great question before them was not economy but the efficiency of the Army Departments. When the War Office was placed on its present footing the hope was held that all the circumbendibus correspondence which before used to take place would either be got rid of altogether or very much lessened, and that a great saving of expense would be effected; but that expectation had not been realized. As the noble Marquess had admitted that excessive amount of correspondence rendered the public service inefficient there would rest upon him great responsibility if he did not take steps to remedy it, and the evils of the Crimean campaign were suffered again upon some future occasion.

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) £135,900, Superannuation Allowances, *agreed to.*

General PEEL inquired when the Vote for Fortifications would be taken.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, that he would state to-morrow.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Mr. CHILDERS moved that the Chairman do report Progress.

Sir HARRY VERNEY called the attention of the noble Marquess to the hardship suffered by non-commissioned officers in India who did not receive the pay due to their rank until the discharge of their predecessors in England had been notified to their regiments.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON rose to order. This matter came under Vote 1, if it came under any Vote in the Estimates, and there was now no Question before the House.

The CHAIRMAN said, the Question before the House was that he should report Progress.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON agreed with his hon. and gallant Friend that the hon. Baronet (Sir Harry Verney) was out of order, for they were discussing whether they should proceed with the Civil Service Estimates or report Progress. However, the question raised by the hon. Baronet did not affect the War Department, it was a question entirely for the Secretary of State for India.

Motion *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;*
Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

LABOURING CLASSES DWELLINGS (*re-committed*) BILL—[BILL 67.]

(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Bruce.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 to 3 *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Authorities and Persons to whom Loans may be made).

MR. AYRTON said, this clause appeared to him to involve a very important question of policy—namely, the expediency of Her Majesty's Government advancing money to private persons to enable them to carry on a private speculation. This was the first time a proposal of that kind had ever been submitted to Parliament. It would certainly act with great injustice. For example, if a builder undertook to build houses in the ordinary way he would have to pay 6 per cent interest for the money he borrowed; whereas, if another person in the same trade took a plot of ground, and if he speculated under favour of this Bill, he would be at liberty to obtain money from the Treasury at 4 per cent. It was to be regretted that the Government had begun a system of communism the end of which could not be foreseen. He therefore thought that these clauses relating to the loan of money to private persons should be struck out.

MR. CHILDERS said, that upon the abstract principle of political economy the hon. and learned Gentleman was perfectly right; but the Government had to deal with facts. From the rapid increase of the metropolis and large towns, and from the unwillingness of persons to enter into sufficiently large building operations for the working classes, there had arisen a state of things which to some extent might be remedied in the manner proposed by this Bill. The hon. and learned Member was mistaken in saying that this was the first occasion when the Government had advanced money for private purposes. The Government advanced money at the present moment in Ireland for the same purposes as those contemplated by the present Bill, and in England for drainage for the benefit of landlords. Considering that the present proposal was for the benefit of the working classes, he hoped an abstract principle would not be allowed to prevail against the necessity of dealing with the evil proposed to be remedied. There would be ample security for the money lent, as the parties borrowing must expend on the construction of the houses an amount equal to the sum borrowed.

MR. AYRTON observed, that there was no difficulty in carrying on building operations for the benefit of the working classes in the suburbs of the metropolis. The places where the houses were not fit dwellings for the working classes were situated in the old part of the town, which was crowded with dwellings, to which the Bill did not apply. As far as money was concerned, the benefit building societies had plenty, and the real difficulty in applying it to the purpose of providing dwellings for the working classes arose from the jealousy exhibited by the House of Commons in former times of any society interfering with land. Consequently, in the Acts regulating those societies there were clauses preventing their dealing directly and honestly with land for the purpose of building houses. What was wanted was that the law should be amended, so that these societies of working people might have facilities for taking land for building purposes; but it was plainly objectionable to advance public money to a private speculator to enable him to enter into a building competition with others.

LORD ELCHO asked, whether the Secretary to the Treasury had taken into consideration what class of buildings would be erected under the Bill, what would be their value, the probable number of £7 houses and £10 houses which would be erected, and in what boroughs and cities they were lkely to be situated?

MR. HENLEY said, that the point raised by the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton), might have been more properly raised on the second reading of the Bill, the principle of which it affected. It was a surprise to him to hear it stated that there were houses in abundance for everybody, because the general belief was that there was a scarcity of houses for the labouring classes. If that were so, it did not seem unreasonable that Government should advance money on easier terms than it could be had in the public market to supply the want. As to the Bill putting a stop to building, private builders did not usually build unless they had something like the fee simple of land or a long lease of it. The Bill was not restricted to any class of persons, and any one who complied with its provisions might obtain advances. If it stimulated the building of houses for the humbler classes it would do great good; and if its operation produced any evils, it would be easy for the Government to put a stop to them.

Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE wished to know, whether anything had been determined in respect to the plans on which the houses were to be built. The Public Works Commissioners of Ireland had prepared plans for such dwellings on a liberal scale. He trusted that the operation of the Bill would be superintended by competent persons, who would really understand what were the best plans on which to construct dwellings in any particular town; and he feared that the Bill would be nullified if these matters were left to the Public Works Commissioners, than whom no one had offered more opposition to the rendering of assistance in the erection of this class of dwellings in Scotland.

Mr. CHILDERS said, in reply to his noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), he must confess that in preparing the Bill he had no eye to the Reform question, which did not agitate him in the least. He did not feel it necessary to consider the probable number of possible electors who would take advantage of the Bill. In regard to the machinery for carrying it out, the precedent of the Irish Act had been adopted. Under the general direction of the Treasury, rules, regulations, and plans would be prepared by the Department of the First Commissioner of Works, and with these any building brought under provisions of the Bill must conform; and there was no intention of employing for any purpose, except inquiries as to security, the machinery of the Commissioners. An answer he had given had been misunderstood by the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets, for only one-half the value of a building could be obtained from Government. As they had heard from the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Henley), there was great demand for additional accommodation for the working classes. They must not be driven out of the towns to the outskirts, which were in many instances miles from their employment. To put them to inconvenience made labour more expensive, and diminished the labour power of the country.

Mr. THOMAS HUGHES said, he dissented from the opinion of the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets. There was great need of dwellings for the working classes, that the building societies did not supply the want, many parts of London were frightfully overcrowded, and the Bill would usefully stimulate the erection of dwellings which would not otherwise be built on speculation.

Sir MATTHEW RIDLEY supported the Bill, which was salutary in its object, and remarked that building societies had studiously avoided the substitution for old and dilapidated dwellings of new and improved ones. He desired to point out that the Bill was not confined to the metropolis, but that any bodies constituted under the Local Government Act might make use of it. He looked upon the measure as a wise and sanitary one which would benefit small towns, and he was therefore prepared to support it.

Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE observed, that it would be necessary that those representing the First Commissioner of Works should be well acquainted with the building materials used in different parts of the country, so as not to insist upon the use in the north of materials which were obtainable only in the south, or *vice versâ*.

Mr. CHILDERS said, the Department had an efficient officer in Scotland, fully competent to advise in these matters.

Mr. AYRTON said, that in order to attain the object aimed at, advances should be restricted to those public bodies which would destroy houses unfit for habitation and build others; but the Bill should not tempt capitalists to speculate in cottage building. It would be a monstrous thing to lend money at 4 per cent to a manufacturer who came in competition with another unable to avail himself of the Bill. The latter part of the clause was altogether preposterous. It amounted to a species of communism which no feelings of philanthropy could justify. He hoped the House would have the moral courage to set its face against it. He moved that the latter portion of the clause from the word "same" be omitted, leaving the Government to make advances to benefit societies.

Mr. AKROYD said, there was nothing in the Bill to lead to the assumption that money would be advanced to manufacturers, but he apprehended that if the Bill passed, rules would be made bringing building societies under its operation. The reason for bringing in the Bill was not because there was any call for it by the manufacturers in the north, but because of the great want of proper dwellings for the working classes in London. He thought that the Government, instead of lending money at 4 per cent should lend it at 3½, in order to give an impulse to the movement now going on, and to provide better house accommodation for the poorer classes.

Sir MICHAEL BEACH hoped the Government would exercise some supervision over the plans of these buildings and some control over the rents which the working classes would have to pay—adopting, in fact, the principle which had been found so useful in administering the Peabody donation.

Mr. OTWAY said, he was at a loss to understand the objection of the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets. But he did think that there was not a sufficient security that the dwellings to be erected would be fit dwellings for the working classes.

Mr. CHILDERS said, the Bill contained the same words as the Irish Act, and they would be quite sufficient to insure that proper buildings were erected for the working classes. He would not go into the politico-economical question which had been raised, as the House had so clearly expressed its views on that subject. The Department which would have to be satisfied as to the security was not a Government Department. The Public Works Commission had not that intimate connection with the Government as had been supposed by some hon. Gentlemen.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 5 to 7 *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Incorporation of Commissioners Clauses Consolidation Act).

Sir WILLIAM JOLLIFFE objected to loans being granted to companies such as harbour and railway companies. The want that was felt in the metropolis of dwellings for the working classes was caused in great measure by so many houses having been pulled down in order to make room for railway stations, and the Bill certainly ought not to be complicated by the introduction of a clause enabling railway and other companies to carry on speculations with regard to these loans.

Mr. CHILDERS thought the clause was a most valuable one. Its object was to prevent any question which might otherwise be raised as to the legality of railway and dock companies to raise funds under this measure for building houses. In other words, it authorized such companies to take these loans in addition to their ordinary borrowing powers.

Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE moved the addition of a proviso that the houses to be occupied by the working classes built under the provision of this Act should always be occupied by them; and that if at any time they should cease to be so occupied the Board of Works should be empowered to call in any balance which might be due.

Mr. CHILDERS objected to the proposed addition. There would be ample power to make proper conditions in each case as might be deemed feasible.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir WILLIAM JOLLIFFE called attention to the complex character of the Bill.

Mr. CHILDERS said, the rules and regulations mentioned in the 4th section would be very carefully drawn up.

Mr. AYRTON asked the hon. Gentleman whether he would lay those rules and regulations upon the table of the House?

Mr. CHILDERS signified his willingness to do so.

Clause *ordered* to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 9

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN inquired whether it was intended to extend the benefits of the measure to Ireland?

Mr. CHILDERS replied in the affirmative, stating that this would be done in a Bill which the Government was about to introduce for amending the Public Works (Ireland) Act.

Mr. CHILDERS then proposed an additional clause, providing that all rules and regulations made by the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury under the provisions of the Act should be laid before Parliament.

Clause *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES BILL—[Bill 78.]

(*Lord Clarence Paget, Mr. Childers.*)

SECOND READING.

Ordered for Second Reading read.

Lord CLARENCE PAGET, in moving the second reading of this measure, explained that it was intended to renew an Act passed in 1864 for the health of our soldiers and sailors in the various ports, with additional powers recommended by a Committee of medical men. It was proposed to refer the Bill to a Select Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the second time.—(*Lord Clarence Paget.*)

Mr. HENLEY said the measure was a very queer Bill upon a very queer subject. Its object was to preserve the health of Her Majesty's troops, and its endeavour was to remove all the penalties which a higher Power had imposed upon sin, and to give the opportunity of sin without the punishment. He must appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether they could expect any blessing upon their legislation if they took these unhappy women, freed them from disease, and then turned them loose to follow the same wretched courses, without any attempt to reclaim them. Inspectors were to be appointed for their bodies, but it was not proposed to take any advantage of the opportunity afforded by the curing of disease to induce them to lead a better life on their discharge. The principle of the measure had been in operation since the middle of 1864, but its effect did not appear to have been very satisfactory, for in the last Report on the navy the medical gentlemen made the following note :—" Little or no diminution of disease in the home ports on account of this legislation." He regarded this legislation as vicious if unaccompanied by any attempt at reclamation, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would introduce in Committee provisions with that object.

Mr. AYRTON said, his objections to the measure were still stronger than on the introduction of the original Act. Even in France a flimsy veil was thrown over these proceedings, by the suggestion of something being done to reclaim these unhappy creatures ; but in this country the Government assumed no cloak of decency or morality by proposing anything for their benefit. It was simply a Bill for keeping public women at the public expense for the gratification of our soldiers and sailors. No useful or moral end was intended, the end in view being vice—unmitigated vice—the administration of the army and navy being so inefficient, that Government was obliged to propose this Bill for the sustentation of vice. Such a proposal was a disgrace to the country, and if the Bill passed he should regard it as his duty, when addressing a popular audience, to tell them that taxes were wrung from them for the purpose of maintaining vice for the gratification of the army and navy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would assume a heavy responsibility if he allowed the Bill to pass into law, and he (Mr. Ayrton) hoped that if it went to a Committee composed of civilians, they would take a proper view of it, and that the House would never hear of it again.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that it was hardly possible this subject could be discussed then with the fulness which would be desirable. His noble Friend, in proposing the second reading of the Bill, had merely proposed the continuation of a system which had received the sanction of Parliament. Neither his noble Friend nor Her Majesty's Government was desirous of flinching from a full consideration of the numerous difficulties by which this matter was surrounded ; and the noble Lord had announced his intention, at the proper time, to propose that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. It would be desirable that those gentlemen who had charged themselves with the painful duty of looking into this question should serve on that Committee. The object of the Government was to have all the assistance on the subject which the intelligence and impartial judgment of Parliament could afford. They wished the matter to be examined free from prejudice of any kind. He therefore, hoped there would be no objection to having the Bill read a second time.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

MASTER AND SERVANT.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Lord ELCHO said, that in the last Parliament Mr. Cobbett moved for the appointment of a Select Committee on the Law of Master and Servant. As that Gentleman was not in the present Parliament, the Secretary of the Association of Working Men, a body formed for the purpose of bringing about an amendment in that law, had requested him to move for the appointment of the Committee this Session. He therefore begged to move for the appointment of a Select Committee on Law of Master and Servant.

Motion *agreed to.*

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire into the state of the Law as regards contracts of Service between Master and Servant, and as to the expediency of amending the same."—(*Lord Elcho.*)

And, on May 8, Select Committee *nominated* as follows:—Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, Colonel WILSON PATTEN, Mr. JACKSON, Mr. Alderman SALOMONS, Mr. M'LAGAN, Lord GROSVENOR, Mr. GEORGE, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL, Mr. GATHORNE HARDY, Mr. DALGLISH, Mr. ALGERNON EGERTON, Mr. GEORGE CLIVE, Mr. FAWCETT, Mr. EDMUND POTTER, and Lord ELCHO: Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

POOR PERSONS' BURIAL (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir HERVEY BRUCE, Bill to enable Boards of Guardians in Ireland to bury poor persons who may not during life have been relieved out of the Poor Rates, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir HERVEY BRUCE, Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN, and Mr. PEEL DAWSON.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 88.]

GRAND JURIES PRESENTMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ESMONDE, Bill to amend "An Act to consolidate and amend the Laws relating to the Presentment of Public Money by Grand Juries in Ireland," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ESMONDE and Mr. Serjeant ARMSTRONG.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 89.]

CATTLE ASSURANCE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. BARING, Bill to give further facilities for the establishment of Societies for the Assurance of Cattle and other Animals, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. BARING and Sir GEORGE GREY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 90.]

The House adjourned at a quarter after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, March 23, 1866.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Law of Capital Punishment Amendment* (61); East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* (62); Land Tenure and Improvement (Ireland) 1866 (64).

Second Reading—Ecclesiastical Commission* (52).

Royal Assent—Princess Helena's Annuity; Prince Alfred's Annuity; Consolidated Fund (£19,000,000); National Debt Reduction; Jamaica Government; Marine Mutiny; Mutiny.

THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF RAILWAY COMPANIES — CORK AND YOUGHAL RAILWAY BILL.

OBSERVATIONS.

LORD REDESDALE rose to call the Attention of the House to the fictitious Character of the financial Arrangements for the Construction of Railways by almost all new Companies and by many already established, and to the Manner in which Public Interest and those of Landowners, Railway Proprietors generally, and of the Holders of Railway Companies' Mortgages and Debenture Stocks are thereby affected; and to move, That the Report from the Select Committee to whom the Cork and Youghal Railway Bill was referred be printed. Those of their Lordships who remembered the circumstances attending the days when railway companies were first established were aware of the facility with which capital was acquired by them, and they would further remember that in the years 1845 and 1846 when speculation was indulged in almost to madness, the money required for railway concerns was obtained easily to a very large amount. Since then matters had gone on from bad to worse in respect to the actual production of the capital before the Bills were obtained; and at last the practice had reached such a pitch that he believed it was his duty to call the attention of the House and of the public to it; for he was convinced that, unless some change were effected everything connected with railways would be involved in the greatest possible difficulty. It was necessary first to consider the causes which had led to this state of things, and then whether it was in the power of legislation to apply any remedy to them. At the early commencement of these undertakings railways were commenced with a subscription for a considerable proportion of the amount required to construct them; and up to the time of what he might call the great railway mania these subscription contracts were, practically, very substantial things. Of course, they might have been sometimes entered into by persons who went beyond their means, and no doubt in some cases there were questionable signatures of persons who, for the sake of appearance, put their names down for amounts they could not pay up; but, nevertheless, as a whole, the subscription contract was a *bonâ fide* transaction. Up to 1845, 1846, and 1847 subscription contracts, except in particular instances, were still realities to a large extent among all those companies which were what might be called respectable rather than speculative; and there was still a very considerable amount of good subscription. But, after that time, speculation reached an extent that had hardly ever been known before or since, and the amount that was called for and the number of schemes started became so immense that subscription contracts were in many instances great frauds, and in some cases they were proved to be so. At the same time, it was difficult to do anything even upon proof; persons put down their names, concerns were unsuccessful, and there was comparatively little notice taken of the matter. These things, however, cast a great slur upon the system of subscription contracts. At last they came to be carelessly executed; in a great many cases fraudulent practices were followed; the names of persons who never possessed the means of fulfilling the large engagements they bound themselves to were put down; the contracts came to be justly considered no security at all for the solidity of the company which was started, and Parliament, and those who were concerned in the business connected with Railway Bills, became so thoroughly disgusted, that subscription contracts were given up altogether, and, after much consideration, it was ordered that there should in all cases be a deposit of 8 per cent upon the estimated cost of the railway, which deposit was not to be withdrawn except under bond on the completion of the line, or upon the expenditure of more than half the capital subscribed. It was always intended by Parliament that the deposit should form a *bonâ fide* part of the capital of the company and should be part of the money available for the construction of the line. But this had entirely ceased to be the case; and, in point of fact, the deposit would be found now in no instance to form part of the capital for the construction of the line. The deposit was money borrowed merely for the purpose of meeting the requirements of Parliament, and instead of being a security for the stability of the company, it was a test only of the respectability or credit of one person or so connected with the scheme. It was no test whatever of the respectability of the company or of its competence to perform its engagements; it was, in fact, rather an impediment than otherwise to the completion of the line, because it was a sum of money borrowed at an enormous rate of interest, bringing a heavy charge upon instead of assistance to the concern. The result was that, except in the cases of lines promoted by established companies having good credit, and able to raise money upon fair terms, almost all the schemes proposed to Parliament were what were called "contractors' schemes," got up by a contractor, an engineer, a lawyer, and a Parliamentary agent. In such cases the contractor practically obtained the money required, there being very little, if any, *bonâ fide* subscription; and, indeed, it had become almost impossible to ask anybody for a subscription, because a subscriber had hardly the remotest chance of getting any return for his money. The work being carried on upon credit, the contractor took shares in payment; he was obliged generally to dispose of those shares pretty much for what he could get for them, and, therefore, it was necessary either that he should receive the shares at a very considerable discount, or else that he should be allowed to charge a much larger sum than represented the value of the work he contracted to do. Take the case of a railway started under what were called favourable circumstances, and supported to a certain extent by the district through which it was to run. Perhaps it was to cost £300,000, or it was proposed to raise that amount of capital; £25,000 was subscribed by the landowners of the district through which the railway was to run, and the line, therefore, came before Parliament with the advantage of being a landowners' line, and the concern was supposed to be quite respectable. The work was commenced; in a year or two, £100,000 having been expended, the company was short of money, and then there was a Bill for additional capital—say £100,000—to be raised by preference shares, into which also the unsubscribed ordinary shares were converted. The result was that persons who had paid up their ordinary shares found the original capital exceeded by one which had precedence in the receipt of dividend. Hence, now-a-days, nobody would come forward to subscribe to scarcely any railway company. People said, "Get the line made; it does not matter who makes it." Yes; but the line constructed under this system would cost a great deal of money; and there was no security for the making of a line which would prove of the greatest convenience to a district and most suit the requirements of the inhabitants; on the contrary, it was very much the practice to select a route which would be most disagreeable to existing interests, and not the best one in connection with lines already made, but rather one which it would be the interest of some existing company to buy, in order to prevent the line falling into other hands. The result was that many lines were not laid down in the best manner with a view to public convenience, and the existing lines were forced, year after year, into a large unnecessary expenditure. Moreover, these new schemes involved the established companies in enormous expenditure in Parliamentary contests. Before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1864, Mr. Stewart, secretary of the London and North-Western Railway, stated that in that Session there had been introduced 161 Bills affecting the London and North-Western Railway, and that there were no fewer than sixty of these that the company had been compelled to oppose. Their Lordships would readily see what a large waste of money such proceedings would occasion. Next, these speculative lines, started with a view to the advantage of the promoters rather than of the public, became embarrassed, and then the established companies were compelled to buy them up, often on terms far above their real value. A very curious case was given by Mr. Stewart in his evidence—a scheme which might be quoted the more freely, because it was by no means a bad scheme in many respects, and there was nothing unusual or improper in the manner of its promotion. The scheme was for a line projected by a contractor from the Uttoxeter Station of the North Staffordshire Railway to the Stafford Station on the North-Western Railway; it was opposed principally by the landowners of the district and by the two companies owning the lines it was to join—the North-Western and the North Staffordshire; and it was admitted by the promoters of the Bill that the scheme would not pay 2 per cent, and would not be carried out unless Parliament granted the powers asked for in the Bill, which were running powers over the lines of the other companies, and power to use their stations. Mr. Stewart stated that the North-Western had just expended £80,000 on their station at Stafford, and pointed out the injustice of allowing the proposed line to make use of it without paying anything for it. He (Lord Redesdale) would not say that the line did not deserve some consideration on public grounds, because the Bill was passed by a Committee by no means inexperienced, which granted more or less of the powers asked for; but the line was an extraordinary one on account of the advantages it obtained. The line was only twelve miles long; it was to cost £130,000; and there were borrowing powers for £40,000. The Bill was passed four years ago; the line was not yet completed. In 1865 the company came to Parliament for power to raise £50,000 additional capital; and he believed the line was to be opened in the course of the present summer. At a meeting of the company held on the 12th of March last it was reported that the completion of the line had been delayed by circumstances over which the directors had no control. The sudden death of the partner of Mr. Field, the contractor, and the necessity of making fresh arrangements with his representatives, had seriously retarded the progress of the works which were then being pushed forward with the utmost energy. At this meeting the directors were empowered to vest in Mr. Field the additional share and debenture capital authorized to be raised in consideration of his undertaking to complete the line, erect permanent instead of temporary stations, and discharge all the liabilities of the company. But what was the state of the company from the beginning? In reality it began with no company at all; and it was not until the Bill had passed and the line was started that steps were taken to find subscribers. The Directors circulated an advertisement, in which they stated the enormous advantages they had got under their Act, and that they had got a contractor to complete the line in eighteen months. Those statements, of course, made a great difference in regard to the receipts, and in this way they sought to obtain the subscribers of the capital. Now, he thought it was clear that none of the original subscribers were ready to take the additional capital, when it is announced that the whole of that capital was transferred to the contractor in order to enable him to complete the line and relieve the company from all engagements. He could not say whether the capital would cover all the expenses, but he inclined to think that it would. Now this was, in its way, a respectable company. The contractor was a man of great respectability, and he was of opinion that this was by no means a bad case. It showed, therefore, what the best cases were. But all their Lordships who had had any experience of railway concerns were aware of the extent to which many companies carried proceedings of an objectionable kind. Some schemes which had been brought before their Lordships' House had shown transactions of a character which certainly did not reflect much credit upon the persons who had the management of those concerns. Last year occurred the Hartlepool case, in which the borrowing powers were carried to an extent that excited a great deal of astonishment, and was much condemned. But he wished to direct their Lordships' attention to the last case which had occurred. The facts were embodied in a Report which had been laid upon the table a short time ago, and afforded a good illustration of the manner in which the affairs of some railways were conducted. He was alluding to the case of the Cork and Youghal Company, which was established a long time ago, and ought to have ceased to exist long ago, but, in consequence of a practice which had become a great deal too easy, it continued to carry on its operations by repeatedly obtaining from Parliament an extension of time. At last it fell almost into a bankrupt state; but, in spite of this, it was taken up by some speculators and was started with an authorized capital of £500,000. The company was now in fact bankrupt, and then the Bill now before their Lordships was introduced for winding up the concern and selling it to the Great Southern and Western Company of Ireland for £315,000, which appeared to be an ample price for it. The Report stated that in addition to the capital of £500,000 the directors had raised, by means of Lloyd's bonds, the sum of £206,000, and that they had allowed to be put into circulation by Mr. Lewis, the financier of the directors, the sum of £165,000 in the shape of Lloyd's bonds, which were to be given in exchange for old Lloyd's bonds, but which old bonds were never returned to the directors, and also the sum of £30,000 of mortgage debentures, under similar circumstances; making in the whole a total of £926,000 as a claim against the company. The directors now repudiate the bonds given to Mr. Lewis which were to be given in return for the old bonds; but it was owing to their culpable neglect that these new bonds were placed in circulation, and with the knowledge of Mr. Lewis' improper conduct they continued him as a director and in their confidence. Mr. Lewis became bankrupt in 1865, and then ceased to be a director. The Committee remarked that these Lloyd's Bonds did not appear to have been given, with one trifling exception, directly to contractors and others in payment for work done, but to Mr. Lewis to raise money upon as he best could for the purpose of the directors. None of the directors, of whom Sir Cusack Roney was chairman, had appeared before the Committee to explain these matters, and the Committee had been unable to ascertain how much money had been received by the company from the putting in circulation the Lloyd's Bonds which were negotiated by Mr. Lewis with various finance companies. Now, it might be supposed that such proceedings as these were of rare occurrence. Still, it was a necessary consequence of there being practically no company at all and the directors being merely the nominees of those who were raising the money for the purpose of constructing the line. In many companies, indeed, there was no real direction at all. The contractor was obliged to have a company and directors to enable him to raise the money; but in many cases persons were qualified as directors by shares given to them by the contractor himself for that purpose, and of course did whatever he bade them. The nature of Lloyd's Bonds was, no doubt, by this time pretty clearly understood by their Lordships. They were a species of security invented by a very ingenious gentleman, who discovered a method of evading a special Act of Parliament which had been passed for the purpose of preventing railway companies from issuing any securities except those which they were authorized by Parliament to issue. These bonds enabled companies to raise almost any amount of money; and the result of course was very great embarrassment, while, unfortunately, it was very questionable whether the holders of them would not be placed on an equality with, even if they did not take precedence of, mortgagees of the company who held their security under the Parliamentary authority. Now, this was a very great evil, both in itself and because nothing was more important than that the security of railway mortgages and debentures should be put on a secure foundation. As long as these practices were allowed it was obvious that such investments could not be so perfectly secure as it was desirable that they should be. One of the largest companies now in existence had applied to him yesterday to sanction the payment of dividends out of capital in order to enable them to raise capital to complete certain works which they had on hand. There was then considerable danger with regard to the general security of railway property, and it was important that it should be placed on a sound foundation. All sorts of little tricks were now going on. There was the case of a contractor's line

—a branch line with a capital of £100,000, but which the line it proposed to join was not disposed to take charge of. The contractor accordingly made a certain number of the persons in his employ shareholders, and called a meeting, at which he announced that the line was completed, that it would no doubt be a profitable scheme, and he engaged to work the line for five years, and guarantee the shareholders 5 per cent for their money. All this was proclaimed in the country and London newspapers, and the effect was that it raised the value of the shares, and an extension line was announced, the cost of which—another £100,000—was to be raised by preference shares; the consequence was that the preference shares were all taken up; the contractor obtained what he wanted—credit for his capital—which enabled him to obtain money on very fair terms; and whether or not that line paid 5 per cent after the time to which his guarantee extended was no concern of his. He believed, however, that the system was coming pretty nearly to a break-down. Their Lordships had, no doubt, seen the announcement of the failure of a very large contractor who owned a great number of the Welsh lines, and he believed one of the most respectable of his class; and they had also read of the failure of one of those finance companies, the transactions of which ought to teach the public a lesson as to the way in which money was advanced. He believed it would be found that other finance companies, established for the purpose of bolstering up this system, would find themselves in a very doubtful position. One evil of the system was increased cost of construction. In a case which had come under his notice a railway company had been obliged to give between £60,000 and £70,000 more for a line than the sum for which it could have been constructed if they had provided that railway accommodation themselves. It might be said that if the system which he was condemning were stopped, no more railways would be made. He believed the effect of stopping it would be to give a check to the construction of railways for a year or so until a sounder system was introduced; but he also believed that it would lead to the schemes propounded being more carefully prepared in order to secure public support. At all events, the present system was injurious to railway companies, to shareholders, and to landed proprietors. The owners of land were kept in great uncertainty as to the manner in which they were to be treated. It had been proved in evidence that some parties had been kept waiting for three years without receiving any certain information as to whether their land was to be taken. This sort of thing prevailed all over the country. Complaints had reached him on the subject from private individuals, whose representations were entitled to every attention. With a better system, if the scheme was a good one, the money would be easily found, and directly the Bill passed arrangements made for taking the necessary land. There was another point to which he wished to advert. It would be very desirable that shareholders should pay a little more attention to the way in which their affairs were managed. This year the Caledonian, the North-Western, and the Glasgow and South-Western Companies promoted schemes the share capital of which amounted to £11,000,000. This staggered persons somewhat; and a meeting of the shareholders of all three companies was held to consider the matter. A representation was made to the companies, which led to the abandonment of some of them to the amount of several millions sterling. Power was given to railway companies to amalgamate without Parliament knowing the terms on which the amalgamation was to be carried out. If the directors were obliged to submit the terms of the amalgamation to Parliament, it would be open to any shareholder to object and appear before Parliament. This would lead to greater caution in respect of amalgamations. If he could advise shareholders, he would say, "On no account, if you can avoid it, allow a contractor to have the slightest influence in the direction." At present, in too many instances, contractors exercised an enormous influence on railway Boards. Another advice he would give them was to reduce the number of directors. If there were too many men on a Board, the business of a company would not be attended to with the closeness which characterized the proceedings of a small and efficient Board. Directors were paid something small for their attendance, and enjoyed some privileges as regarded travelling on the line. That was all they got in the way of remuneration. Now, nothing was more expensive than amateur management. If he could make his voice heard by railway companies, he would advise them to have the direction reduced in number, and to pay the directors well. If they did that, they would secure men who would give their whole time to the interests of the company, and the company's affairs would be managed in a satisfactory manner. One great disadvantage arising from having a large body of directors was that it lessened responsibility. If the number was small, any particular connection or influence prejudicial to the interests of the company would be soon discovered if it operated in the board room. It was obvious that a small line worked by one of the great companies and with its shares at a very low ebb might sell itself to great advantage to the large companies. One never knew how far speculation might go; but it was quite conceivable that a contractor holding a very large amount of shares, possibly having the whole of those of the smaller line in his hands, might find means to influence several of the directors in the larger concern parting with some of his shares to them and making a handsome profit himself out of the remainder. With such large bodies of directors it was impossible for shareholders to exercise adequate supervision over their actions ; and anybody who knew how railway business was conducted, how much was done by the secretary and traffic manager, must feel persuaded that large bonds were unnecessary. The largest company, he felt convinced, might be efficiently directed by six or eight men. With that number of directors, all well paid, and devoting their whole time to the management of the affairs of the concern intrusted to them, improvements would be made that would change the whole system of the railway world. That was his private opinion, formed as the result of much experience ; and the shareholders of the various companies could act upon it or not, as they might think expedient. With regard to what Parliament had in its power to do to improve the existing state of things, he believed that something might be done towards making deposits really available for the construction of the line. The Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the subject recommended the adoption of measures with that end in view ; but their Report came at the end of the Session, and when the proposal was made the various interests affected found means very easily to put it aside ; with what success the proposal might be renewed he was, of course, unable to say, but in such a matter he held that their Lordships, equally with the other House of Parliament, had a responsibility from which they could not escape. And although he was desirous on all occasions to act as much as possible in concert with the other House of Parliament, and although the Standing Orders of both Houses had been brought practically into uniformity, he did not see why upon some occasions they should be afraid to take the lead in suggesting improvements. After Easter, therefore, he should certainly propose certain Standing Orders with regard to deposits, allowing ample time for their Lordships, for the other House of Parliament, and for the public to consider the effect of those Standing Orders before seeking to have them adopted. Once they were adopted, they would become binding on suitors before Parliament whether the other House adopted them or not. At the same time, any example set by one House which might prove advantageous for the public interest would very soon, no doubt, be followed by the other—so that practically they would be acting in concert. He regretted that the subject had not been in abler hands to place before their Lordships ; but, having greater facilities for obtaining knowledge upon questions connected with Private Bill legislation than many of their Lordships, he had felt it his duty to bring this matter under their attention. In the discharge of the duties of his office unopposed Bills to a very large number were left in his hands, practically, to be dealt with as he felt to be right ; and naturally any suggestions or counsel from their Lordships would be invaluable to him in the discharge of such responsible duties. Their Lordships, unless informed of the exact state of the case, would naturally feel great hesitation in adopting any new regulations such as the circumstances when explained seemed to render advisable. He trusted he had said enough to put their Lordships in possession of the facts, and to convince them that he had not needlessly intruded upon their time.

Moved, "That the Report from the Select Committee to whom the Cork and Youghal Railway Bill was referred, be *printed.*"—(*The Lord Redesdale.*)

Earl RUSSELL said, their Lordships, he had no doubt, would be of opinion that the noble Lord the Chairman of Committees had rendered great service to the House by placing before it in so clear and intelligent a manner questions growing out of the subject with which he possessed a more minute and accurate knowledge than any other of their Lordships. The statement made by the noble Lord was one that required the most serious consideration at their Lordships' hands. Possibly the principles which the noble Lord had laid down might, on examination, prove most suited to attain the end in view; but he apprehended that the more convenient course would be, as the noble Lord had suggested, to place upon the table as soon as possible any Resolutions which their Lordships hereafter were to be invited to sanction.

THE DUKE OF CLEVELAND desired to convey his thanks also to the noble Lord the Chairman of Committees, whose great experience and official knowledge had enabled him to place before their Lordships so clear and able a statement. He was enabled entirely to confirm what had been said by the noble Lord with regard to fictitious deposits, and believed that the time would come when something must be done if they wished to stop the evils which had already arisen and must continue to arise under the present system. A great mistake had been made in abandoning altogether the subscription contracts. These were given up under the impression that they had become altogether fictitious; but under proper restrictions it would have been possible to render them at once more stringent and more beneficial. What was needed was the appointment of some public officer charged specially with the supervision of these matters, whose duty it would be to see that the requirements in each case were not evaded. He felt convinced, with his noble Friend, that the time had arrived when Parliament should really take this subject into consideration, and devise some more effectual means of preventing the system of levying black mail upon old established companies by the formation of new lines got up by contractors. The interest of these contractors lay not in the quality of the work, but in the work itself. With the assistance of experienced actuaries they ascertained what amount of stock could be floated in London, and of this they acquired a sufficient quantity to pay themselves remuneratively for the outlay—of course, at the ultimate expense of the line which was unfortunate enough to be called into existence under these circumstances. The result was that lines were projected and made which were not in themselves of a remunerative character, but which proved an obstruction to the making of other lines more beneficial to the shareholders and the public.

LORD EBURY said, he was enabled to corroborate much of what had been stated by the noble Lord the Chairman of Committees, having had painful experience in his own person of some of the evils which had been described. One of the greatest evils tending to decrease the profits of railway companies was the persistency with which the directors opposed schemes projected in opposition to their own. If the money spent in litigation between railway companies were expended in making new lines, the result would be attended with increased convenience to the public and profit to the shareholders of both undertakings. The London and Brighton Company, in which he was a shareholder, was threatened with much opposition from the London, Chatham, and Dover Company; he, therefore, wrote to the Chairman of the Brighton company asking him not to spend his money in litigation on that account, because he believed the Brighton company could not now carry its very large traffic, and it was to the advantage of the public and the profit of the shareholders that a new line to Brighton should be made by some one. With respect to the Boards of Directors, he regretted that it had become too much a habit of late to seek for titled persons to conduct railway companies—and, what was worse for Members of the House of Commons—with the hope that their influence in the Legislature might be used in behalf of the company with which they were connected. He trusted the noble Lord who had introduced the subject to their Lordships would pursue it further, and that his action would lead to a satisfactory result.

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE rose to endorse the views of the noble Lord the Chairman of Committees; and remarked that it was evidently to the interest of agents, contractors, and others interested in the proceedings before Parliament to invent as many new schemes as possible. It was quite time, in his opinion, that these men were kept within bounds.

THE EARL OF WINCHILSEA said, he was of opinion that legislation was more called for upon this subject than upon many questions which were now demanding the attention of the Government. He trusted that Her Majesty's Government would give consideration to the subject, and would bring forward a well-adjusted scheme, such a one as would tend to the national advantage.

Motion *agreed to.* (*Parl. Paper*, No. 63.)

LAND TENURE AND IMPROVEMENT (IRELAND), 1866, BILL [H.L.]

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

THE MARQUESS OF CLANRICARDE, in calling the attention of the House to the Law relating to the Tenure and Improvement of land in Ireland, said, that although he did not think that any material alteration of the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland was necessary, still he thought it possible to effect some improvement, and with that view he had prepared a Bill upon the subject which he hoped would meet with their Lordships' approval. If the time had arrived for legislating upon the subject, he thought that that legislation ought to be made upon the principle that the law of real property in Ireland should be assimilated to the law which affected real property in England. There had been a great deal of clamour on this subject. That most villainous and insane conspiracy of the Fenians, although utterly contemptible as affecting the United Kingdom, had, undoubtedly, done a great deal of harm—he hoped not of a permanent character—and the persons who had organized the conspiracy had the satisfaction of knowing that they had greatly injured the prospects and the welfare of their country. The public credit had, to a certain extent, suffered injury, and the course of improvement had been arrested. If the present agitation as to land went on, and if real property in Ireland were not to be protected by the same laws as of those of England, credit would be endangered, and capital would be prevented from flowing into that country. Their Lordships knew that numerous Bills had been prepared upon this subject, and that it had been discussed by a sort of Parliament in Dublin, in which they talked as coolly of taking away the property of the owners of land in Ireland as they would of any other speculation. A noble Friend of his (Lord Houghton) had also coolly suggested the other night that Irish landlords should surrender some of their rights, though it was hard to know why; and in this state of things he believed that the time was come when Parliament should lay down the principles upon which the law should be improved whilst adhering to the sound principles of the law of real property in England. There was a good deal of difficulty besetting this question, arising not so much from defective legislation as from the habits of the people, which led to a loose mode of dealing between the landlord and tenant, and gave rise to occasional injustice suffered on either side. It was true that there were rumours that the Government were about to take up this question; but as they had not said that they would do so until after he had given his notice he had prepared the Bill he held in his hand. He was sorry to hear the rumours abroad as to the nature of the Government Bill, and therefore he thought it desirable to return to the principles embodied in Acts, accepted by that House some years ago. The subject was discussed in 1853, and the Bill which he had now prepared was founded to a great extent upon the same principle as those upon which a Bill which he had the honour of introducing to their Lordships' notice in that year was founded. A good deal of the Bill of 1853 had been embodied in an Act subsequently introduced by Mr. Cardwell and the Irish Attorney General Mr. Deasy, in 1860, which had passed into law; but the working of that Act had not been found satisfactory. He had, indeed, been informed that there were only three instances in which the machinery of that Act had been availed of, and although he could not say whether that number was correct, it was undoubtedly the fact that the Act had not answered its purpose. The object of the Bill which he had now the honour of bringing forward was to hold out the greatest possible inducement, and to make as compulsory as possible the employment of written agreements between landlords and tenants. The rights of both parties were clearly defined, and a simple remedy was afforded in the case of any wrong being attempted or suffered by either. The tenant would be secured from loss in the case of his effecting improvements upon the property which he occupied if those improvements had been sanctioned by the landlord. It was generally held that a tenant who improved the property in his occupation ought, if turned out, to receive compensation or was entitled to the enjoyment for a reasonable period of the property which he had so improved, and that was, undoubtedly, simple justice. But, in reality, many of the so-called improvements were no improvements at all, and were effected not only without the consent of, but in the very teeth of the landlord. It was absurd, in such cases, for a tenant to maintain that he was entitled to compensation on leaving. The tenant might set up close to the residence of the landlord and under his very eye a positive nuisance which might be the destruction of the rest of the property, and he might then turn round and say that he valued the works at so much, and that he must be paid the full value before he was turned out. That was certainly an extreme case, and one not likely often to occur; but any man of experience must know how many things might be done under the name of improvement—in drainage, for instance—which might be a considerable injury to the property of the landlord and to the neighbourhood in general. Persons in speaking on this subject always talked of the small farmers, who undoubtedly had at times been very harshly treated—just as the landlords had been sometimes unjustly dealt with by the tenants. But he always missed, when he read an account of meetings on this subject, the names of men who were large tenant-farmers in Ireland. He knew many of these, both in the east and in the west, and he never saw any of them coming forward with complaints. And who were the men who were examined before the Committee of the other House last year? Why, men who did not possess a foot of land, and would not know how to manage a farm if they had one. These were the men who presented themselves as the best judges of what was to be done with the land in Ireland. Now, in his opinion, Parliament should lose no time in taking up this subject, and deciding on what principles they would proceed to legislate. The questions of tenure and improvement were both comprised in the Bill which he was about to submit to their Lordships. In 1860 Mr. Cardwell and the Attorney General for Ireland of the day treated these questions in separate Bills; but he thought both might now be embodied in one measure. What he would recommend to their Lordships was to take a view of the whole question, so as to be able fully to consider it in all its bearings. It was impossible for the law to make good landlords or good tenants. All that could be done by legislation was to facilitate just dealings as much as possible, and to render it advantageous for both parties to act in a fair spirit. When the Bill was printed it would be circulated among their Lordships. They would also soon have the Government measures which they had seen sketched in the newspapers, and he hoped that an early opportunity would be afforded Her Majesty's Government of declaring fully and explicitly that they were as determined to uphold the rights of property in Ireland as they were the rights of property in England, and thus give encouragement to persons to invest their money in Ireland. That was what was really wanted. He had heard people say, "How are we to know how to deal with our property when there is an uncertainty as to the kind of legislation we may have next year?" In conclusion, he begged to lay the Bill upon the table.

Bill to consolidate and amend the Law of Land Tenure and Improvement in Ireland *presented* (*The Marquess of Clanricarde.*)

Lord DUNSANY said, he was quite satisfied that the noble Marquess had no sinister or political motive in bringing this subject forward; but, at the same time, he might express his opinion, that raising discussions on such a question was attended with danger; and the mooting of the subject at the present time had given rise to hopes which had better not be gratified, and had enabled the revolutionary parties who were now agitating Ireland to use it for their own designs. It was no recommendation to these designs to see that they were approved by a distinguished Member of the other branch of the Legislature, Mr. Bright, who, he presumed, held the same principles to be applicable to England. The party which were now agitating the question of land tenure in Ireland were not desirous of compensation for improvements. What they desired was fixity of tenure, or, in other words, to transfer from the landlord to the tenants certain rights now belonging to the landlord. He could satisfy their Lordships from the recognized organs of the party that they rejected and repudiated the idea of compensation. He could quote from *The Freeman's Journal*, which was well known to represent the tenant-right party, which was made up mostly of priests, who told landlords their duties and tenants their rights, to prove that such was the fact. The paper to which he referred had said—

> "We believe he considers he has a sort of claim to the land, from which to oust him would be a moral wrong. We believe no mere scheme of compensation for improvements with or without notice to the landlord will induce the tenant to spend money. He is utterly indifferent to compensation."

That was perfectly intelligible. The cry of tenant-right was perfectly intelligible, because it meant the permanent occupation of the land by the present tenants, the landlords being like pensioners, like dowagers, or other incumbrancers upon it. Such views would never have met with any favour were it not that a considerable misconception prevailed with regard to the land question in Ireland. Even in that House their Lordships had heard it broadly asserted that in Ireland the tenants make the improvements. That assertion was made the other night by the noble Lord opposite (Lord Dufferin), whose sketch of Irish affairs entitled him to the gratitude of every Irishman, and from whose statement he did not wish to dissent in any way except with regard to that particular point. No doubt, the noble Lord was quite correct with respect to the province of Ulster; but with regard to the other three Provinces it was correct only in a limited sense that the tenant made the improvements, and for this reason, because unfortunately no improvements were made there at all. It would be better if the tenants in Ireland, instead of looking to the Legislature to remedy what they complained of, would go to their landlords and arrange the terms upon which improvements might be made.

LORD DUFFERIN said, that having already had occasion recently to trouble their Lordships at considerable length upon this subject, he would refrain from doing so now. It was the less necessary he should do so, because it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce into the other House a Bill upon the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland. On a previous occasion what he said was that, as a general rule, buildings in various parts of Ireland were erected by the tenants; but he took occasion especially to mention that within the last five years no less a sum than £75,370 had been spent by the landlords alone, under the Land Improvement Act, in the erection of farm buildings, and that this expenditure must be a small proportion of the expenditure incurred out of the ordinary revenues of the Irish landlords. It may be considered a general rule that in Ulster the tenants erect the farm buildings; but there were many exceptions; there was a case in his own neighbourhood in which a landlord had expended £15,000 in fifteen years on various improvements of that description. He was also glad to have this opportunity of correcting a statement he made the other evening when he was referring to the material progress of Ireland during the last twenty-five years. Speaking from memory he gave £40,000,000 as the increase in wealth, whereas he found the increase exceeded £50,000,000. He did not include railways as an element in his calculations, because the unsatisfactory condition of the affairs of railway companies might result, as much from bad management as from any want of prosperity in the country. It so happened, however, that a reference to the railways told the same tale of prosperity. The returns of the six principal railway companies showed an increased dividend of a half per cent this year. The Great Southern and Western for the last five years had been paying only 4½ per cent; last year it paid 5. The Dublin and Drogheda Railway during four years paid 4 per cent; last year but one it paid 4½, and last year 5. The Ulster Company the year before last paid 4 per cent, and last year 4½. The Dublin and Belfast Junction Company paid 3½ per cent the year before last, and last year 4½. The Belfast and Northern Counties paid 3½ per cent the year before last, and last year 5. On reference to the reports made by the directors to their several companies, he found that nearly all congratulated the shareholders upon the improvement exhibited by their respective undertakings.

THE EARL OF BELMORE desired to remind their Lordships that the law of distress was falling into disuse; for himself, he could say that during the ten years he had the management of his property he had never had recourse to it. Ejectments were also less usual; and with a view of throwing some light on the subject, he begged to give notice that after the Easter recess he would move for a Return of the number of ejectments, as also of the replevins granted in the courts in Ireland in the last six years.

EARL RUSSELL: I quite agree with the noble Marquess in thinking that both landlords and tenants in Ireland are entitled to know under what law they are to live. Therefore, I think it is desirable Parliament should settle what that law is to be. I do not quite concur in the suggestion to assimilate the laws of England and Ireland. There are abuses in Ireland which have not existed in England, and it would be quite right to apply remedies in Ireland although they may not be necessary in England. A case must be made out, and the remedy must be shown to be appropriate to the disease. I shall be glad to promote any measure by which I believe the question can be settled on terms acceptable to both parties.

The Earl of PORTARLINGTON believed that difficulties seldom arose on well-managed estates, and that they were chiefly occasioned by properties passing into the hands of land jobbers who turned out tenants to get higher rents.

After a few words from The Marquess of Clanricarde,

Bill read 1^a; and to be *printed* (No. 64.)

LAW OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for amending the Law relating to Murder, and for giving further Protection to new-born Children, and for altering the Manner in which Capital Sentences are carried into execution in England and Ireland—Was *presented* by The Lord Chancellor; read 1^a. (No. 61.)

Then, on the Motion of Earl Russell,

House adjourned at a quarter past Seven o'clock, to Thursday the 12th of April next, a quarter before Five o'clock.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, March 23, 1866.

MINUTES.]—New Writs Issued—*For* Ripon, *v.* Lord John Hay, Commissioner of the Admiralty; *for* Honiton, *v.* Frederic David Goldsmid, esquire, deceased.

New Member Sworn—Sir Edmund Anthony Harley Lechmere, baronet, *for* Tewkesbury.

Public Bill—*First Reading*—Customs Duties (Isle of Man) * [91].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued illness and unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, and read the following Letter, which he had this day received:—

Speaker's House, March 23, 1866.

Sir,—I beg you will express to the House my thanks for the indulgence that has been shown me. It has been a great vexation and annoyance to me, to have been kept so long, by an unfortunate accident, from the service of the House.

I have benefitted very much by the complete rest, and I trust that at the end of the Recess I shall be able at once to resume my duties.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient Servant,

J. Evelyn Denison.

To Sir Denis Le Marchant, Bt.

Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—WHITWORTH GUNS.—QUESTION.

Mr. WHITE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, If it be true that the War Office has contracted with the Manchester Ordnance Company for two 15-ton 9-inch Whitworth guns, at the rate of £3,000 per gun; and, if so, whether those guns are intended to be used in the armament of the *Royal Sovereign* and *Prince Albert* turret-ships, and whether a proper course of experiments or trials have been made prior to such order being given, and why the War Office does not avail itself of the experiments made with the 7-inch 150 cwt. competitive rifle guns during the last two years, as grounds of comparison with the hexagonal bore, and direct that a heavy Whitworth gun, of like dimensions, should be subjected to a similar trial before adopting a system as yet insufficiently tested; and whether the War Office would have any objection to furnish a Return of all the Whitworth guns, brass, iron, or steel, or any combination of those metals, which, up to the present date, have been tried, with particulars of their weight and dimensions; number of rounds fired from each gun respectively; also under what conditions those rounds have been fired; the nature and composition of the ammunition employed; the whole summarized in a tabular statement with such other information as may be requisite to form a correct judgment of the resisting qualities of the Whitworth system of constructing, rifling, and venting heavy guns?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, that the two 15-ton guns had been ordered at the request of the Admiralty. The Secretary of the Admiralty would be able to state in what ships they were intended to be used. Lord De Grey and the Duke of Somerset considered that the merits of the Whitworth system of construction and rifling had been sufficiently tested and established in the trials which were made by the Armstrong and Whitworth Committee to justify them in ordering a further practical trial on board Her Majesty's ships. In the present stage of the question further competitive trials were not in their opinion necessary. There would be no objection to giving the Return asked for by the hon. Gentleman of the guns tried by the War Department, down to the word "fired." The remainder of his Motion was too vague to be complied with.

NAVY—IRON CLAD SHIPS.—QUESTION.

Mr. GRAVES said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, The names of all the Iron-clad Ships which have had their funnels temporarily lengthened previous to trial, the length so added, and how soon removed after trial; and whether it is intended to try the *Bellerophon* at the measured mile with funnels reduced to ordinary sea service height, and when such trial may be expected to take place?

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, in reply, that there were three vessels which had had their funnels so lengthened—the *Royal Oak*, the *Warrior*, and the *Black Prince*, the trials being made in order to ascertain whether the funnels would prove satisfactory. He could not say exactly how much they were lengthened. With regard to the *Bellerophon*, if the funnel used at the trial succeeded it would not be taken away.

NAVY—WHITWORTH GUNS.—QUESTION.

Mr. WHITE said, he would beg to ask the noble Lord, to give him a reply to that part of his Question which his Colleague, the noble Marquess at the head of the War Department, was unable to answer?

Lord CLARENCE PAGET replied that he could not state the ships on board which it was intended to use the 15-ton 9-inch Whitworth guns.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.—QUESTION.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, he would beg to put a Question to Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, with respect to the order of business before the House after Easter?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, the intention of the Government is to proceed on the 9th of April with the Civil Service Estimates, as is the usual practice on the first day after the Easter recess. On the 12th, as I have already announced, we are to proceed with the second reading of the Franchise Bill; and after the second reading of that Bill we propose to take the Budget. Probably that will be thought a sufficient bill of fare to satisfy the House.

DRIVERS OF HACKNEY CARRIAGES.
QUESTION.

Mr. CRAWFORD said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether any, and if so what, steps are taken to insure the fitness and competency of persons applying for licences as drivers of hackney carriages?

Mr. BARING, in reply, said, the measures taken by the Commissioners of Police to inquire into the character and qualifications of persons making application for the licences of drivers of hackney carriages were very strict. The candidate first had to send in an application stating several points respecting his character and qualifications. He had to produce a certificate signed by two ratepayers who had personally known him for three years, stating their opinion of his character and his fitness for such employment. He had also to present a certificate from his last employer, vouching that he was competent to act as the driver of a hackney carriage, and that he knew the town well. All these papers were referred to a sergeant of police, who then made inquiry into the character and qualifications of the applicant; and not until all these inquiries had taken place was the licence given by the Commissioners of Police. Of course, with the enormous number of licences of that description which had to be given from time to time there might be individual cases in which the person appointed might not be completely qualified.

INTERNATIONAL COINAGE.—QUESTION.

Mr. WATKIN said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chanceller of the Exchequer, If any discussions have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States in reference to the proposal of Mr. Chase to establish an International Coinage between England, France, and the United States of America?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, I have caused inquiry to be made at the Foreign Office with reference to the subject of the hon. Gentleman's Question, and the answer made to me is that on a careful search of the papers in that Office, no trace can be found of any discussions having been raised on this matter during the time that Mr. Chase was in office, as between the two Governments of England and the United States. Speaking from memory, I certainly recollect on one or two occasions to have seen some gentlemen who were in this country, and who, as I understood, were here to ascertain what was the general state of sentiment and opinion on this subject. I cannot speak positively, but certainly I am not aware that at any period the matter had advanced so far as to be the subject of any official correspondence beween the two Governments. As regards the period of Mr. Chase' tenure of office, I am informed that there is absolutely no trace whatever of such a correspondence.

BRIGANDAGE IN THE PAPAL STATES. QUESTION.

MR. O'REILLY said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, By whose authority the following statement was inserted in the public papers of the 26th December, 1865:—

> "The Earl of Clarendon makes public the following information, which he has received from Her Majesty's Consul at Rome, dated November 28th: 'Various bands of brigands have now descended from the Neapolitan territory into the Papal States in such numbers, that the small amount of Papal troops (in the absence of the French) is evidently unable to contend successfully with them;'"

whether he is aware that the statement, telegraphed from Paris on the 4th January,

> "It is officially announced that nearly all the brigands on the Roman territories have surrendered to the Papal authorities"

is correct; and whether he will have any objection to lay upon the table of the House a Copy of all Correspondence during the year 1865, from Her Majesty's Diplomatic or Consular Agents, relative to brigandage in all parts of Italy?

MR. LAYARD said, in reply, that the notice to which the hon. Member referred had been inserted in the newspapers on the authority of Lord Clarendon. It was an extract from a despatch received from Her Majesty's Consul at Rome. The hon. Member was doubtless aware that more than one British subject had fallen into the hands of brigands, and Lord Clarendon thought it desirable on receiving that official communication to make it public, as a warning to those British subjects who might be going abroad. If Lord Clarendon had not done so, he would have been open to just reproach. He was not aware that the telegram to which his hon. Friend had referred was correct. On the contrary, he believed that more than one British subject had been despoiled by brigands on Roman territory. In reply to the last Question of his hon. Friend, he thought there would be an objection to publishing the correspondence.

ARMY — ROYAL ENGINEER DEPARTMENT.—QUESTION.

MR. SCOURFIELD said, in the absence of his hon. Friend (Sir Hugh Owen), he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, When it is likely the re-organization of the Royal Engineer Department, referred to in the foot note on page 158, of the Army Estimates for 1866-7, will take place?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, in reply, that he was not able to state exactly at what period the re-organization of the Royal Engineer Department would take place. The matter involved two separate questions of great importance—namely, the pay of the Engineer officers and the pay of the officers of the Department of Works. The financial portion of the Question were now under consideration, and he hoped it would be settled before the next year.

NAVY—THE "LORD WARDEN." QUESTION.

MR. LAIRD said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether it is intended to lengthen or alter the bow of Her Majesty's iron-cased frigate the *Lord Warden*; and, if so, whether, looking to the importance of testing the new description of engines in that vessel, the trials at the measured mile will take place before such alterations (if any are proposed) have been commenced; and, in the event of no alteration being contemplated in the hull of the *Lord Warden*, how soon the trials of that ship at the measured mile will take place?

LORD CLARENCE PAGET said, in reply, that the bow of the *Lord Warden* was similar to that of the *Bellerophon*; and that the *Lord Warden*, and the sister ship, the *Lord Clyde*, had been tried at the measured mile.

MERCHANT SERVICE—QUALIFICATIONS OF MASTERS AND MATES. QUESTION.

MR. LAIRD said, he would now beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade with reference to the 132nd section of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, which empowers the Board of Trade to lay down Rules for the qualifications of Masters and Mates for certificates of competency, Whether any alterations have been made in the Examination Papers, since they were first published in 1851 ; and, if so, what is the nature of those alterations ; whether he has any objection to lay upon the table of the House a Copy of the present Examination Papers, showing the alterations made, if any ; and, whether under existing Rules persons can pass, and have passed, for certificates of competency, as Commanders of large full-rigged ships, their former services having only been as seamen on board such full-rigged ships, or as Masters or Mates of fishing smacks and small coasting vessels ?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON : Some alterations, Sir, have been made from time to time in the rules concerning the qualifications of masters and mates. Those alterations have been suggested by experience. The examination papers shall be laid on the table, and in a form which will show the changes and additions that have taken place. In answer to the second Question of the hon. Gentleman as to whether persons having only served in small coasters receive certificates of competency, entitling them to command large full-rigged ships, I have to state that such a practice would be contrary to our rules, and if cases have occurred they have been accidental.

THE FRANCHISE — INCREASE OF ARTIZAN VOTERS.—QUESTION.

Lord ELCHO said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether any investigation has been made as to the rate of increase of the number of artizan £10 voters in Boroughs, relatively to the other Borough voters not of the artizan class, from 1836 to 1846, 1846 to 1856, 1856 to 1866 ; whether an estimate has been made of the probable rate of increase of the number of artizan £10 voters in Boroughs, relatively to the other Borough voters not of the artizan class, under the existing Law from 1866 to 1876, 1876 to 1886, 1886 to 1896 ; whether an estimate has been made of the probable rate of increase of the number of artizan voters in Boroughs relatively to the other Borough voters under the proposed Bill, from 1866 to 1876, 1876 to 1886, 1886 to 1896 ; whether an estimate has been made of the number of artizans in Boroughs that will be enfranchised as lodgers, relatively to the other lodgers not of the artizan class, that will be enfranchised under the proposed Bill ; whether an estimate has been made of the probable rate of increase of lodgers of the artizan class, relatively to other lodgers not of the artizan class, that will be enfranchised under the proposed Bill, from 1866 to 1876, 1876 to 1886, 1886 to 1896 ; and, whether Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the event of such estimates having been made, will lay them before Parliament; and whether, should no such estimates exist, he would cause them to be made ?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER : Sir, there is no information whatsoever at the command of the Government which would enable them to make an estimate on the subject to which my noble Friend refers. I may add that in our opinion we have prosecuted the investigation with respect to the proportion of the working classes on the register quite far enough, and we think it is not desirable to widen the field of that inquiry. The information which we have got we look upon as of great value, and we consider that the continuance of those inquiries would lead to an entirely wrong estimate of the feelings with which we regard the admission of the working classes to the franchise. There is, however, one element of information which does not touch the artizan voters directly, although I cannot say that we are going to lay, with regard to that, any estimate on the table. It is, at the same time, a matter of some interest, and a calculation in connection with it may be made by any hon. Member for himself or by the Government for the use of Members. It is this, that various Returns having been made at different periods showing the number of the respective classes of borough voters, and that, taking the number of £10 voters that existed at the time when each of those Returns was made, a comparison might be instituted between them and the growth of the population. As to the proportion which those £10 artizan voters bear to the population, that is a matter which any hon. Gentleman may estimate for himself on the basis of the recent Returns. I endeavoured as well as I could to estimate the number, but I had not the necessary means for doing so, because no inquiry with reference to the number of artizan voters was made up to that period. I have heard—I must not pretend to give my noble Friend any official information—

from a person who has carefully studied these figures, that which will probably rather surprise the House, that the increase in the list of £10 voters was very much more rapid in the first than during the latter portion of the period which followed the Reform Act. I find that taking the nineteen years from 1832 to 1851 the £10 householders increased at the rate of 90 per cent, while the increase of the population was only at the rate of 43 per cent, so that in those nineteen years the £10 householders increased at a rate more than twice that of the increase of the population. In the next fifteen years, that is to say from 1851 to 1865, the £10 householders have been increasing at the rate of 39 per cent, the population at the rate of 25 per cent, so that as compared with the growth of the population the increase in the number of £10 householders appears to have been very much less during the latter of those two periods. I have now pointed out the very narrow limits within which the inquiry may be made. The Government can easily have the figures looked into, and should they think that any result sufficiently important was arrived at, it shall be laid on the table of the House.

Mr. WALPOLE: Does the answer of the right hon. Gentleman refer to £10 householders generally, embracing those above that amount?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: All £10 householders.

CASE OF EMILY JANE BALLARD.

QUESTION.

Mr. SHERRIFF said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been directed to a statement reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, of Tuesday, the 20th instant, to the effect that Emily Jane Ballard, a child said to be about ten years of age, was—on suspicion of having stolen a penny from another child while attending Divine Service at Inkberrow Church, near Redditch — ordered by the Vicar of the parish, the Rev. G. R. Gray, who is also a magistrate for the county of Worcester, to be confined in the lock-up at Redditch, where she remained till the Friday following; and whether bail was offered for the appearance of the child and refused by Mr. Gray?

Sir GEORGE GREY, in reply, said, he was not aware of the facts of the case; but since the hon. Gentleman had placed his Notice on the Paper he had seen the statement referred to in a newspaper, from which it appeared that the case was adjourned until that very day. If the statement were correct—and whether it was or not he had as yet no means of judging—he considered that some explanation of the circumstances by the magistrate was required. That explanation would be called for, and he should on a future occasion be able to state the result.

CASUAL POOR—CLERKENWELL WORKHOUSE.—QUESTION.

Lord BURGHLEY said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Poor Law Board, Whether his attention has been drawn to a statement in one of the public journals of the 6th of March, containing an account of the horrible state of the sleeping places for the Casual Poor, and also of the cellar for the extra Casuals, in the Clerkenwell Workhouse, in which, besides other horrors too shocking to mention, it is stated that on

> "Sunday evening (March 4th), forty men and women were crammed together into wards with nominal accommodation for thirty, and, having been locked up in the dark, were left to scramble or fight for room, as they thought fit;"

whether it is true that the wards at this Workhouse have never been certified by the Poor Law Board, and that they are inconceivably close, foul, and unwholesome; whether he has seen an article in the same journal, dated the 22nd instant, that the guardians still allow this state of things to go on without attempting to provide a remedy; and whether, if the accounts alluded to are correct, it is his intention to take immediate measures to put a stop to this intolerable evil?

Viscount ENFIELD: Sir, I have to inform the noble Lord that I have seen the statements to which he has adverted. I have to state that the casual wards at the Clerkenwell Workhouse have never been certified by the Poor Law Board, because they are inadequate to meet the provisions of the Houseless Poor Act, both as regards their position, their ventilation, and their insufficiency generally. The guardians of the parish of Clerkenwell have attempted to provide a remedy for this state of things, and were, in fact, a few weeks since negotiating for property in St. John Street Road, Clerkenwell, which they purposed converting into casual wards; but eventually, the owner of the property in question objected to the premises being used for the purposes adverted to. I have, however, to add, that men and women are not "crammed together" in these wards, as there are separate wards for each sex. A letter, however, has been received at the Poor Law Board from that parish, stating that they had in prospect a good freehold property in the neighbourhood of the workhouse, and hope to be able to obtain it and complete a building for the purpose in view. The parish of Clerkenwell is under a local Act, and the guardians are elected for life. When it is asked whether the Poor Law Board intend to take immediate measures to remedy the evil complained of, I must remind my noble Friend that the compulsory powers of the Poor Law Board are not sufficient to effect so complete a change as they desire to see in the existing state of things.

IRELAND—PROBATE COURT DUBLIN.
QUESTION.

MR. SERJEANT ARMSTRONG said, he wished to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether the Irish Government have been made aware of the repeated complaints of the Judge of the Probate Court in Dublin, and the Profession and Jurors attending that Court, as to its insufficiency and unwholesome condition; and, whether the Irish Government have considered their complaints, and have taken or recommended, or intend to take or recommend, any steps to remedy these inconveniences?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) replied that complaints had reached the Irish Government on the subject, and those complaints were, he believed, well founded. He understood that communications had been made to the Commissioners of Public Works on the matter, but beyond that he was not able to give his hon. and learned Friend any definite answer.

IRELAND—ARMAGH ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL.—QUESTION.

THE O'DONOGHUE said, he rose to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, If he was that evening in a position to answer the Question which he (The O'Donoghue) had put to him the day before in reference to a search which was said to have been made for arms in the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Armagh?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. LAWSON) said, he had that very morning received information on the subject from Ireland. The facts of the case were that the police had obtained information that a smith, whose forge was near the Roman Catholic cathedral, was engaged in the manufacture of pikes. From the field at the back of the forge it appeared that there was an underground passage leading into the crypt of the cathedral, and the police searched for arms in that passage as well as on the premises belonging to the smith. He was further informed that one of their number, having asked the steward of the works for permission to do so, entered the crypt for the purpose of getting into the passage at the end farthest from the forge, and made there a search for arms—if, indeed, it could be so called. He might add, that what the police had done they did on their own responsibility, without having received any instructions from the Government, and that the resident magistrate, as soon as he had ascertained what had taken place, waited on the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and explained what had occurred, thinking it likely that the circumstances might be misrepresented. The matter in his opinion, therefore, did not require to be further investigated.

IRELAND—REGISTRY OF DEEDS DUBLIN.—QUESTION.

MR. SERJEANT ARMSTRONG said, he would beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether any decision has been come to on the Memorial of Clerks in the Registry of Deeds Office in Dublin for an increase of their salaries; and, if such salaries are to be increased, from what time such increase is to be computed and paid, and what is to be the future minimum salary of a clerk in that Office?

MR. CHILDERS: Sir, a Commission was appointed by the Treasury to inquire into the establishment and salaries of the Registry of Deeds Office Dublin. This Commission has made a Report, and has recommended a revision of the salaries and a re-classification of the clerks. This Report is under consideration, but the rates of salary to be fixed, and the time at which such salaries are to commence, have not as yet been finally determined.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE.—QUESTION.

MR. GATHORNE HARDY said, he had received the permission of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to put a Question to him with respect to a matter of great interest, especially as the House was that evening about to adjourn for the Easter Recess. The question was, What is the purport of the Orders in Council which are about to be issued on the subject?

SIR GEORGE GREY, in reply, said, the Orders referred to by the hon. and learned Gentleman were very long, and he was, therefore, afraid, as he had only a few minutes before received notice that the Question was about to be put, that he could not give to it so complete an answer as he should desire. He might, however, state that the purport of the new Order was the revocation of all the existing Orders, with the view to the consolidation of the whole of the existing regulations in one document. Many of the conditions contained in the existing Orders would be re-enacted, as for example those having reference to the appointment of inspectors, and to the notice required to be given of the appearance of the disease in any district, and to the disinfection of premises in which diseased cattle had been. It was desirable that a good many regulations of that description now in force should be renewed, and the Order would contain new provisions with regard to the proclamation of infected districts and the prohibition of all markets and fairs, except those held under the licence of the Privy Council. With respect to the removal of cattle, it was intended to extend the provisions of the existing Act until the 16th of April, and after that date to substitute a regulation, authorizing the removal of cattle by railway or by highway under licences, some of which would be left to be framed by the local authorities, and others would be contained in a schedule. There would be other provisions, which he need not now enumerate. It was intended that the greater part of this Order should not come into operation until the 16th of April, but part of it would come into operation immediately in order to enable the requisite arrangements to be made for giving effect to it, and it would be in the possession of the Courts of Quarter Sessions the week after next.

MR. DISRAELI said, he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman, if he has any objection to state to the House whether the Government have received information that the cattle disease had been re-imported from abroad into this country, and, if the statement is authentic, what measures the Government have taken in consequence?

SIR GEORGE GREY said, that the day before yesterday information was received that several milch cows had been recently imported from Holland, and not taken to a market, but removed directly from the place of disembarkation to dairy sheds in London, several of which were found to be affected by the disease. Simultaneously with that information the Government received a despatch from Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague, stating that the disease was prevailing to a great extent in Holland, and that it was believed some animals suspected to be affected with the disease were being sent to this country. An Order in Council would be passed prohibiting, unti the Order should be revoked, the importation into this country of cattle from Holland.

SIR ANDREW AGNEW said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if it were possible to lay the Order of Council upon the table of the House that evening, so that it might be placed in the hands of hon. Members?

SIR GEORGE GREY replied, that it was impossible to place the Orders on the table now, but they would be published in the *Gazette* and sent to the Courts of Quarter Session. The Orders did not apply to Scotland, a separate Order being required for that country.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he wished to ask, whether Her Majesty's Government, in consequence of the re-importation of the cattle plague, has not under consideration the propriety of prohibiting the removal of imported cattle from the place of debarkation?

SIR GEORGE GREY said, that that was prohibited at present. No cattle imported into London could be taken beyond the metropolitan district. That provision would be continued by the Order.

MR. STEPHEN CAVE said, he wished to know, whether the Order applied to sheep as well as to oxen?

SIR GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that it would only under certain circumstances. With respect to markets, the regulations would not apply to sheep, unless the sheep had been brought into the same market with cattle, and then they would be subject to the same restrictions.

MR. LOWE said, he wished to know whether, as cattle had been introduced into this country from Holland, and taken from the place of importation, not to be slaughtered, but to dairies, the Government will take into consideration the propriety of subjecting all store cattle coming from abroad and not intended for immediate slaughter to quarantine?

SIR GEORGE GREY replied, that that question had been referred to by the Committee moved for by his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he rose to ask whether, under the proposed Orders, it would be competent to move cattle from one part of the metropolitan district to another?

SIR GEORGE GREY replied that it would be not competent to move any of them without licence.

MR. CRAWFORD said, he wished to know, whether the right hon. Gentleman can state the particular locality from which the diseased cows came?

SIR GEORGE GREY replied that he could not.

THE EASTER RECESS—ORDER OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, in rising to move that the House at its rising adjourn to Monday, the 9th of April, I think it may be convenient, in reference to the course of business after the Recess, that I should state the view which the Government take of some important notices placed on the paper of the House, and particularly—not for the purpose of argument, but for the purpose of information to the House — particularly with regard to the notice of my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. Kinglake). That notice is in the form of a notice of a Question to be put to me—the hon. Member has given notice of his intention to ask me, "Whether in the course of the Easter recess the Government will take into consideration the expediency of proceeding by Resolutions, towards a settlement of the questions relating to the Representation of the People." In answer to my hon. Friend, I have to say that, the Government having introduced a Bill for the purpose of dealing with the franchise in England and Wales, our intention is to persevere with that Bill, and that we do not intend to proceed by way of Resolution. The next Notice of Motion relates to an Amendment to be proposed on the second reading of the Bill by my noble Friend the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor). With respect to that Motion, I would simply say—speaking of the Mover and the Motion in different senses, for no one who knows my noble Friend can speak of him in other terms than of the highest respect and regard, but Motions and Movers are very different things—with respect to the Motion, I have to state that it is the intention of the Government to resist it. They will resist it upon the ground—first, that it is a Motion which, as far as we can judge, says one thing and means another; and secondly, on the ground that it is, in our judgment, a direct vote of want of confidence in the existing Administration. Then there is another Motion to which the hon. Member for Bridgwater has attached his name. The Motion of my noble Friend the Member for Chester has reference to the second reading, but the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater refers to something to be done in the interval between the second reading and the Committee on the Bill, and presumes the second reading to have received the assent of the House of Commons. The hon. Member proposes to move—

> "That it is not expedient to go into Committee on the said Bill, until this House shall have before it the expected Bill for the re-distribution of seats."

Perhaps I may be permitted to remind the House of what I have already stated, or rather what I have already stated on the authority of the Government, and on their behalf. We consider it part of the obligation we undertook to deal with the question of the re-distribution of seats, and we likewise gave it as our opinion that that question may be properly dealt with by the Parliament which now exists. My hon. Friend, in addition, asks for a specific explanation of our intentions. We are not unwilling to give that explanation. After the second reading and before the Committee we shall be prepared to state distinctly to the House our intentions with respect to the franchise in Scotland and Ireland, and all the questions connected with the re-distribution of seats; and as we wish to convey those intentions in a form most convenient to the House, and to place the House in the fullest manner in possession of them, we shall put them in the form of Bills, and lay those Bills on the table. At the same time, I cannot state too distinctly to the House, as we are desirous, above all things, not to be misunderstood, that our intention in laying the Bills on the table is confined at the present time to the object I have named—that of giving information to the House—and that we propose to proceed with the Bill relating to the franchise in England and Wales in the manner we originally announced, and with that Bill exclusively until its fate is determined. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving, "That this House do at its rising adjourn to Monday, the 9th of April."

EARL GROSVENOR: Sir, I am not in one sense surprised at the announcement made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though I confess I am so in another. I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for the manner in which he has referred to my name in connection with the Motion of which I have given notice; but I have no wish or desire to separate myself in any way from that Resolution. The views of many hon. Members with whom I have the honour to act, as well as my own, on this question, are, that before we legislate on any part of the great Question of Parliamentary Reform it is necessary that we should have before us all the other Bills alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman, and that we should consider the Question as a whole. I wish, therefore, to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether he still intends to proceed with the second reading of the Franchise Bill before the House shall have an opportunity of considering the other Bills which he proposes to lay upon the table? [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Unquestionably.] The principle of a Bill is generally considered to be dealt with on the second reading. I believe that the principle of that Bill and the principle of the other Bills are so intimately connected that I cannot myself see that it would be possible or statesmanlike to take the sense of the House on the second reading of the Franchise Bill before the House shall have had an opportunity of considering all those measures and the whole of the proposals relating to the subject; neither do I think the House will consent to such a course as that proposed by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. KINGLAKE: The noble Lord has just said that the second reading of a Bill is the occasion which Parliament provides for the consideration of its principle. Now, Sir, it is precisely for that reason that I propose the Motion for carrying to a later period of the existence of the Bill the objection to which I refer. The period when you are considering the principle of the Bill is the very last on which you are entitled to approach it by any objection founded on external circumstances. I entertain quite as strongly as the noble Lord entertains an objection to the idea of separating the question of the franchise from that of the re-distribution of seats; but while I have determined that I will give effect to that objection by my vote in this House, I will choose my own time for submitting the Amendment to the House. It seems to me very clear that the period of the second reading is the very last you could choose for objections of that kind. The Motion for leave to bring in the Bill would, I think, have afforded a proper opportunity; but the most appropriate occasion for my Motion is when, after having expressed our opinion on the Bill, we are invited to go into the consideration of its details. I, for one, am in a situation which I believe to be common to many hon. Gentlemen in this House. I am in the situation of having over and over again committed myself to the principle which is to be affirmed in this Bill. Am I to follow the noble Lord so far as to evade the opportunity of declaring my opinion on the principle of the Bill? I have now to say that I have taken this mode of giving effect to the view I entertain, and I prepare for myself an opportunity of asserting the principle on which the noble Lord has founded his objection quite as efficient as his would be; but I make it consistent with the opportunity of voting on the question of the principle of the Bill. I am also not ashamed to say that I am glad to find I can make my view consistent with a vote which is not hostile to the party with which I have the honour to act.

MR. OLIPHANT: After what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I wish to be permitted to say a few words with reference to the Motion which stands in my name for the 10th of April next. That Motion is for the purpose of collecting data and statistics on which we may determine the question whether a re-distribution of seats and a re-arrangement of boundaries are necessary. I gave that notice not from a desire to embarrass Her Majesty's Government, but to draw forth a clear and distinct assurance that a Bill for the re-distribution of seats is regarded by them as an essential part of a scheme of Reform. After what has fallen from my right hon. Friend I am satisfied that want of time, and want of time alone, is the reason why the other Bills could not be brought in at the same time with the Franchise Bill, as stated in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and as I now find that he will, concurrently with the Franchise Bill passing a second reading, lay on the table the data and materials on which the other two Bills are framed, I feel that I am not called on to pursue my Motion further. I now beg to withdraw it, and on the understanding that these further materials are to be collected, and that the other measures are to be proceeded with, I shall give my vote for the second reading of the Franchise Bill.

MR. DISRAELI: Sir, it is proverbial that to change your front in the face of an enemy is always a very perilous operation; and I cannot say that I think the course adopted by the Chancellor of the Echequer to-night is an exception to the rule. So far as I can learn from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, we are much in the same position as we were before—we are called upon to take a leap in the dark. What is objected to in the Amendment of the noble Lord who has recently addressed the House is, I understand, this—that the Government having indulged in very vague and general allusions to a large scheme or schemes of Parliamentary re-construction have favoured us with a definite measure on one portion of it only, and that one which, in the opinion of the noble Lord, and, as I believe, in the opinion of a majority of the House and the country, cannot properly be dealt with unless we had every information as to the other portions of the subject. Well, now, the right hon. Gentleman does not at all pretend that we are to be in any other position than we were when he made his statement. We are to proceed with the Bill respecting the franchise, and we are to be favoured with what he has called the views of the Government on the other questions. True, he says they are to be put in the form of Bills, but they are Bills that are not to be proceeded with. Sir, I think this is trifling with the House. Sir, it is obvious that this great question has been introduced to us by men who have not well considered it; who have changed their opinions constantly during the time it was preparing for the consideration of the House. There is evidence of great inconsistency, of great want of judgment, of great wavering; and, as always happens, timidity and precipitation are nearly allied. The right hon. Gentleman spoke as if he had solved a great difficulty; but the fact is he has not touched it—he has only evaded it—and the House is left in the same nebulous state in regard to the policy of the Government as they were before. What security have we if this Franchise Bill pass that any of the other Bills of the Government will ever be passed either during this or any other Session? The House may be betrayed into the most precipitate decision on points connected with the subject which never can be brought to any happy solution except with reference to other topics which the Government will not now deal with; and the country is left in a state of complete mystification. If I might presume to offer any advice to the Government, which their numerous Cabinet Councils, so hurriedly called, show they are in want of, I would say this—that a Government which has to deal with a great Question in the House of Commons, and wishes to treat it successfully, should, above all things, treat the House of Commons with frankness.

ELECTORAL STATISTICS.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. BANKS STANHOPE, on rising to call attention to the "Electoral Statistics" presented to the House, and particularly to the absence of all information respecting copyholders and leaseholders whose property is situate within the limits of Parliamentary cities and boroughs, and to the defective character of the information respecting occupiers in counties whose "gross estimated rental is under £50," said, he made this Motion in the persuasion that if it was desirable that any measure on Parliamentary Reform the House might be called on to adopt should be founded on full and accurate information, the subject of electoral statistics must be regarded as one of considerable importance. The contents of the volume which has been placed in the hands of Members were divided in a somewhat unequal manner. The volume purported to contain the electoral statistics of the boroughs, and of the counties of England and Wales. It consisted of 298 pages, of which 274 were devoted to boroughs; 10 contained references to previous Returns, and only 13 pages were given to the counties. Now, the disproportion was so manifest, that when he first saw that 274 pages were occupied with the boroughs, he asked if there was not another volume for the counties. He did not think it possible that the Government could wish them to suppose that sufficiently full information could be given about all the counties in

13 pages. But beyond that he found the greatest possible difference in the information respecting boroughs and respecting counties; and though his Motion referred more especially to the deficiency of the information respecting the counties, he hoped the House would forgive him for drawing their attention to the borough statistics, as that was in some degree necessary to show how deficient the information was with respect to the counties. The borough Returns gave the population in 1831 and in 1861, and the number of electors on the Parliamentary register, these being divided into £10 householders and other franchises, and distinguishing the number of working men as £10 householders and other franchises, as also the number of voters at the last general election. The total number of voters on the borough register was 514,026. Of these, 463,548 were householders, 41,641 were freemen, and 8,837 were scot and lot and other voters. Thus freemen scrip, it seemed, was at a discount, and potwallopers formed a very insignificant element. The information under this head was of a very valuable character, and was very nearly complete. Then they had some further Returns, for which he, for one, sincerely thanked the Government—namely, as to the working class proportion of the constituencies. The £10 artizan occupiers, it appeared, numbered 108,298, the freemen 20,018, and other voters 2,348, making a total of 130,664. One point, however, was left obscure, for it was not shown whether the 22,366 freemen and other electors, not being £10 occupiers, lived in £5 or £9 houses. This was the only unknown quantity which prevented their calculating the present state of things with exactness; but with that exception the borough Returns were as clear and precise as a banker's balance sheet, giving, as they did, the total number of voters, the different qualifications, the number who belonged to the working class, and a statement of all male occupiers above £4, these being described on one page according to the gross estimated rental, and on another according to the rateable value. Now, let them turn to the county Returns, which they would naturally have expected to find equally minute and intelligible. Such Returns, to be worth anything, should show the total number of voters, and these should be classified as owners, occupiers, and other franchises, and should also distinguish the urban from the rural element, by giving the number of voters living in boroughs, the number living in large parishes not being boroughs, and the number residing in the rural districts. They ought also to furnish the number of male owners and occupiers above £2, both at a gross estimated rental and at rateable value, and these, for reasons which hon. Gentlemen could easily understand, might advantageously be divided into occupiers under £14, those under £20, those under £50, and those above £50. They should likewise show the number of freeholders, leaseholders, and copyholders, whose qualification, though situate in boroughs, did not give them a vote for such boroughs. County representatives had the same right to expect complete Returns that borough Members had, and had the information respecting counties been worth the paper on which it was printed—which it was not—it would have complied with all the provisions which he had just stated, and would thus have particularized the population in counties, as a preliminary to legislative action respecting them. What, however, was the fact? He found by Return G, page 286, that the total number of voters on the county register was 542,633, and of these 116,860 were specified as occupying tenants above £50. Not a scrap of further information was afforded on this point, so that 425,773 persons out of 542,633 were entirely unaccounted for. A classification of these would have been extremely valuable, for occupiers below £14 might have been taken as cottagers, those below £20 as very small farmers, those below £50 as medium farmers, and those above £50 as large farmers; and a similar distinction might have been made with the resident owners. Another defect was that while there was a Return of male persons assessed on the valuation list as having tenements with or without land between £10 and £50 in value, the Return of those above £50 included occupiers either of land or tenements, so that the two columns could not be properly compared. Moreover, while the occupiers under £50 were taken according to rateable value, those under £50 were taken at gross estimated rental; and how, again, could these be accurately compared? It reminded him of the problem that used to puzzle him as a schoolboy many years ago—namely, that of telling the affinity between a goose and a gooseberry. He could harmonize the two Returns only by mental arithmetic or by the rule of three, for the gross estimated rental of the counties

being £70,000,000, and the rateable value £60,000,000, a £12 rateable value might be taken as equivalent to £14 gross rental. If, however, they wanted to ascertain the number of occupiers at £20 gross rental there was no column of rateable value which would give the information. A £15 rateable value answered to an £18 rental, but in no way was a £20 rental to be arrived at. He also desired information upon another important point—namely, as to the number of owners of land occupying their own land of the value of between £14 and £20, between £20 and £50, and above £50. The information given upon this point was of such a character as to mislead, as the number of owners occupying their own land under £10 value was not stated. He was sure hon. Members representing counties would corroborate his statement, that there were an enormous number of this class in counties. It appeared from the statistics which had been given that the Northern Division of Lincolnshire contained 3,848 owners and occupiers above £10 ; whereas he knew that of the 12,000 voters on the register, 6,000 or 7,000 were owners and occupiers of land. Why should such slender information be supplied as to the counties, and such ample information as to the boroughs ? What would be said by borough Members if they were told to find out the number of people under a £6 estimated rental by the rule of three, and if they were told to look at the estimated rental of £10 to find out how many were rated at £8 ? They would refuse to enter into such a calculation, and he was not prepared to enter into it either. There was another large class as to whom they had received no information whatever—namely, those owners of property in boroughs whose qualification did not entitle them to vote for the borough but gave a vote for the county. Another large class not referred to in any way consisted of the leaseholders and copyholders in boroughs, but whose qualification did not enable them to vote for boroughs, although it might, under certain circumstances, enable them to vote for counties. He should wish the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give him some information upon this point. It would be found upon inquiry that there was a great difference between the tenure of property in towns and that in the rural districts. In the country districts nearly all the property was freehold, but in the large towns it was almost entirely leasehold. For instance, the whole town of Huddersfield was, with the exception of one house, the property of a former Member for the West Riding, who, he regretted, had at present no seat in that House (Sir John Ramsden). Again, in Birmingham there were 3,000 leaseholders ; in that portion of the metropolis where they were then sitting every house was occupied by a leaseholder ; and the same was the case in the large district between Vauxhall and Chelsea, in Tyburnia, in Belgravia, Russell Square and Covent Garden, and in the east of London. The Government had not treated hon. Members and their constituents fairly in depriving them of such an enormous amount of information as he had shown had been withheld. What would be the result if a metropolitan railway company were to come before a Private Bill Committee with statistics of this character—if they were to put down all their receipts in English money and their expenses in foreign money, and were to tell the Committee to calculate the difference by the rule of three ? Would the Bill be passed under such circumstances ? He thought not. Again, if the railway company further informed the Committee that they had bought a lot of freehold houses in the borough, but gave no account of the number of the freeholds or of their value ; or told them that they intended to purchase a lot of leaseholds, but that they could not and would not give any information respecting their number and value—would the chances in favour of the Bill passing be improved ? Were a Bill brought before a Committee of which he was a member with statistics of this kind, he should not be prepared to pass it. He did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer had acted wisely in withholding all information on this point. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* He must acknowledge that there was no danger so great as an unknown one. He would give an illustration of the alarm created by an undefined threat. Fifty or seventy years ago a former Speaker had to deal with a very disturbed House of Commons, and it was with great difficulty he could preserve order ; but at the last moment he always put a stop to the disturbances by saying, "If this disorder continues I shall have to put on my cocked hat." Some few years after, when he became a Peer, he was asked by a noble Lord what he would have done after he had put on his cocked hat, whereupon he replied, "That is exactly what I have always wished to know myself." Still, the undefined threat kept the House in order. Now, the unknown householders were the Chancellor of the Exchequer's "cocked hat." He did not think it wise in the right hon. Gentleman always to threaten the House with his cocked hat. He was aware that a great number of the leaseholders who had property in boroughs would be entitled to vote for boroughs, but there was an enormous number of owners who did not live in their houses. He had no authentic information on this subject, but he was told that in Birmingham alone there were £3,000 leaseholders who would be entitled to vote for Warwickshire. From all the information he could obtain he saw no reason why the number of leaseholders on the county registers should not amount to 100,000. Looking to the importance of the subject, he trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to lay his own estimate on the table, and to tell the House on what basis it was formed. He felt he was speaking the sentiments of the representatives of counties and of their constituencies when he appealed to the Government to give the House fuller and more accurate information, without unknown quantities, and on their behalf he protested against the Legislature being called upon to decide this question upon what were miscalled the county statistics of the volume, and which as a guide to the future were most dangerous and delusive.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he wished to direct attention to some remarkable facts upon another branch of the question — the statistics relating to the boroughs of England and Wales. He did not wish to anticipate in any way the discussion upon the second reading of the Franchise Bill; but his object was that the country should have all the information necessary for considering the subject in all its bearings. These statistics had been placed before the House immediately previous to the introduction of the Franchise Bill, when there was little time to consider them, and every day was bringing new surprises to those who searched into the particulars. He held in his hand a table he had prepared from the blue book, and which might be verified by reference to it. He had only gone so far as thirty-nine of the largest boroughs for England, but the results gave serious ground for reflection to all who really desired to inquire into the real bearing of the subject. By taking in each of those thirty-nine boroughs the number of persons registered in respect of £10 houses, and the male occupiers at £10 and over, the difference was approximately obtained of those who would be added by the extinction of the rating qualification—that was to say, supposing there was no lowering of the franchise there would be the addition to the existing constituencies, the difference between these two numbers. If to these were added the number of voters in respect to houses between £7 and £10, the increase in the constituency would be pretty clearly seen. He found that in the case of nearly every one of these thirty-nine towns the number of voters would be actually doubled, without counting the freemen or the number of voters claiming under the savings bank franchise. Not to weary the House, he would only give the figures relating to three or four boroughs. In Birmingham, the actual number of electors registered as £10 householders was 14,997; the number of male occupiers at £10 and over was 19,062; making a difference of 4,065. The number of new voters added by reducing the qualification down to £7 was 14,959, making an increase of 19,024 to be added to the present £10 constituency. The case of Bradford was not quite so strong. The present £10 electors were 5,189; the male occupiers at £10 and upwards were 6,170; and the difference 981. The number of new voters down to £7 was 3,113, and there would be a new additional constituency of 4,094 as against the present constituency of 5,189. In Gateshead the present constituency was 1,165, and the increase would be 1,377. In Leicester the constituency now numbered 3,348, and the new constituency would amount to 3,963. In Manchester the present constituency was 21,542, and the additional new constituency would be 21,494. A similar result appeared in every one of these boroughs, and it was clear that the abolition of the ratepaying clauses, and the number of new voters to be added under the Bill, would double the constituency. He should take care that the result in each case should be published, but he offered these few figures to the House as a humble contribution to the information it required, and as statistics of which no one could impugn the accuracy.

LORD ELCHO said, that, before the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. C. P. Villiers) replied to the Question, he wished to say a few words. He thought that the House was very much indebted to his hon. Friend for the careful analysis of the Government Returns which he had just offered, as to the number of new voters for houses above £10. An hon. Member had placed in his hands a letter from a leading manufacturer, which touched upon the probable effect of a £7 Bill on houses now below £7 value. The writer said—

> "I trust you will excuse the liberty I take in writing to you upon the Reform question. My only reason for troubling you is that no speaker or writer upon the Government Bill has yet dealt sufficiently with the statistics below the £7 rental. If this standard becomes law it is morally certain that no £5 or £6 houses will be built in the future, as a £7 rental will pay better interest of money, being in so much greater request. Every present £6 house will be burnished into a sevenpounder without delay. Even those at £5 will either decline into hovels, or be restored into better than new at £7. I know an owner of cottage property in this borough who has already decided to convert all his into £7 rental if this Bill passes. It is a very simple question; in round figures £7 a year is 2*s.* 8*d.* per week, and £6 a year is 2*s.* 4*d.* per week, and £5 is 2*s.*; so that, in point of fact, every £5 householder will, by increasing his rent only 8*d.* per week, be able to place his name on the list of voters, and by taking a lodger at 1*s.* a week he would even profit by the exchange. It would certainly be cheap at that price, if only to please their employers by voting as they directed. Thus you see that a £7 franchise should be examined in relation to the statistics at £6 and £5 rentals; and if this is done you will find that it gives the working classes an absolute majority of votes in most of the boroughs in England."

Now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that it was not the object of the Government to give a preponderance of one class over another, and what he (Lord Elcho) complained of was that information was refused as to the probable effect of these changes on the future distribution of power. He thought that the House ought to look a little beyond the present moment, and when he asked them to look at the effect of this Bill twenty or thirty years ahead he thought he was asking for nothing absurd, since they were dealing with a Constitution of 600 years' standing. But every question put to the Government—and he might refer, for instance, to the Question put by the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) with respect to the increase of borough leaseholders giving votes for counties—was met by the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the reply that he was not aware of any estimate on the subject. That very night he (Lord Elcho) had endeavoured to ascertain certain important facts relative to voters of the artizan class; but no data had the Government got. So it was throughout. Nothing had been calculated by the Government prospectively. It was, however, only the more incumbent upon the House to look to those who were to come after them, and to the institutions and interests which they were bound to transmit.

MR. M'LAREN said, that the noble Lord who had just sat down had given them an additional reason for adopting a £7 Franchise Bill. There were two Bills before the House which aimed at providing comfortable dwellings for the working classes, and if a £7 Franchise Bill would have the effect of converting all bad houses into good houses—of making them comfortable, improving them in a sanitary point of view, and rendering them profitable to their owners—then, in a social point of view, the noble Lord had furnished them with one of the best arguments yet brought forward in favour of the Government Bill. He would next refer to the statement that had been made by the hon. Baronet the Member for Ayrshire (Sir James Fergusson); and before doing so he must say it was rather a curious fact that all the Members from Scotland who had yet spoken in respect to this Bill had spoken more or less against it. It was said by the hon. Baronet the Member for Ayrshire that in all the large towns to which he had referred the proposed franchise would more than double the number of voters; but he (Mr. M'Laren) took leave to say that the hon. Baronet had made a great mistake in his calculations. He (Mr. M'Laren) represented a city (Edinburgh) with a population of 170,000; and having heard such statements made before, he had moved for a Return to show the effect that this franchise would have in the city of Edinburgh. He had got a copy of that Return, and it showed that while the present number of voters on the electoral roll was 10,350, there would under a £7 franchise be apparently added — only apparently, for there were deductions to be made—3,600 to the roll. Surely the hon. Baronet would not say that 3,600 were equal to 10,350? It appeared from the proceedings at the last registration for the city of Edinburgh that more than 1,200 persons occupying houses of the value of £10 and upwards were not admitted because they had not resided for the statutory period within the city. That was a deduction of about one-eighth for insufficient residence. None of these were excluded because of the ratepaying clauses, for Scotland fortunately never had ratepaying clauses; but the one-eighth were excluded because they were not for twelve months resident in the city. He thought no person would be more ready to admit than the hon. Member for Ayrshire that the poorer the people the more migratory they were in their habits; and if one-eighth of the occupiers at a £10 rental were now excluded for insufficient residence there would probably be double that proportion excluded in respect of houses under £10. These facts were quite subversive of the argument used by the hon. Member for Ayrshire, who counted up the whole number at the £7 limit, assuming they would all be admitted at once without inquiry of any kind. In towns like those mentioned by the hon. Baronet a very large deduction must be made; and in some of the large manufacturing towns even 20 per cent would be too small a deduction to make from the gross number shown in the Returns, for the reason he (Mr. M'Laren) had stated. There was another source of deduction peculiar to those towns that had a large number of freemen, one-fourth of whom occupy houses above £10. They were told that the other three-fourths of the freemen were a poor and wretched class, speaking generally. He did not know whether they were or not; but if so, the other three-fourths must occupy houses under £10. Now, suppose the apparent increase of the number of electors in a borough, after making proper allowance for insufficient residence amounted to 1,000, was it not quite plain that 1,000 would not be added to the roll of voters, because this number would absorb a large proportion of the freemen, and they could not count the same men twice over on the electoral roll. There must, therefore, be a deduction on that account of a very large number. From all the inquiries he (Mr. M'Laren) had made—though this proposed franchise did not come up to the expectation of many true friends of Reform, nor up to the expectations of the majority of the inhabitants of the city of Edinburgh, who would prefer a £6 franchise in boroughs and a £10 franchise in counties—he had reason to think that the measure would give great and general satisfaction throughout all the towns in Scotland.

MR. PLATT desired, as a large employer of labour, to say that he thought the measure of the Government would be rather too restricted than otherwise as regarded the artizans and the working classes. In his own neighbourhood he employed about 5,000 adult males in one of the most important branches of mechanical enterprize, and one in which the best class of artizans in England were engaged. Among those 5,000 adults there were only sixty-nine who had votes; and out of that sixty-nine there were only thirty-five who could be properly described as being of the artizan class. With thirty-five voters out of 5,000 adult males, who were among the most intelligent and best paid workmen in this country, it could hardly be said that the artizan class was over-represented in my own statistics. Taking the borough with which he was connected (Oldham), the results would be found very much the same. The population was 107,000, and the voters upon the register were 2,229. Of the latter, only 150 belonged, properly speaking, to the working or artizan class. That he took to be a fair sample of the modern manufacturing towns in the North of England. Having had an experience of upwards of thirty years of the working class, he could say that, although it was quite true they had their failings, as well as any other class, he had no fear whatever of them. He was aware that there was one thing that frightened many employers and manufacturers—namely, the trades unions; but in regard to that point he took a different view from some persons. They would place more responsibility on the workmen by giving them votes and teaching them political economy in a practical sense; and by that means they would reduce the numbers who joined trades' unions. Moreover, during the last fifteen or twenty years an advance had been made by those bodies. Formerly many of them had very restricted laws; but since then some of the most important and most intelligent of them, and among others the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, had abolished all their restrictive laws, and converted themselves into simple benefit societies; after which their employers had had no further trouble.

MR. C. P. VILLIERS said, he rose in consequence of the forms of the House precluding his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer from answering the Questions more directly put to him by the hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope). In replying to that hon. Gentleman, he would confine himself strictly to the purpose of his Motion, for he thought the present was not the most convenient occasion for entering into a discussion upon the Reform Bill or into speculations as to its results. He did not think it would be difficult to show the hon. Member that he had not so much reason to complain as he seemed to imagine with respect to a portion of the electoral statistics which had been furnished to the House. The hon. Member had been pleased to express his satisfaction with regard to the completeness of the statistics so far as they affected boroughs and cities; of this the credit was entirely due to the gentleman who had had the labour of preparing them, seeing that he deserved all the honour for the admirable manner in which they had been presented to the House. He understood the hon. Member to say that the Returns respecting the number and the value of the occupations which were to confer the qualification for future voters in boroughs and cities to be complete; but that he complained that there were not the same means provided for ascertaining the number of voters in the counties as in the boroughs and cities. It was, then, necessary to look at the Returns that had been presented in respect of the boroughs and cities. Two Returns had been given showing in parallel columns the estimated rental of the occupation which the voters would have, and also the rateable value; but for the counties no rateable value had been given. The reason why both the estimated rental and the rateable value were given for the boroughs and cities was that the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) had moved for a Return on those points, and the House was in possession of it, and therefore it was added to the present statistics. The hon. Member for Lincolnshire, who attended to rural affairs during the recess and officiated as a magistrate, must have been aware of recent legislation affecting assessments of property, and therefore he was surprised that the hon. Member should have expressed any doubt as to the sufficiency of the means afforded for obtaining the estimated rental and the rateable value in counties. Possessing the estimated rental the hon. Member had at once the rateable value, or, having the rateable value, he had, at the same time, the estimated rental; for between the two there was an established proportion. If the hon. Member would only look to the Returns which he already possessed and those moved for by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire last year, he would see the rule regulating the deduction to be made from the estimated rental in order to get at the rateable value. That was, however, enforced only throughout the counties and not in the cities and boroughs. The deduction was invariably 15 per cent, or about 3*s.* in the pound; and, having the rateable value, all the hon. Member had to do was to take off 15 per cent, and he would immediately ascertain what he required without the laborious arithmetical process to which he had referred. Now, these Returns were ordered, in the first place, for the information of the Government for the preparation of the Bill, and they wished to give as little trouble as possible to those persons charged with the collection of them. They were made out by the clerks of unions, in conjunction with other persons. One clerk, indeed, said that he was unable to give the time and the trouble requisite for this purpose; and the Poor Law Board thought it right to summon him before the Court for refusing to comply with its request. The Court, however, sympathized with the clerk of the union, stating that he was appointed for one purpose, and now the Poor Law Board called upon him to make a Return for another. The House was bound to spare as much as possible the people engaged in the collection of statistics, and the delay which would be requisite to obtain the further information desired by the hon. Member would be very considerable. There was, indeed, no necessity for obtaining any further Returns in reference to the increase that would be made in the number of county voters by the Bill which had been introduced to the House, for ample means for obtaining this knowledge was already provided. Some extraordinary conclusions had been drawn from the statistics. The hon. Member for Ayrshire (Sir James Fergusson) had discovered that in thirty-nine boroughs the constituencies would be doubled; he hoped the hon. Member would publish those statistics, and explain the process by which he had arrived at the conclusion. He was quite sure that the hon. Member was aware that the number of occupiers was no proof of the number of voters. Looking at the present registers, the present occupiers, and the present qualifications, a deduction must be made of at least 28 per cent between the number of occupiers of £10 houses and the persons upon the register. The hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope), towards the end of his address, dwelt upon the fact that no Returns had been made of the number of copyholders and leaseholders, but did not indicate to the House the way by which they could be obtained. There was no record of copyholders and no register of leaseholders qualified at present to vote for the counties, and there was no means that he knew of, except going from house to house, and making inquiries at each house, by which information on these points could be obtained. If the hon. Member, however, were to examine the Returns he already possessed he would, without any great effort, be able to draw a tolerably good inference. There was no register of freeholders in the counties. There was a difference between the city voters and the county voters to be noted; in the counties the electors were obliged to send in their claims, whereas the parochial officers in towns and boroughs were compelled to make out a register of the persons entitled to vote in cities and boroughs. The hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Platt) had made an objection to the Returns on the ground that the working classes had been entered in too large numbers. He did not doubt that the statement of the hon. Member was correct as respected Oldham. According to the Returns, which were made by a gentleman well known to the hon. Member, the number of working men on the register was 315; and he had intimated his readiness to prove his statement. The hon. Member, however, stated the number at 150 only. The discrepancy probably arose from the Government Returns having taken too comprehensive a view of the term "working men," and so including many whom the hon. Member did not regard as coming under that category. He was not aware of any further objections to the statistics, and the arguments that had been brought against the Bill would be better met on a future occasion. The noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) had shown that one of the tendencies of the Bill would be to improve the character of the dwellings of the working classes. If so, that would be a very beneficial result, and the miserable hovels which now existed would be swept away. Stimulated by a desire to obtain the franchise, they would become more frugal and acquire the means that would enable them to dwell in better houses.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE said, he wished to make one or two remarks in reference to the county voters and the form in which the information respecting them had been presented to the House. What his hon. Friend the Member for North Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope) had complained of was, that the county Returns were defective, and were not given in so convenient a form as the borough Returns. Instead of giving the number of voters who would come within the Government proposal by a £14 rental, the Returns gave only the rateable value. Although it might be easy for persons conversant with the mode of estimating the gross estimated rental to make the deductions necessary to arrive at the rateable value, it was by no means so easy for those who did not happen to be familiar with the matter to make the calculation. The Government might, without much difficulty, in his opinion, have supplied information which individual Members would have some trouble in obtaining as the result of their own inquiries. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, for instance, had pointed out certain mistakes which had been made by his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Ayrshire (Sir Jame Fergusson) in his calculations; but if it was true that he had fallen into those errors, was it not extremely probable, he would ask, that other Members would be led into similar mistakes, and did not that very fact show that the Government ought to have submitted the statistics on the subject to the House in such a form as to have obviated the difficulty? The whole gist of the case of the Government was that the House was to proceed in the matter of Reform deliberately, and step by step on the information laid before it; and they were informed in the Queen's Speech that Returns were being prepared which were to serve them as a guide. The information thus indicated had been collected, and he admitted that the officers employed in collecting it had done their work extremely well. On that information the Government formed their conclusions, and proposed a particular franchise; but surely it was only natural to suppose that they would, under the circumstances, have placed the House of Commons in possession of the information which was necessary to enable them to form a sound judgment on that question also. The Government must all along have had in their eye the grounds on which they intended to base their proposal. It was an easy matter, therefore, to have set some person to make the necessary calculations, instead of leaving every individual to make it for himself; thus involving the expenditure of a vast amount of time, which the labours of a single skilled person might have saved.

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU was surprised that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Poor Law Board, who now finds it suits his purpose to pretend to be the friend of the working man, should have repeated the argument which had on a former occasion fallen from the hon. Member for Birmingham, and should state that one good thing in the Government Bill was that it would oblige landlords to improve their houses, so that the labouring class would in future have a £10 instead of a £6 house. [Mr. C. P. Villiers: I did not say that.] Well, at all events, he seemed to argue that in boroughs there would, after the passing of the Bill, be £7 instead of £6 houses. But that was, he (Lord Robert Montagu) thought, a matter in which the supply would be governed by the demand. But, be that as it might, he wished to put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had stated that there were certain ulterior schemes which he proposed to lay, in the shape of dummies, on the table of the House—as to what checks he proposed to place on the increased franchise. By lowering, for instance, the franchise in counties, the present agricultural constituencies would be swamped, but if the various towns were taken out of those counties and grouped with the boroughs by means of a re-distribution of seats, something might be done to mitigate the evils which would thereby be created. The House, therefore, ought, he contended, to be made aware before the second reading of the Franchise Bill in what the whole scheme of the Government really consisted. Because those questions with which they intended to deal will afterwards become really part and parcel of the principle upon which they meant to proceed.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER contended that there was another Bill which it was expedient should be laid on the table before the House went into Committee on the Franchise Bill, and that was a Boundary Bill, without having which before them it would be impossible to deal with the question of the re-distribution of seats. It was evident that a Boundary Bill might alter the whole question of the re-distribution of seats. Because those places which without a change of boundary might be disfranchised might not be disfranchised, if addition to their boundaries were made. He hoped, therefore, that a complete Boundary Bill as well as a Re-distribution of Seats Bill would be laid on the table for the information of the House.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: If my hon. and learned Friend who has just spoken (Sir George Bowyer) will refer back to the only successful specimen of legislation in regard to Reform to which I need call his attention—the Reform Act of 1832—he will find that no such preliminary Bill was introduced as that which he has mentioned, and that the House then voted on the general question of the re-distribution of seats without having a Boundary Bill before it. I am of opinion that some examination of boundaries would be necessary before the final adjustment of the whole of the details of that question; but the influence of such an investigation would, after all, I think, be a matter of only secondary importance. If, indeed, the observations of the hon. and learned Baronet have any meaning, their practical result would be that nothing should be said on the subject of the re-distribution of seats in the present year.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER: That might be the consequence, but it is not the meaning.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I close with my hon. and learned Friend on these terms. And now I may be allowed to refer to what has fallen from the noble Lord the Member for Huntingdonshire (Lord Robert Montagu), who rose in his place, and made some remarks as to my right hon. Friend near me (Mr. Villiers) thinking it worth his while to pretend to be the friend of the working man. Would he like, I would ask him, to have such a phrase applied to himself?

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU: Certainly, if it could be done with truth.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Then the noble Lord adheres to the expression, and I am very much disposed to appeal to the Chairman as to whether he is justified in speaking of another Member in those terms. In my opinion those working men to whom he alludes would, if admitted within these walls, set the noble Lord an example of courtesy, would set him an example of good breeding, would set him an example of high breeding, which he might do well to follow. I confess I am astonished that the noble Lord should, on reflection, adopt those words, and if I did not appeal to you, Sir, when he uttered them it is because I thought that he would, when reminded that he used them, at once say that they had escaped from him by accident. But the noble Lord went on, not conscious that he was all the time replying not to the speech of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers), but to that of the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), upon whom in reality he poured forth the vials of his wrath. The hon. Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote), however, who preceded the noble Lord, spoke, as he always does, to the purpose; but, notwithstanding what he has said, I confess I do not at all feel that I owe a debt of gratitude to the hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope) for the course which he has to-night taken. The hon. Member for Stamford has entirely misapprehended the matter. He said that certain elaborate calculations are easy to experts, but very difficult to the mass of mankind, and the Members of this House ought not to be called on to go through them. But there are no elaborate calculations involved in the matter—all that is necessary to bear in mind is that a £12 rating is equivalent or very nearly so to a £14 rental. But I object to the whole mode of dealing with this question of statistics, as adopted by hon. Members. That is the reason why I feel no gratitude to them. They seem as if they were engaged in ascertaining the numbers of an invading army; but the persons to whom their remarks apply are our fellow-subjects, our fellow-Christians, our own flesh and blood, who have been lauded to the skies for their good conduct—men who have borne destitution and privation in a manner which might be a lesson to all of us. I cannot accede to the demand for information founded on a principle which I consider mischievous and untrue. [An hon. MEMBER: Untrue!] I speak of the principle as untrue, which means unsound. I deny that mathematical precision is necessary in giving information on this question. The noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire has recently passed some few days of his life in a state of alarm at the prospects of the country. The noble Lord at the head of his Volunteers would not in the least tremble to meet a French invasion, but the idea of an invasion of his own fellow citizens desirous of obtaining the franchise has entirely frightened him from his propriety. These voters between £14 and £50 will not belong to the labouring class. [Mr. BANKS STANHOPE: That is what I want to know.] There are certain facts, at any rate, which do not require to be made the subject of a statistical Return, and in producing the statistical information already placed before the House, we consider we have complied with the terms used in the Queen's Speech. Occupiers between £14 and £50 in counties do not as a rule belong to the labouring class. They are substantially of the middle class; though there may be some exceptions in the case of holders of small parcels of land, who may be properly described as belonging to the labouring class, and who are under the influence—I do not mean the compulsory but the friendly influence—of their landlords. Therefore, it did not enter into our minds that this question of the county franchise would be viewed in the spirit of jealousy and alarm with which it appears to be regarded by the hon. Gentleman opposite. [Mr. BANKS STANHOPE: In the absence of statistics.] With regard to another class of persons—namely, copyholders and leaseholders—we would have been glad to produce statistics, but it is not possible to do so. It is a matter most proper to be considered and discussed in Committee whether collateral information can be had. If it can, by all means let it be had. We cannot pretend to get the information, though I fully admit that it would be desirable to have it if possible. With respect to the gross estimated rental, I ask what was done in 1859? The House then passed a Bill which established a £10 occupation franchise for the counties, and I am not aware that the information then placed before us was better than, or so good as, the information now placed before the House. I think we have gone to the fullest length of our tether in furnishing information, and I am not prepared to accept the censure of the hon. Gentleman opposite.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE: The right hon. Gentleman seems to wish to strengthen our moral nature by saying that we ought first to have confidence in the Government passing their Bill, in the hope that after that they will listen to our wishes. I submit to the right hon. Gentleman that there is no use in producing statistics at all if they are not perfect and complete, and such as would really form some reliable ground for estimating the effect of the Government Bill. The right hon. Gentleman talked about the class of persons referred to as being our own countrymen and our own flesh and blood, and that, therefore, any measure to enfranchise them must be adopted; but the right hon. Gentleman should bear in mind that in producing the blue book he made a pratical admission that investigation of this kind is a necessary foundation for a satisfactory measure of Reform, and therefore he is bound to collect the Returns so that the House may be able to the utmost extent to judge of the effect of the proposed Bill on the various constituencies. The information supplied to the House is defective in two particulars. In the first place, the House is not told by the statistics how far the agricultural population would be swamped by the urban; and, secondly, how far, in boroughs and counties, the middle and upper classes will be swamped by the working class. I am inclined to adhere to the estimate previously formed—namely, that some 130 Members would be placed in the hands of the working classes, and when the re-distribution of seats comes they will probably have the majority of boroughs. The whole matter is surrounded with uncertainty, in consequence of the defective information with respect to lodgers, compound householders, the effect of the repeal of the ratepaying clauses, of the establishment of the £14 occupation francise in counties, and of the grant of a county vote to copyholders and leaseholders in boroughs. And what reply is given when this defective state of the Returns is noticed? The Chancellor of the Exchequer tells the House that he has gone to the very utmost limit in supplying information with respect to the preponderance of working men in the constituencies; and he now declares that, as a matter of principle, he will refuse to supply any further information in reference to the working men. Putting all the sentimental rant aside about "our own flesh and blood," it is important to inquire whether this Reform Bill is to transfer the tax imposing and the tax expending power from one portion of the community to another. I ask the right hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Goschen) whether, in drawing this Bill of Reform, he would not, as a matter of business, have been influenced by the particular considerations which the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to disregard? Recalling to mind the calmer and more prosaic atmosphere of the Bank Parlour, the right hon. Member for the City of London will acknowledge that the Bank itself would have been brought into difficulties if matters of business affecting large amounts of money had been treated on the principle of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This is a question, not of phrases and sentiment, but of facts and figures. The right hon. Gentleman has yielded something—if he should yield a little more, we may find the expression of the Government standing or falling by the Bill will have to be taken in a non-natural sense. If it be that the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer should frame a Reform Bill, I would entreat him to re-consider his doctrines about the necessity of full information, and before he again asks the House of Commons to transfer the power over the legislation, the taxation, and the finances of this country from the section of the community which holds it now to another section of the community, I entreat him to let us know who our new masters are to be. In a constitutional country it is at least as important to know who the new governing classes are to be as it is in other countries to know what change will take place in the dynasty. Whether it were great or small, for the better or for the worse, there would, at all events, be an absolute change of the governing power over all the best interests of the country. When such a change is about to take place, surely it is not unreasonable that we should come to the right hon. Gentleman and inquire what manner of men these new rulers of ours are to be—whether they are split up into different sections or united together; whether they are likely to support agricultural interests or not; whether they are in favour of direct or indirect taxation; and, in particular, whethey they were impartially spread over all those interests, or would give an overwhelming preponderance to one end of the balance. I will not discuss the policy to be founded on the information which might be obtained; but I say that if we require information relating to the small matters on which the Legislature has already been engaged, we ought, above all things, to have information on that which, as it were, contains and includes them all. I cannot accept as an excuse what has been urged by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) as to the expense and difficulty of collecting Returns of this kind. Why, in a matter of this kind, we ought to recoil from no trouble and no expense. If the requisite machinery does not exist, it ought to be created. We ought to know, with reference to every constituency in the country, the extent of the change proposed, the number of new electors to be introduced, what class of the community they belong to, and, as far as it is possible to ascertain it, how far they would represent the wealth and the numbers of the people. This is information for which we have a right to ask, and I am quite sure that no Government can succeed in carrying a satisfactory Reform Bill till it makes up its mind, in spite of any trouble or expense, to satisfy this legitimate demand. Before I sit down, I wish to correct one error which the right hon. Gentleman fell into with respect to the remarks of the noble Lord (Lord Elcho). The argument of the noble Lord was simple and obvious. He said that the probable tendency of any measure of Reform would be to induce persons who wished for political influence to raise the character and rental of their houses, and that the consequence would be that the number of £7 voters would be greater than could be ascertained at present from the number of £7 houses. Now, that seems to be a very legitimate argument; for it is obvious that in any future purchase you must add a margin, however slight it might be, for the right of claiming the franchise. The argument of the noble Lord, therefore, appeared to be a very legitimate one, and I think he hardly deserved the attack which was made upon him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I quite concur with the hon. and learned Member for Dundalk (Sir George Bowyer) that the question of boundaries must necessarily precede the question of re-distribution of seats; and I think the right hon. Gentleman will find, if he looks to the precedent of 1832, that at that time the boroughs which were to be disfranchised were of a notorious character, and there could be no very great contest, after it was admitted that some disfranchisement should take place, as to the nature and extent of the disfranchisement. At all events, the Reformers of 1832 were not infallible, but that circumstance does not diminish the effect of my hon. Friend's argument, that if you adjust the system of representation you are bound to entertain the question of boundaries.

MR. GOSCHEN: The noble Lord opposite (Viscount Cranbourne) has asked me very pointedly what the custom is in dealing with large financial transactions in the City. I will tell him one rule which we always follow, and that is never to haggle —never, when large financial matters are in question, to think of the shillings and the halfpence. But I need not refer simply to the practice in the City, but to the maxim of which we were recently reminded by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), *De minimis non curat lex.* In this matter it is impossible to go so minutely into detail as the noble Lord seems to demand. This discussion is brought on by a Question relating to the alleged insufficient nature of the statistics in the hands of the House. The whole matter, I suppose, turns on the difference between £15 or £14 or something of that kind. It turns on £1, or 10*s.* at the most, for it must turn on this—whether a £12 rating is equivalent to £14 rental, and if not, where the error lies, and how many new voters it would be the means of introducing into the constituencies. If we were to assume that it might admit 20,000, that would be a very large estimate indeed, but probably the calculation is nearly accurate, and a £12 rating is about equivalent to a £14 rental. If, however, there is a difference, do the hon. Members opposite know the number within a few hundreds? ["Hear, hear!"] Well, perhaps they would like to know within a few units. Hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to calculate precisely the social standing and power to pay rent of every single constituent in the boroughs. There is a doctrine, which has been applauded by hon. Members opposite, that under our present Constitution it was easy enough to acquire the franchise. Well, we find in the constituencies at the present moment a large number of working men whom hon. Members opposite did not suspect to be there, and these working men have so conducted themselves that it is impossible to tell the difference between a working man and any other. Apart from that, however, hon. Members opposite admit that if the working men pay a little more for their houses, they are able to obtain the franchise, and therefore a system of calculating precisely the number of working men in any borough must break down, because the number changes from day to day and from hour to hour. I have heard it stated that the discovery of gold in Australia raised wages throughout the country, and any such circumstance might affect the number to some extent; but it is only when you are dealing with tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands that these statistics can be used at all. However, if I am not much mistaken, the noble Lord will find all the calculations he wishes for in the possession of some of his friends, because, no doubt, when Lord Derby introduced his Bill all these precautions were taken. Those statistics must have been in the possession of many hon. Gentlemen opposite, because when they proposed a diminution of the county franchise they must have calculated the additions that would be made in each county. I am sorry that they kept the statistics to themselves, but no doubt the noble Lord will be able to find them. I confess, however, that I do not concur with him in thinking that it is so necessary to make such minute calculations for every county or borough. Indeed, it is impossible as well as undesirable to make such minute calculations. If we are to inquire minutely into the numbers of the working classes, why should we not ascertain how strong the landed interest is, and the military interest, and the commercial interest, and the manufacturing interest? I think it would be a great disadvantage if we should come to discuss among ourselves precisely how many there are belonging to one class or to another. The whole question must rest upon a broader basis than simply how many there are in inhabited houses of £10 and £7. I am sure the statistics go as much into detail as it is possible or desirable that they should. Questions of this kind, if they are right by tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands, ought not to be pursued down to the lowest figures, tens and units. The increase which is taking place in the general prosperity of the country must change the aspect of affairs in any particular locality in the course of a very few months.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had given an admirable argument against those weekly Returns which the Bank of England was so fond of publishing. To be sure those Returns related only to money and to the solvency of the Bank of England. But when the question was who were to be the people to make the House of Commons, who should constitute the hundreds of thousands of additional constituencies, then demanding Returns, forsooth, was haggling. What were all the Supply nights but haggling? What were the Budget nights but haggling? What was the legitimate jealousy which scrutinized Bills, both public and private—what was that, in the language of the Treasury Bench, but haggling? He made the right hon. Gentleman a present of this "haggling." But it sent hon. Members to the country and to their constituents with unpleasant feelings when they found the Government trying to make use of a mighty force by putting on the *bonnet rouge*, and when they found the Chancellor of the Exchequer making sentimental appeals to "flesh and blood," which, if it meant anything, was a direct appeal on behalf of universal suffrage—the second chapter, in fact, of the treatise on the subject of which the right hon. Gentleman had published the first series one Wednesday during the last Parliament. This talk about "flesh and blood," "fellow-Christians," and so on, was either a direct and palpable appeal to the passions of the multitude, and an argument in favour of universal suffrage, or it was mere rubbish and rhapsody; for every adult male, just as much as of the seven-pounders, it stood true that they were "of the same flesh and blood" and "fellow-Christians." Then came the other Chancellor—the Chancellor of the Duchy—who said that the Opposition were inciting the working classes to analyze, to their disadvantage of course, the classes of which that House was composed. He would tell that right hon. Gentleman that if he felt disposed to publish another edition of the *Black Book* of thirty-five years ago, which came out in the turmoil of the Reform Bill to stir popular passion against the governing classes, it would not be very saleable now-a-days. They had by this time got beyond all that sort of thing—the Reform Bill had done them much good in that respect. They who agreed with him stood upon the Reform Act. They simply wished to preserve the handy-work of Lord Russell in his youthful time, as yet untouched by profane hands. They wished to preserve it against the feeble tampering of its own author, who came forward to meddle with it after so many of those septennial periods had elapsed which as men of science say change the identity of the human body. There was one point on which he differed from his friends. They complained that the statistics were imperfect. In a measure only was that true; for in many cases they were no statistics at all. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made an eloquent appeal to the House not to be alarmed at the admission of the 400,000 of "our flesh and blood" into the suffrage. This meant, or it meant nothing, that there would be no re-distribution of seats, no disenfranchisement, no further enfranchisement, for otherwise that 400,000 must be changed to some other and much higher figure. It might be 500,000, or 600,000 or 700,000. If the £7 was to be accepted in the dark as the first *sine quâ non*, how were they to know the names and boundaries, the number and population of the towns which were to be admitted into the representation under that new franchise? What were the islands in this sea of Utopia which would have to be discovered if they passed the Bill? The Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that if they were good children, and believed what their political pastors and masters told them, if they swallowed the dose, cried Amen, and said it was all right, the Government would then in its condescension give them data which might prove that all which had been alleged or done was wrong. That was the simple, plain English of the Government policy. But they wanted to know what the Reform Bill was before they passed it in sections. He wished to know whether the re-distribution of seats was to bear a penal character, and hinge upon the way the second reading was treated; whether the right hon. Gentleman was to come down like a school inspector with smiles on his face or anger on his brow, according as they behaved; whether the enfranchisement here and the disfranchisement there was to be a whole or a half proceeding, according to the division list; whether Schedules A and B were fluctuating quantities; whether the cutting off a Member was to be at a line drawn at 5,000, 10,000, or 15,000 of population, according as they were or were not deaf to the sweet syren the noble Member for Chester? Was the balance to be struck between the counties and the boroughs to depend on the subserviency of their Members? These were all questions they were entitled to ask. When so preposterous a system was pursued—a system which revolted against all ideas of justice and common sense—they had a right to suspect the worst of political dodges—something beyond the honest desire to reform the representation of the people—and that was some device to repair the tottering props of a falling Cabinet. Let the right hon. Gentleman rise in his place on Monday fortnight, and state what was the measure that he intended to bring forward, what the re-distribution of seats, and let him lay on the table the statistics they had not yet seen; and then the House could say whether, in their judgment, the measure was good or bad, whether it was to be the salvation of England or the destruction of our old and stable Constitution—at least, that the Government had taken an honest and straightforward course. He wished with all his heart he were able to say so much to their credit now, but that was what he could not say.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER said, he was glad to have from the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Beresford Hope) such a manifestation of loyal attachment to the Reform Bill of 1832. The great complaint which had been made with regard to these statistics was that they did not give exact information about all who were at present excluded, but only of those whom the Government hoped to include. Now, he agreed with his right hon. Friend the Member for the City of London (Mr. Goschen) that if they were to give such exact information about those who were excluded they might expect that class to require similar information about the included. He thought the Government had gone quite as far as they ought to have gone in this matter; and some measure of injustice had rather been done to the artizan class by representing them to be less entirely excluded than they really were. He could conceive nothing more impolitic, not with reference to the interests of the Government and the Liberal party, but of the country, than an attempt to characterize and distinguish between the included and excluded from the franchise. Did hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to know the individual character of these men? Did they want to know what they would do under any circumstances? Did they want to know not only how much money they earned, but how they spent it? They had no right to go into these questions with regard to any class of their fellow-subjects. Would not the excluded be tempted to make similar inquiries with regard to those who had the elective franchise? Would they not ask how many voters there might be who were under the influence of their landlords? Would it be advantageous to go into questions of that kind? Hon. Members opposite sometimes talked of the impropriety of setting class against class. He could conceive nothing more likely to have that effect than the course which was now being pursued by hon. Gentlemen on the other side—treating the working class as enemies to the Constitution, and prying into the mode in which they would use the franchise if given to them—in fact, forcing them to do what he believed they never would otherwise do—to bind themselves into a class, and as a class act for class purposes. As a class, he believed they were least of all likely to act together for any special purpose; but hon. Gentlemen opposite were by their suspicions doing what would, if possible, produce that result. The noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne) made use of a remark which, for Conservative interests, might be considered dangerous; he said they wanted this exact information because the Bill proposed a change in the taxing power of the country. Did not this suggest an irresistible inference that the taxing power had hitherto been used with an immediate view to the interests of the represented? If ever there should be any disposition to attack the present possessors of power it could only arise from such remarks and such unfounded suspicions. The hon. Member for Stoke (Mr. Beresford Hope) stated that they were going to the country during the recess with unpleasant feelings. No doubt hon. Gentlemen opposite regretted much to find that the debate on the second reading of the Bill would now be put on its true issue—whether or no the time had come when they ought to admit a large number of British citizens to the elective franchise. No doubt they would have preferred if the issue could have been shifted. The hon. Gentleman said he wanted definitely to know what boroughs would be disfranchised; but he would know that in sufficient time to guide his vote before the Bill became law. If he was in favour of lowering the franchise it would be quite within his power to vote for the second reading of the Bill; and if he found that power was likely to be made use of for purposes he could not approve, when the question of re-distribution came up he might reverse his vote without reproach.

Mr. P. A. TAYLOR congratulated the House and the country upon the altered and more frank tone which had characterized the discussion. The atmosphere around the great Reform question had been singularly cleared during this discussion, and the country would fully appreciate the change that had taken place. Hitherto hon. Members opposite, not content with calling themselves the friends of the working man had even professed themselves to be his sole friends; and they had gone so far as to charge the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers), who had done so much to procure the repeal of the Corn Laws they had themselves so long upheld, with pretending to take an interest in the labouring classes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had been blamed for talking of those classes as flesh and blood, and as having a common interest with hon. Members in a common country; but he supposed the right hon. Gentleman had lately been reading his Bible. The issue would now go forth with sufficient distinctness to the country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, "Here are large numbers of the working classes, intelligent, educated, taxpaying, law-obeying Englishmen. I recognize them as brother Englishmen, who have a right to be brought within the pale of the Constitution. The principles which the right hon. Gentleman had put forward were no new ones; they were the principles of Charles James Fox, of Edmund Burke, and of Sir William Blackstone. But hon. Gentlemen opposite declared that all the doctrines about human rights were mere sentimentalism, and said, "We have ruled over the country for many years—we, the aristocracy, have taxed the people, and made laws for our advantage, and we will not admit the people unless we retain sufficient power in our own hands to answer our own purposes." The noble Lord (Lord Elcho) cheered, but he (Mr. Taylor) was glad that the issue had at last been so clearly raised, for it would be now discussed at meetings too numerous to be put into a cigar-case, however large. The noble Lord (Lord Elcho) had made a speech which, like most of the noble Lord's, was fuller of dogmatism and personal assertion than of argument. It reminded him a great deal of the Irishman's account of the weather—"There was very little wind, but what little there was was tremendously high!" He regarded the doctrine which had been propounded that night—namely, that the working classes formed a separate class—as altogether novel, unsafe, unfounded, and dangerous. The people would understand the issue that had gone forth, and the discussion which had taken place would do more to show who were their real friends and those who had no care for their interest than anything that had before occurred. He rejoiced to think that the issue between the people and the aristocracy had been placed on so clear a basis.

Mr. DUNCOMBE said, he wished to make a few observations on the subject that had occupied the attention of the House during the greater part of the evening. Her Majesty's Government had brought in a Bill for the reduction of the franchise, but had withheld certain information which it was absolutely necessary the House should obtain before they could properly come to a decision upon the important constitutional change which it was proposed to make. Her Majesty's Government, in proposing to overthrow the balance of the political power and to place the larger share in the hands of the working classes, were bound to furnish the House and the country with such information as would justify the acceptance of that proposal. The hon. Gentleman the Member for North Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope) had asked for a Return of the number of leaseholders and copyholders in boroughs who have votes for the counties, and this information the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had declined to give. It almost appeared that Her Majesty's Government, in refusing to give these Returns, were afraid that they would not tell in their favour—as if they were afraid of the House knowing the full extent of the proposed change. The House should not accept the Government proposal unless, at the same time, a Bill for the redistribution of seats was introduced. Her Majesty's Government had not pursued a straightforward, frank, and statesmanlike course with reference to this matter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the leader of the House, in answering the observations of the hon. Member for Huntingdonshire, had shown a considerable amount of reluctance, and he must confess that he was rather surprised at the general tone of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks. He trusted that the House would decline to proceed with the Government Bill until the information asked for had been furnished.

WATERWORKS RESERVOIRS.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. FERRAND called the attention of the House to the continued dangerous state of existing Public Waterworks Reservoirs; to the fact that no provision has hitherto been made by Parliament to retain a future supply of spring water for the inhabitants of the districts from which the watersprings have been taken away; that the rights of landowners and farmers have been entirely disregarded, and the public health injured by the sources of rivers being withdrawn without sufficient compensating Reservoirs. The hon. Member was understood to say that since these waterworks reservoirs were first constructed upwards of 400 lives had been sacrificed, and property of the value of more than £1,000,000 had been destroyed. He had been charged with having made exaggerated statements as to the danger of the reservoirs in his own neighbourhood, but his statements had been borne out by facts, and the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department had pledged himself to introduce clauses in future Bills for the protection of life and property, but those clauses had never been embodied in an Act of Parliament. The Bill which had been introduced by the right hon. President of the Board of Trade was altogether inadequate to meet the requirements of the public, for under one of the clauses, which set forth that when any reservoir was in a dangerous state and it was necessary for the authorities to order it to be emptied, the millowners were not entitled to receive compensation, even although their mills might remain inactive for two or three years. And besides, the Bill authorized the construction of new reservoirs on the same principle on which the old ones had been constructed. The hon. Member had adverted to the case of the Holmforth reservoir, and the disaster which had occurred at Sheffield, stating that the waterworks company were re-constructing a reservoir on the same principle as that which had caused such a lamentable destruction of life and property in 1864. He had called the attention of the Home Secretary to the state of the Doe Reservoir, in his own neighbourhood, and the right hon. Gentleman, on the authority of the Mayor of Bradford, had denied that it was in a dangerous state, but the statement which he (Mr. Ferrand) had made was fully borne out by the manager of the Edinburgh Water Company and several gentlemen connected with that company. He had intended to refer the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade to the report of those gentlemen; but as he found it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to prevent a full discussion of the question, and considered the conduct of the Government offensive to himself and insulting to the people whose lives were in jeopardy, he would no longer address the House, but at once move that it be counted.

[At this time not more than three or four Members were in the House; but the Motion having been made that the House be counted, hon. Members returned to their seats in sufficient numbers to make a

House; and then immediately withdrew. The hon. Member's speech was, consequently, almost unheard.]

MR. MILNER GIBSON said, that he thought the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Ferrand) was not justified in using the language with which he had concluded his speech. He had not the slightest intention to be disrespectful to the hon. Member. He had himself sat and listened to him, but it was not in his power to command the attendance of other hon. Members. In reply to the observations of the hon. Gentleman, he begged to state that the Government were as much alive to the importance of the question as he could be, but it was admitted on all sides that considerable difficulties existed in framing clauses in an Act which should be applicable in all cases. They had, however, introduced a Bill referring all existing reservoirs in which power was given to the Board of Trade to cause inspection to take place either with or without complaint being made, and to order repairs when necessary. The Bill also contained other provisions which it was believed would render the reservoirs of the country more secure than they now were. The best course would be for the hon. Member to allow the Bill to be read a second time, and then to introduce in Committee such clauses as he should think would render the operation of the Bill more perfect.

Motion *agreed to*.

House at rising to adjourn till *Monday*, the 9th day April next.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at a quarter before Nine o'clock, till Monday, 9th April.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, April 9, 1866.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBER SWORN—Henry Arthur Herbert, esquire, *for* Kerry.

SELECT COMMITTEE—On Contagious Diseases *nominated*.

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—CLASS I. PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS—*Resolutions* [March 22] *reported*.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolutions in Committee*—Crown Lands Acts.

Ordered—Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland)*; Labouring Classes' Dwellings (Ireland)*; Drainage Maintenance (Ireland)*; Local Officers Superannuation (Ireland)*

First Reading—Local Officers Superannuation (Ireland)* [92]; Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland) [93]; Labouring Classes' Dwellings (Ireland) [94]; Drainage Maintenance (Ireland [95].

Second Reading—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases* [86].

Considered as amended—Labouring Classes' Dwellings* [67].

Third Reading—Public Offices (Site)* [62]; Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man)* [80], and *passed*.

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

Mr. Speaker having taken the Chair, begged to acknowledge the kindness and consideration of the House during his illness; and stated that, although far advanced in his recovery, he should still be obliged to claim some further indulgence; and he hoped he might be permitted to sit while putting the Questions.

LONDON GAS BILL (*Lords*).

REFERRED TO SELECT COMMITTEE.

Bill read a second time.

MR. ALDERMAN LAWRENCE moved that the Bill be referred to the same Select Committee which was then considering the London (City) Corporation Gas Bill.

MR. ADAIR said, he understood that the sole object of the Bill was a financial one, and that it did not at all affect the question whether gas had been well or ill supplied to the public. It, therefore, ought not to be referred to the same Committee as the other Bill.

MR. LOCKE said, he thought it most important that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. If there was nothing for them to consider, so much the better for the Committee.

MR. KINNAIRD said, he must oppose the Motion for referring the Bill to the Committee which had the City of London Corporation Gas Bill before it. The present Bill was a merely financial one, and limited to the purpose of raising money to pay for new buildings which the company were under the Gas Act obliged to erect. Every protection for the interest of the public was secured by the Bill, and there was not a single clause in it giving any additional powers to the Commissioners. It was therefore hard, simply because the City of London was piqued at not being able to pass its Bill, that the promoters of the present measure should be put to the expense and inconvenience of having their Bill sent to the same Committee.

MR. ROEBUCK said, he wished to know what harm there was in submitting this Bill to the consideration of a Committee. If the promoters of the Bill were right the Committee would decide in their favour. If they were wrong they would be beaten. On that simple consideration he thought the Bill ought to be referred to a Committee. He believed there was not a gas company in the City of London that was not at this time cheating the public.

MR. DODSON said, the object of the Bill was simply to raise additional capital. At the present moment there was only one petition against it, and as to that the *locus standi* of the petitioner was disputed. If the Bill should prove to be an unopposed Bill, it would be somewhat hard on the promoters to refer it to a Committee and put the promoters to the expense of appearing by counsel. If, on the other hand, the petitioners should make good their ground against the Bill, the House would refer it to the Committee to which the other gas Bills had been referred. The Motion of the hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Alderman Lawrence) should be postponed till Friday next, when it would be seen whether the Bill was an opposed or an unopposed one. It could not be committed until eight days after the second reading.

MR. ALDERMAN LAWRENCE said, that the Committee had instructions from the House to go into the whole question of gas and of the Act of 1860. It was clearly understood that all measures relating to the supply of gas should be referred to that Committee, and he therefore trusted the House would refer this Bill also. He denied that the corporation of the City of London was actuated by any pique in the matter.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be committed to the Select Committee on the London (City) Corporation Gas Bill."—(*Mr. Alderman Lawrence.*)

The House *divided* :—Ayes 73 ; Noes 36 : Majority 37.

COURT OF PROBATE.—QUESTION.

MR. LOCKE said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, the reason of the delay in giving effect to the suggestions made by the Judge of the Court of Probate to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury for the future regulation of the salaries and emoluments of the clerks and officers in the Principal Registry ?

MR. CHILDERS : Sir, I have to state, in reply, that Sir James Wilde submitted to the Treasury early this year a plan for re-organizing the Registry of the Probate Court. Hitherto, officers have been appointed to specific duties at specific salaries, but no system of classification or annual increment in salary has been established. The Treasury were unable to take up the question at once from the pressure of other business, but the proposals were carefully considered and reported upon in March, and I hope before the end of this month that I shall be able to state the result to the House.

ARMY SURGEONS IN THE GUARDS.

QUESTION.

MR. O'BEIRNE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether the system hitherto followed in promoting Assistant Surgeons to Battalion Surgeons in the Foot Guards has not been Regimental ; whether there is any intention to change that system ; and, if any change is to be made, under what warrant ?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, in reply, that up to the year 1858 the system of the promotion of assistant-surgeons to surgeons in the Guards was undoubtedly a regimental system. In that year, however, a warrant was issued which conferred several pecuniary advantages upon the medical department, and that warrant also enacted that the mode of promotion as a general rule should be by seniority in the service. In 1860 a question arose as to whether the provisions of this warrant would apply to the surgeons of the household brigade of cavalry, and, after consideration, it was decided by Her Majesty on the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary for War that in the household cavalry and the Guards also, in consideration of the surgeons having accepted the warrant, and being in the enjoyment of the advantages conferred upon them by it, the mode of promotion enacted by that warrant should be carried out in both services, to the extent that the promotion from the rank of assistant-surgeons to surgeons should not go in the regiment but in the brigade. Until within a few days no case had occurred in the Brigade of Guards under the new system ; the alteration, however, was not a recent one, but dated as long back as 1860.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE.—QUESTION.

Mr. READ said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of the Government that those portions of the Cattle Diseases Act which authorizes the slaughter of all cattle suffering from the plague shall be continued in force after the 15th of April?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that the temporary provisions—those affecting the slaughter of cattle—which were to expire on the 15th of April, would continue in operation till the 10th of May.

Mr. READ: The provisions for compensation as well as the slaughter of cattle?

Sir GEORGE GREY: Yes.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr Speaker do now leave the Chair."

REPORT OF THE SEA FISHERIES COMMISSIONERS—OYSTER CULTURE.

OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. HUNT said, he wished to call the attention of the House to a subject concerning which he gave notice before the adjournment for the Easter recess. It was only the thin attendance of Members that prevented his bringing the matter forward on the day of the adjournment. He now desired to direct the attention of the House to the sixth section of the Report of the Sea Fisheries Commission, respecting the desirability of appropriating certain public grounds in estuaries, bays, and places of that nature within the three-mile limit—over which now the inhabitants of the country had a common right of fishing—to companies or individuals for the purpose of cultivating oysters. He was anxious to elicit the opinions and intentions of the Government in this matter, and he hoped the House would not think it was a subject unworthy its notice. The subject was one which in France had received to a great extent the attention of the Government, by whom certain regulations were made and certain conditions prescribed, under which persons were enabled to take possession of the foreshores for the purpose of oyster culture. The Commissioners, in their very able Report, referred to the amount of ground which was favourable for such culture in these kingdoms, enumerating among

other places the coasts of Kent and Essex, chiefly the estuary of the Thames, Clew Bay, in Ireland, and portions of the Scottish coast. It seemed that there were in connection with the oyster fisheries certain spots which the public had a right to use, while in the immediate neighbourhood of those public grounds there were, for the most part, private beds, which had for years been devoted to the raising of oysters. The Commissioners were of opinion that a large portion of those public grounds might with advantage be appropriated to oyster culture, which they said was not promoted to the same extent in them as it would be if they were in private hands. For the purposes of such culture it was necessary that the ground should be kept clear, not only from the accumulation of weeds and mud, but also from the enemies of the oyster—the whelk and starfish—as well as from the accumulation of muscles. The Commissioners under those circumstances recommended that the public should be deprived of their right over the grounds to which he alluded, and that they should be delivered over under certain conditions to persons who would use them for oyster culture. Their Report, it was clear, would stimulate the applications of companies for the purpose. At present only one Bill had passed into law allowing such appropriation, and that was two years ago in the case of the Herne Bay and Reculver Oyster Fishery, and already there had been a Chancery suit with regard to that company. It might or might not be desirable that those appropriations should be permitted in future; but if they were, companies ought not, in his opinion, be allowed to go to a Committee upstairs for a Bill without having some general principle laid down for their guidance. He agreed with the Commissioners as to the desirability of the appropriation, but he thought the Government should bring in some general measure on the subject, so that the parties applying should know the conditions under which they would take the grounds, and also that the public might be protected as far as it should be thought right for them to be. The Government would therefore, he hoped, bring in some general measure on the subject. The questions which would have to be decided by such a measure were, whether any portion of the public grounds should still be left open to the public, or whether the whole should be appropriated as was recommended; whether, in the event of their being appropriated by an individual or by companies, the laying out for a certain number of years of a certain amount of capital should be required on the penalty of a forfeiture of their rights; and whether the owners of private oyster beds in the neighbourhood of the appropriated public grounds should be compensated, for they said that the public grounds were in a great measure stocked by the spat or oyster spawn which went from their private grounds, and they were anxious to retain the advantage they enjoyed at present, of being able to reclaim that oyster spat. If the Government endorsed the views of the Commissioners to the effect that the appropriation should be allowed, they might, perhaps, deem it advisable to declare that clauses should be introduced into private Bills for the purpose similar to those required by the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act. He was anxious, inasmuch as he believed that before long applications would be made by many persons seeking to form themselves into companies, with a view to oyster culture, to see some uniform principle adopted by the House, under which the appropriations to which he adverted might take place. He asked the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to that part of the Report of the Sea Fisheries Commissioners (United Kingdom) which relates to the desirability of promoting the Cultivation of Oysters by the appropriation of public grounds in estuaries and other places for the formation of Oyster Beds; and if it is the intention of the Government to bring in any general measure upon the subject?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON said, the subject had been under the consideration of the Government. The Board of Trade, without exactly pledging themselves to every recommendation urged by the Commissioners, were favourable generally to their objects with respect to the cultivation of oysters. There could be no doubt that there were portions of the bed of the sea within the marine league which might be appropriated to the cultivation of oysters, and over which exclusive right might be given to private persons without any disadvantage to the public. The question, as far as he had been able to form an opinion upon it, stood thus: If a portion of the bed of the sea were granted by the Crown there still remained to the public the right of fishing; and if any person having such grant of foreshore and bed of the sea with the marine league were to lay down an oyster ground, and to go to great expense in cultivating and raising a crop of oysters, others might come and in a few years sweep them away under the sanction of a common right of fishing. He concurred with the hon. Gentleman in thinking that if an exclusive right were given in the way proposed, we should be contributing very usefully to the encouragement of the cultivation of oysters, and to the increase of the supply of that important article of food. The Government had a Bill under consideration, but whether it would be desirable to proceed, as the hon. Gentleman suggested, by proposing a set of clauses that should be incorporated in all private Bills in those cases in which persons sought for powers to appropriate the bed of the sea or any river, he was not quite prepared to say. That might be a fit way of accomplishing the object in view, or it might be attained by a system of licences with proper safeguards. Great caution would be required to be observed before any Department of the State should take on itself to grant exclusive rights of property in those cases in which rights were now possessed by the public. The question of the enclosure of waste lands and public commons, was one which at the present day excited considerable attention; and if persons could easily enclose and appropriate to themselves portions of the coast where humble fishermen obtained a scanty livelihood, without fitting compensation and proper consideration, a general ground of complaint might be furnished. The Government were alive to the great importance of the subject, and the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hunt) had done good service in bringing it under the notice of the House. After some further time had been given for its consideration the Government would, he hoped, be able to mature a measure which might, perhaps, meet with the favour of the House, and accomplish the end which the hon. Member had in view.

Motion, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply *considered* in Committee—Civil Service Estimates — Class I. Public Works and Buildings.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) £40,925, to complete the sum for Royal Palaces.

(2.) £85,437, to complete the sum for Public Buildings.

Mr. BENTINCK said, he wished to ask for an explanation respecting the sum of £1,200 put down for designs for enlarging and improving the National Gallery, and to know what course the Government intended to pursue with regard to that building.

Mr. COWPER said, that the Government had determined to buy the ground now occupied by the workhouse, the parochial schools, and some houses in the rear of the National Gallery. It would be necessary to consider the matter in two points of view—one in reference to covering by buildings the ground in the rear, and the other in reference to pulling down the building in Trafalgar Square, which was unworthy of the position it occupied, and erecting a new building there, in addition to the buildings to be erected in the rear. The Government were not prepared to decide at once to pull down the existing National Gallery before having some idea of what should be substituted in its place. He had, therefore, thought it desirable that a limited number of architects should be consulted as to the best mode of laying out the ground, and as to the general question of the expediency of erecting a new Gallery either on all the ground he had mentioned, including a part of Trafalgar Square, or on a portion of it. As it was not a case for unlimited competition this matter would be carefully considered by a small number of most eminent architects, to each of whom £200 would be given for their labour in preparing designs. The number had been at first fixed at six, and it had since been determined to enlarge the number to ten; and he doubted whether it would be desirable to enlarge it further. The arrangement was only a preliminary step for the purpose of getting the opinion of these architects and for obtaining their designs, and whatever plan might be adopted would be brought before Parliament.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, he was glad that the number of six architects was to be enlarged to ten, and he would be more satisfied if the number were increased to a round dozen, or still further. If the right hon. Gentleman was not at present prepared to mention the names of the selected ten, perhaps he would state how soon they would be made known, and whether the competing architects would be called on to produce two designs—one for enlarging the present Gallery, and the other for an entirely new building? He trusted that nothing like prejudice would be allowed to operate against any one in regard to the style which he might adopt.

Mr. BENTINCK said, he concurred in the propriety of enlarging the number of architects to be called in by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) if he went into the City and walked through some of the thoroughfares there, would see the works of many architects who might properly be included in the competition. Another point on which it was desirable that information should be given was, whether the style of the new building had been considered. He did not suppose that any one desired to see a pseudo-mediæval building erected in Trafalgar Square, and he had reason to believe that the right hon. Gentleman was in favour of a different style. He understood that Mr. Street had been nominated one of the ten architects, but if that gentleman should be appointed architect for the Law Courts under the condition of confining his exertions to their construction entirely, how could he possibly attend to the erection of a new National Gallery as well? Another point of importance was the constitution of a competent tribunal to decide on the merits of the various designs. From the letters which he himself received, as well as from what he saw in the public papers, he inferred that there was great public anxiety as to the competency of the tribunal. He hoped that gentlemen would be selected for that office in whom the public and the class of professional architects would place the most perfect confidence. It would be satisfactory, he thought, if the right hon. Gentleman assured the House that he would feel at liberty to select for the purpose of preparing designs a larger number of architects than ten.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, he agreed with the hon. Member (Mr. Bentinck) as to the necessity of appointing a competent tribunal to decide on the designs, but did not concur with him in thinking that the question of style should be foreclosed, or that this was the proper time to raise the discussion. In the discussion about the Law Courts the other day it was creditable to the House that the *acharné* warfare about the respective merits of Gothic and Classic architecture was not on that occasion revived, the debate being confined to the question then under consideration — the propriety of having a good tribunal and a sufficient number of competing architects. Upon that point he sympathized with the hon. Member, but could not go along with him in the declaration that the building in

Trafalgar Square should be classical. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) would not commit himself one way or the other on the question of style. If the present building were pulled down, Trafalgar Square would then present a *tabula rasa*, with St. Martin's Church and a certain number of modern Italian buildings round it, but upon one side stood the half-Gothic Northumberland House, while close by the more than half-Gothic Charing Cross Hotel and Eleanor Cross rose conspicuous. On such a site a building in either style might be raised with equal propriety.

Mr. LOCKE said, he wished to inquire, whether it was the decision of the Government to re-face the present building, or to pull it down?

Mr. COWPER said, that his individual opinion was in favour of pulling down the existing building, but the Government had not come to a final decision on the subject, since the decision might partly depend on the excellence of the design for the new building, for mean and inappropriate as the old Gallery was, it was possible they might get something worse in its place. Great care must be taken to make the new portion harmonize with the old, in the event of the latter being retained; and, as no decision had yet been arrived at, he thought it best, in giving instructions to the architects, to request them to prepare alternative plans—one for an entirely new building, and one simply for alterations of, and additions to, the existing building.

Mr. LOCKE said, that if they merely re-faced the old building all the present inconveniences internally would remain, the space allotted to the sculpture being the most miserable hole that could be conceived. He should much prefer a new building, the designs being submitted to general competition. It would be absurd to attempt to put a new face upon the building, unless it was also to have a new interior. Its small rooms were essentially unfitted for the purposes of a national gallery. He did not think it would be advisable to erect a Gothic building upon the site.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, he would suggest that the ground contiguous to the Houses of Parliament and the new Foreign Office should be bought up, so that they might have a site which could accommodate the whole of our public offices. This would inevitably have to be done in the end, and it was surely much better to do so at once at a moderate cost than to wait until every improvement had been made on the property, and have to give seven or eight times its original value. The capital the sum asked for represented would effect this object, and would produce a commodious building that would be a credit to the country. Enormous sums, amounting to upwards of £25,000, were annually set down as rent of public offices, and the more economical course would be to buy up the necessary premises and sites at once. He thought the course at present pursued a penny wise and pound foolish one.

Mr. COWPER said, that the ground to the rear of the National Gallery consisted of an acre and a half, and it would be necessary that it should be built upon before the present Gallery was pulled down, in order that there might be an edifice to which the collection could be temporarily removed, no other place being available. Then would come the question, whether it would be desirable to destroy the present building. He was of opinion that it would, but that was a matter on which they need not for the present decide, and they would be better able to come to such a decision when they had before them the designs for an edifice to be erected in its place. It would not be right to prejudge this question now. He believed the National Gallery cost about £80,000, and the Government had to consider whether it would be worth while to sacrifice the value of the existing building to put up a building worthy of London and admirably adapted for the exhibition of pictures. He was of opinion that it would be worth while, but what he proposed to do was to get plans, which would enable the Government and the House to decide that question when the time for decision came.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE: Has the architect been asked to send in a plan of alterations?

Mr. COWPER: No, the building might be altered; but he thought it could not be altered in a satisfactory way. The architects selected would be called upon to furnish two plans; the first for an additional building on the new site, and the other for an entirely new structure. With reference to the number of the architects, there was nothing magical in the number six, or nine, or twelve; the proper course was to consider how many architects there were who were fit to be intrusted with such a work, and, in his opinion, the number of such men was small. When the architects who were to send in these designs were appointed, he would be prepared to make known their names. His hon. Friend opposite had referred to Mr. Street, and he was rather suprised to hear him object to the appointment of that gentleman, who was, in his (Mr. Cowper's) opinion, a man of great genius, and one to whom he would be happy to intrust any great public work. His hon. Friend seemed to object to that selection because Mr. Street was a Gothic architect; but there were Gothic architects quite capable of designing admirable buildings in another style. Mr. Scott, for instance, who was known as a Gothic architect, had used the Palladian style in the Foreign Office with the greatest success. There were certain buildings the style of which might be determined beforehand upon general considerations. But a picture gallery was not a building of that description. What was wanted in such a case was something novel in its adaptation to the uses for which it was required, for all people would now agree that such a gallery should be lighted from the roof, consequently there would be no windows to furnish the marked characteristics of the different architectural styles. He had therefore thought it desirable to leave the architects unfettered with regard to the style of the building in question. They were told that all that was required was a building which might afford an advantageous light and accommodation to the large multitude who visited it; and which would at the same time serve as an ornament to the site on which it was to be raised. His hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Baillie Cochrane) recommended that large purchases should at once be made of the grounds in the neighbourhood of our public offices. But it was not always an economical course to buy land before it was wanted. He would remind his hon. Friend that there was a bit of land at the corner of Downing Street which had remained for thirty-five years unused. That site was deemed necessary when it was purchased for the purposes of that day, and he did not complain of that purchase, but they acted more wisely in purchasing the ground according as they wanted it for the public offices than if they acted upon the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman, and were buying land before they really wanted it.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE had listened with pleasure to the remarks of his right hon. Friend (Mr. Cowper) as to the equality upon which the different styles would be placed by the plan of top lighting, which left the walls to be mere spaces available for any system of decoration; but he must protest against his statement that only a small number of men were fit to be intrusted with such a building. He (Mr. B. Hope) probably had a greater acquaintance with architects than any other non-professional man in the House; and, in his opinion, the number of architects of ability, judgment, taste, and imagination was much larger than the right hon. Gentleman conceived. The development of art education, the facilities of travelling, and the encouragement that was afforded by the so-called æsthetic propensities of the age had brought out a surprising amount of architectural talent. He was afraid of raising the question of an unlimited competition, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would admit, on re-consideration, that there were a great many men competent for such a work, and that he would be very liberal in his invitation to competitors. It was possible (though he did not commit himself to it) that a small number of architects might be fit to design the Law Courts, owing to the quantity of chambers and the elaborate business to be transacted therein; but in the case of a building so simple as a National Gallery, a dozen or even twenty men would by no means exhaust the list of men able to design a structure which would be an honour to the country. With respect to the purchase of a site, he would call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that there was an area which they already possessed, and on which they might erect public offices at a cost much less than the capital sum represented by this £25,000 a year. He referred to New Palace Yard. No doubt it was a very good thing to have open spaces, but the mania for them might be carried a little too far, and it was possible to have open spaces that destroyed instead of enhancing the effect of our public buildings. Sir Charles Barry, he might remind the House, produced a magnificent plan, which was laid on the table by Sir William Molesworth, the then First Commissioner of Works, for enclosing New Palace Yard on two sides, with a noble and high-roofed gateway at the angle, reminding one of the mediæval gateways of German cities, with high-roofed buildings round the two sides of the yard. Such a plan would, he thought, be much more dignified, and would tend more to the completeness of the Houses of Parliament, than the iron railing which was to be put up along Bridge Street, and he would urge his right hon. Friend to consider whether public economy and the completeness of the Palace of Westminster might not both be attained by carrying out this too-soon forgotten and abandoned scheme of Sir Charles Barry's.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER said, it seemed that the Government were about to proceed in the matter of the National Gallery in that piecemeal manner which the House had so many reasons to lament. They would be obliged, sooner or later, to consider whether the existing building should be pulled down, and it was surely much better that they should decide this point before taking any step whatever. They were going to erect a building in the rear of the National Gallery without having any idea of what was to be placed in the front. They must consider, sooner or later, what they were going to do with the National Gallery, whether they were going to pull it down or re-face it. Let them come forward with a comprehensive plan and he believed Parliament would not grudge the money when they knew what they would get for it; but by proceeding in this piecemeal manner they would be very likely to spend in the long run a larger sum than would be required for a comprehensive scheme. He agreed with the hon. Member for Stoke (Mr. B. Hope) that the number of competent architects was not confined to six, or twelve, or twenty. He was told there were 300 architects in this country. [Mr. BERESFORD HOPE: There are nearer a thousand.] Taking them, then, at a thousand, it was only reasonable to conclude that a fair percentage of them were competent for such a work, and by limiting the competitors to half a dozen they might exclude the very man who was most qualified. He should prefer an open competition; but if this could not be, let there be a fair percentage invited to compete. With regard to Mr. Street, he did not wish to say anything in disparagement of that gentleman, but he thought he was not likely to produce anything good in the Italian style. He was informed that he some time ago visited Vicenza, and that he went through it without seeing anything of the public buildings for which it was famous, on the ground that he was afraid if he looked at them the purity of his taste would be injured. He doubted, therefore, the judgment of the Government in selecting Mr. Street as a competitor. With regard to style, he hoped the House would have an opportunity of discussing the matter before a definite decision was come to. In his opinion, Gothic was not adapted for a picture gallery, owing to the mullion windows, the small openings for light, and all the adjuncts required to render Gothic windows handsome, whereas the rival style was capable of greater adaptation to the object in view, and would allow plenty of light and ventilation. He should like to know whether the new National Gallery building was merely to contain the pictures now in the collection and those to be purchased in future, or whether it was to accommodate the Royal Academy, the National Portrait Gallery, and the Natural History collection. His view was that a building might be erected which would be capable not only of containing the gallery of pictures we now possessed, but of fulfilling a variety of other purposes under the same roof. He hoped the Government would give some information as to what they really intended to do. In any case he trusted they would not adopt a piecemeal system, but would wait until they had determined upon some comprehensive plan before they directed the building to be erected.

MR. HENRY BAILLIE said, that his hon. Friend (Mr. Baillie Cochrane) had suggested that it was advisable to capitalize the sum of £25,000 per annum voted for the rents of public offices, and with the sum so raised to erect suitable buildings for the public offices. Of that suggestion the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) had taken no notice, although by adopting that plan no outlay of public money would be required. He wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether there was intention of continuing the experiments which were commenced some years ago for the purpose of arresting the decay of the stone facings of the Houses of Parliament?

MR. BAGNALL said, he wished to inquire, whether the right hon. Gentleman proposed that the new picture galleries should be lighted with gas?

MR. BENTINCK said, he should be sorry if it was supposed that he had intended to say anything direspectful to Mr. Street in the observations he had made. All that he intended to say was that that gentleman being committed to the Gothic style it would be better to place the matter in the hands of an architect who was not wedded to any particular style of architecture.

MR. COWPER said, that the phrase

"piecemeal," by which the hon. and learned Member for Dundalk (Sir George Bowyer) had described the course of the Government, was altogether misplaced. The ground would not be vacant for two years, and it was impossible to commence now the comprehensive plan. He thought it right to occupy the present year with a careful consideration of different alternative plans as to the mode of using the acre and a half in the rear of the National Gallery, and that they should ask architects to give their recommendations as to laying out the ground, and dealing with the site of the existing building, supposing it should be pulled down. This was all that could be done at present. The building to be erected at the rear of the present gallery would, of course, not be a temporary structure. The building to be erected would form part of the National Gallery, whether the existing building were pulled down or not. No steps would be taken in the way of erecting the proposed building until a comprehensive plan had been approved by the Government, and had been submitted to the House. The hon. and learned Member had asked as to the mode in which the award would be made when the plans were submitted. All he would now say upon the subject was that the persons who were to make the award had not yet been named; but he might mention that, in the case of the competitions for the Natural History Museum and for the Patent Museum, the Committee of Judges to determine upon the merits of the various plans consisted of three architects and two nonprofessional gentlemen, and that the decision of that body appeared to give general satisfaction at the time. In reply to another question which had been put to him, he begged to state that gas might safely be used in lighting picture galleries where proper means were adopted to secure adequate ventilation. It could not be introduced into the present buildings without considerable danger, but when they were building new ones it was easy to make ventilation arrangements by which the products of combustion might be carried off. The new building was for those pictures which belonged to the National Gallery, and those to be hereafter added to the collection. It might be thought that the Cartoons, which were formerly at Hampton Court, and which were now temporarily at South Kensington, might be exhibited with advantage in the new building, as also many of the drawings of the Old Masters now in the British Museum; and space would be provided for these. With regard to the decay of the stone in the Palace of Westminster, a good deal of misunderstanding and exaggeration existed on the subject. So far as he could understand, the only portion of the building which showed serious signs of decay were certain horizontal lines below the weatherings, where the drip of the rain was retained, and the moisture penetrated the surface. The stone was so porous that where the rain remained for a long time it carried with it the soot, and the sulphurous acids affected the alkaline portion of the stone, and thus decay ensued. But the decay was not at all general, or of a character to excite any apprehensions for the future. A comparison had been made, when he first came into office, between two solutions, the one called Zopissa, of Mr. Szerelmy, and the other made under Mr. Ransome's patent. Upon the report of Sir Roderick Murchison and Professor Faraday, the former was applied to the inner court, and so far did it succeed that there was no appearance of decay; but from what had been ascertained by analysis of its composition, which was in part bitumen and zinc paint, it did not appear that its effects would be permanent, and it had not been thought right to continue its application. Six of the most promising of the applications which had been recommended to them had been applied to the western front, near to the House of Lords, under the superintendence of a competent chemist, Mr. Abel, of Woolwich; and it was hoped that they would receive a report from him next year on the results of the various plans, and the best of the six would then be adopted. As to the purchase of land, what he had said was that he did not think it desirable to purchase beyond their wants; but with regard to the offices now in hired buildings, that was a matter which was receiving the serious consideration of the Government. A Treasury Commission had recently been named to consider what arrangements might be made for erecting permanent buildings to receive all those offices which were at present in hired buildings, and bringing all the Departments of the Government into closer juxta-position.

MR. BAGNALL said, he did not understand that the right hon. Gentleman had replied to his question as to whether it was intended to light the new picture galleries with gas.

MR. COWPER said, that he would consider the propriety of lighting the gallery with gas for the exhibition of the pictures at night.

SIR MATTHEW RIDLEY said, that he concurred in the opinion entertained by many competent authorities that the use of gas in the galleries was attended by pernicious effects upon the pictures, and this he believed was especially the case in London, where the quality of the gas was exceedingly impure. Even in South Kensington Museum, where precautions had been taken to purify the gas which was burnt, it was believed by many whose opinions were entitled to weight, that the pictures suffered injury from being subjected to its influence. A Committee was inquiring into the subject at the present moment at South Kensington, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not hastily make up his mind upon the subject, but give that attention to the opinions of that Committee to which they were entitled. One object should be to preserve our national collections as long as possible, and not to expose the pictures to the injurious influences inseparable from the lighting of the public galleries by gas.

MR. HENRY SEYMOUR said, he wished to know if the passing of the Vote under discussion pledged the Committee to the employment of a small and a particular number of architects in the preparation of designs for the improvement of the National Gallery; he would also be glad to learn whether the designs would be exhibited in public?

MR. COWPER said, he had already stated that the Committee would not be pledged by passing the Vote to the consideration of the designs of any specified number of architects only. For himself, he had no preference for any particular number, and though an endeavour would be made to have such a number of architects as would constitute a guarantee that the competition was entered into by men of sufficient experience and qualifications, the number had not yet been finally filled up. The designs when sent in would be exhibited to the public and to the House.

MR. HENRY SEYMOUR said, he wished to know whether any Member after this Vote would be permitted to revive the question as to the advisability of submitting those designs to public competition. Would his right hon. Friend also take into consideration the improvement of the passage at the back of the National Gallery, such as that, for instance, which might be effected by the formation of a thoroughfare, which was much needed, between Regent Street and the Strand? The designs to which they were referring might include the formation of such a street without any extra cost. He hoped, moreover, that the Baths and Washhouses at the back of the National Gallery would be removed, and this might the more easily be done as the expense attendant upon their removal would be comparatively trifling. They only cost £4,000 to build. It was plain that if they were allowed to remain, the smoke discharged from their chimney would before long seriously injure the pictures.

MR. THOMSON HANKEY said, he wished to ask, whether it was intended to take all the Votes in the Paper before them that night, including the new Votes, such as that for the Natural History Museum.

MR. COWPER said, he did not propose to take that Vote that evening. He assured his hon. Friend (Mr. Henry Seymour) that he would not be pledged by agreeing to this Vote. However desirable an improved communication at the back of the National Gallery might be, he could not understand that it was the duty of the Government to do the work, or that its expense should be defrayed out of the national revenue. He would suggest an application to the Metropolitan Board of Works. He might, however, say that the Government proposed that the new building should be set back so as to widen Hemming's Row. He did not propose to take the site of the Baths and Washhouses, simply because it was not wanted; but he thought that precaution should be taken to prevent smoke coming from the building.

MR. HENRY SEYMOUR said, he thought that it was impossible to prevent injury to the pictures if the baths were allowed to remain. Besides, the proposal of the Government to remove the pictures to South Kensington was founded upon the injury which they would sustain from smoke in London. He believed that the metropolis would never be worthy of the country until there was some central authority, as in Paris, to make improvements. The Chief Commissioners of Works, by his influence over bodies having funds for such a purpose, might do a great deal in this direction by causing all the authorities to act together in the matter. If he applied to the Metropolitan Board of Works no doubt they would agree to co-operate in carrying out a grand scheme of improvement. He had always held the opinion that the Chief Commissioner of Works had as much power vested in him as any authority existing in Paris to make the metropolis worthy of the nation. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take a more extended view of what were the duties of his office.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he confessed there appeared to him to be very considerable danger in laying down the principle that a party had only to create a nuisance in the neighbourhood of a public building in order to induce the Government to propose to vote a considerable sum to purchase the property; for he was afraid that an example of that kind would create a great disposition to follow the precedent. He believed that there was a steam-engine in the Baths and Washhouses in question in St. Martin's parish, no doubt an excellent institution—but he did not know why the managers should be permitted to contravene the law, and he should propose that it should be ascertained whether this smoke nuisance ought not to be put down by compelling them to consume their own smoke. Recently there was a very interesting discussion in the House as to the smoke nuisance, and he hoped that there was an increasing disposition to set their faces against it. If in the instance in question the nuisance existed, he should prefer its suppression by means of the law to buying it up by means of public money. As to the proposition to place a very great responsibility upon the Chief Commissioner of Works—to make him the centre of all authority as to metropolitan improvement, like the Prefect of the Seine in Paris—that he should take the initiative by forming an opinion as to the improvements, and urging their adoption by the Metropolitan Board of Works—that proposition might be right or not, but it would involve a very important change, and one the nature of which the House ought to be alive to. There was this important difference between the Commissioner of Works and the Prefect of the Seine, that the latter, though an Imperial, and not a municipal officer, was backed up and sustained by a very large grant from the Imperial revenue, and this grant, in connection with the municipal revenues of Paris, was devoted to the improvement of the city. Now, it would be singularly hard if his right hon. Friend (Mr. Cowper) were expected to produce the same splendid and magnificent results unless they were prepared to supply him with a large annual budget devoted to the improvement of London. But he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was very doubtful whether the House would be prepared to adopt that course, for if they took that step they would have to adopt the same course in many other instances. In France they had a totally different system. In that country there was a multitude of charges paid out of the Imperial revenue which were here defrayed by local authority out of local rates, and if the House should adopt the system of drawing upon the Imperial revenue they must be prepared to adopt a very great change in their system of finance. Whatever might be their opinion as to important changes which turned upon this discussion, he was quite sure that they would not call upon his right hon. Friend to make a very large quantity of bricks without any straw. Whilst agreeing that it was very desirable to have improvements such as had been referred to, he must say that if they expected those results from the action of his right hon. Friend they must supply him with the necessary money.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, he wished to ask, whether the promise given with respect to the bringing forward of plans applied alike to all projected public buildings, including the new Patent Office and the London University?

Mr. HENLEY said, he was glad the Chancellor of the Exchequer had interposed to prevent the First Commissioner of Works getting upon a very tall horse, and riding about London to see what changes he could propose in order that the streets might be made worthy of London, and London worthy of England. He was perfectly sure that if the right hon. Gentleman were thereafter to suggest his improvements to the Board of Works they would immediately ask him, "How much money are you going to give us?" And when he answered, "Not a farthing," they would doubtless make him a civil bow, and nothing would be left for him but to get on his horse again and ride home. It was sufficient if Government dealt with improvements when necessity and opportunity arose for making them; it was more than sufficient if Government set about making London worthy of a diplomatic kingdom.

Mr. GREGORY said, he wished to inquire, whether the architects who would design plans for the National Gallery would be instructed to make provision in the new building for the pictures of the National Portrait Gallery ?

Sir WILLIAM STIRLING-MAXWELL said, he wished to ask whether the architects would be instructed to make such a design as would preserve the present building ? He would suggest that as it was generally admitted to be unsatisfactory it should not be preserved ; and that the designs should not be spoilt by any such instruction. An additional reason for the rejection of the present building was the projected new street between the Strand and Regent Street, which would materially affect the shape of the new National Gallery. The right hon. Gentleman had, on a previous occasion, submitted a design for a very excellent picture gallery at Burlington House, and its rejection was to be regretted.

Mr. COWPER said, that considering the time which would elapse before the site in the rear of the National Gallery could be acquired, and the time the buildings would take to erect, five years in the future was the earliest period when it would be necessary to deal with the existing building. The site proposed to be purchased in rear of the National Gallery could not be obtained for two years. After that period had elapsed, it would take two years to complete the new buildings, and, consequently, it was not possible to deal at the same moment with the site behind the National Gallery and the Gallery itself. The design would be divided into two separate parts — one would refer to that portion of the future gallery to be erected on the acre and a half, and the other to what might be substituted for the existing building in Trafalgar Square. The two plans were to form a complete and uniform building, yet the Government and Parliament could accept either without its companion. He had given instructions that provision should be made for the reception of the pictures of the National Portrait Gallery ; but the management and responsibility of that Gallery would be kept distinct from that of the National Gallery.

Sir WILLIAM JOLLIFFE said, he wished to ask, whether the right hon. Gentleman could indicate any period at which it was likely that the portion of the National Gallery now appropriated to other purposes would be available for the accommodation of the national pictures ?

Mr. COWPER said, that pursuant to the notice they had received from the Government to that effect, the Royal Academy were prepared to vacate the portion of the building assigned to them as soon as they could obtain fitting quarters elsewhere.

Vote *agreed to.*

(3.) £9,000, to complete the sum for Furniture of Public Offices.

Mr. BOVILL said, he wished to call attention to the internal condition of the Patent Office, from which a revenue of £40,000 to £60,000 annually was obtained. Any person having occasion to enter that office on business was shown into a room where the desks were most inconveniently placed, where half a dozen persons were usually waiting to make searches, and where there was exactly one chair and a stool for the accommodation of the party. The state of the place altogether was discreditable, and he did not suppose it had been white-washed for the last eight or ten years. Producing as it did so large a sum of money to the State, he wished to know whether any steps were in contemplation to provide that office with proper furniture ?

Mr. COWPER said, he had been aware that the Patent Office was confined in point of space, but not that the furniture was unsuitable to the dignity of the place. If any desks or furniture proper for the office were needed, he would take care that they were supplied.

Mr. BOVILL said, his remarks applied not to furniture suited to the dignity of the office, but to the convenience of those whose duties brought them to the Patent Office, from which the State so largely benefited.

Mr. COWPER said, it was generally expected that officers in the different departments would make known their wants in regard of furniture ; and no application of that kind had been received from the Patent Office.

Mr. BENTINCK said, he wished to ask whether the same discretion as to additional furniture was vested in officers charged with the care of the National collections of pictures. There were several places, he thought, where additional seats would add to the comfort of persons visiting the galleries.

Mr. COWPER said, that their wants were made known by the different officers to the Department of Works, which granted them if they were not very unreasonable.

Vote *agreed to.*

(4.) £78,769, to complete the sum for Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens.

Mr. SELWYN said, it was impossible for any one who took an interest in Kew Gardens to avoid referring to the great loss the public had sustained by the death of one whom it was no exaggeration to call a benefactor as well as a most efficient public servant. The right hon. Gentleman and the Government might be congratulated upon having compensated that loss, as far as possible, by the appointment of so efficient a successor as the son of that lamented officer. He knew he should not be controverting the opinions either of the late Sir William Hooker or of his son in declaring that nothing was more imperatively required at Kew than the completion of the temperate house. Three years ago attention had been called to the subject, and strong opinions expressed in that House; but the two octagons were still allowed to remain without wings, notwithstanding that the foundations had been excavated, and the workmen's sheds and temporary roads allowed to remain, to the great disfigurement of the gardens. While these buildings lay in the state he had described, other works—such as the reservoir for the supply of water—not of equal importance to Kew Gardens, whatever they might be to other parts of the Government property, had been pressed forward.

Mr. THOMSON HANKEY said, that a positive promise on this subject had been given to the House three years ago, and it was a disgrace to the country that gardens bearing so high a character should be suffered to remain in such an untidy, discreditable condition.

General DUNNE said, he must repeat the objections which he had urged on many former occasions to the payment out of the Consolidated Fund for local information, such as Battersea Park, Kennington Park, Victoria Park, and others in London. The expense of keeping up Parks should be borne, not by the Consolidated Fund, but by the localities in which they were situated.

Mr. COWPER said, he agreed with the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Selwyn) that the gardens at Kew had been most admirably conducted under the late excellent and learned director (Sir William Hooker) and his no less able successor, Dr. Hooker. The question which had been raised in the present discussion was, whether they were to spend a sum of £14,000 in enlarging the present temperate house? It was quite true that the building as designed seven or eight years ago included net merely the building now erected, but also two wings. When the plan for an enlargement was submitted to him, he delayed some time his decision on the subject; but after considering the matter with much attention he arrived at the conclusion that the expenditure was not one which he would be justified in recommending, and accordingly he had not thought it his duty to propose in these Estimates a sum of £14,000 for new wings to the temperate house. As that decision had been come to, the excavations might now be filled up, the workmen's houses removed, and the temperate house put in order, so that it would not retain that unfinished appearance to which his hon. Friend had alluded. With regard to the expenditure on the reservoir, the late Sir William Hooker had pointed out to him that the plants in the house itself were suffering from the impurity of the water accumulating on the leaves, and the expenditure on the reservoir with the view of removing the cause of the injury was one which could not be delayed.

Vote *agreed to.*

(5.) £49,090, to complete the sum for the New Houses of Parliament.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he rose to call attention to the inconvenience arising from the existing arrangement of seats in the House of Commons. He had no very sanguine expectation that the interior of the House would be made what it ought to be; but he wished to show that the present inconvenient disposition of the seats had a physical and a moral aspect. It was a monstrous thing to have a House not large enough for the Members who were entitled to sit in it. There were 658 hon. Gentlemen entitled to take a part in the business of that House; and it was to be expected that on some occasions at least most of those Gentlemen would be present. He discarded at once from consideration the galleries above our heads as totally unsuitable for taking part in the business of the House. The Benches under the gallery, also, at each side were practically useless for the purposes of Members who wished to take part in a debate. The same might be said of those seats which were beyond the Chair. In fact, 170, at the outside, was the number of the seats really available for Members who wished to hear or to be heard. The form of the House had arisen from old associations—that of old St. Stephen's Chapel having been followed; designed long before Parliamentary Government had spread to other countries, and in which the accommodation of every kind was so bad, that ladies who wished to hear the debate had to go up into the ventilator. In all other countries that had adopted Parliamentary or representative Government, the form of their places of assembly was semi-circular, which, as experience had taught mankind, was the only form suitable for assemblies where seeing and hearing were essentials. If they looked to France, Italy, and America, they would find that the semi-circular form was the one adopted. The result was great inconvenience and great loss of time. Hon. Members who wished to secure seats were obliged to lose a full hour, by coming down at half past three o'clock, before the Speaker was at prayers. The want of sufficient accommodation produced a collision or competition between hon. Gentlemen, some of whom—young Members—contrary to the rules of the House, occasionally placed something on a seat in order to be able to claim the place at a later hour. A semi-circular arrangement of seats was the one generally adopted for legislative assemblies in other countries, and it was the one which we ought to have here. So much for the physical, now for the moral aspect of the question. In former days the House was divided into two opposite factions, and the business was confined to about half a dozen giants of debate. That was no longer the case. Hon. Members now reserved their opinions until they had heard the merits of each question. It was not to be supposed that in the present day a mass of educated men could be drilled so that they would be content to follow, in blind and silent obedience, half a dozen leaders on either side of the House. That might have done very well when the House of Commons was divided into two factions; but it was no longer so divided. Members of Parliament now exercised an independent judgment, and they had a right to expect that there should be neutral benches for hon. Gentlemen who wished to maintain an independent opinion. Look to the neutral benches of the House. They were very well placed for hon. Members who desired to carry on a private conversation, but they were of no other use or convenience. There were only six seats in that House which would answer the purposes of the cross-benches of the House of Lords. On the latter, Princes of the Blood and other peers who did not wish to be mixed up in politics were enabled to take their places without identifying themselves with any party. If the seats were arranged in a semi-circular form, there would be at least five divisions of Members, as was the case in the French Chambers. The extreme right, the extreme left. The right, the left, and the centre, were certainly natural positions. M. Thiers, for instance, would be found in the right centre. A similar arrangement was desirable in the House of Commons. Toryism might sit on one side of the House, Radicalism on the other, Conservatism here, Whiggery there, and Independence between the two. He was not prepared to submit any practical mode of carrying out his views, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) would encourage them in the expectation that a remedy could be found for the inconvenience arising from the present state of things.

Mr. THOMSON HANKEY said, he wished to make two practical suggestions. The first was that there should be a door at the end of every gangway opening into the lobby. This would remove the difficulty which hon. Members must frequently have experienced of getting into the division lobby. He did not believe that the arrangement which he ventured to propose could possibly cause any practical inconvenience. His second suggestion was that the lobbies upstairs, which were almost useless, should be thrown open. Though occasionally used by the Attorney General and other Law Officers of the Crown for writing and the arrangement of their papers, they were practically of little use to Members generally. This would give greater facilities to peers and distinguished strangers who might wish to listen to the debates, and for whom at present very scanty accommodation was provided. It was true that many hon. Members never addressed the House, but that was no reason why they should not all have convenient seats, where they could hear important debates. The crowding upon great occasions was extremely inconvenient. He thought, too, that greater accommodation might be given in the ladies' gallery, as the seats now provided for the ladies were quite discreditable to the House. It was almost impossible for a lady to sit down with any comfort and listen to a debate. In his opinion the ladies' gallery ought to be thrown open altogether, and the unsightly grating in front of the gallery might well be removed.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN said, he thought that the proposed opening of a door at the end of the gangways would be a very great improvement. With respect to the opening of the lobbies upstairs, he was not architect sufficient to say whether such an alteration could be effected. The object of the hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Darby Griffith) seemed, however, to be not so much the accommodation of Members as the re-distribution of seats—because last month he gave notice of a Question he intended to put to the First Commissioner of Works to this effect—namely—

> "Whether, considering the various shades of political opinion now existing, and likely to prevail still more in future in the House of Commons, it might not be desirable to arrange the seats of the House in such a manner as should enable Members to locate themselves in more ostensible accordance than at present with the particular class of political opinions to which they might personally incline.

The hon. Member evidently thought it was likely there would be some change in the House of Commons soon after the Reform Bill was passed, and he perhaps wished to have a place where a third party might seat themselves. His proposal would be a serious innovation upon the established practice of the House, and before they entertained it he ought to be prepared with statistics to show the necessity for a re-distribution of seats. Of what was this third party to consist? An hon. Member (Mr. Bright) had said that it was composed of only two Members, and he was at a loss to know which was the head and which the tail. They had heard of fancy franchises, and this might be called a fancy party, but perhaps they might, more correctly speaking, be termed "casuals." No such new idea ought to be introduced in the constitution of the House without ample notice and the fullest inquiry. The hon. Gentleman in support of his proposition had alluded to foreign countries with novel institutions, but—as we had been reminded by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli)—ours was an ancient and historical institution, and had not sprung up out of the backwoods of America. The existing arrangements ought not to be altered without manifest necessity for an alteration.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER said, he thought it was hardly fair, just when the Government had brought in a Franchise Bill, and had promised to lay upon the table a Bill for the re-distribution of seats, to impose upon them the additional burden of classifying Members according to the opinions they held or the parties to which they belonged. Perhaps the hon. Member for Devizes himself would have some difficulty in indicating with whom he ought to be classified. It appeared to be his idea that hon. Members ought to be classified like the objects in a natural history collection, but he had not given the elements which would form the basis of such a classification. The accommodation in the ladies' gallery, to which he called attention two years ago, was perfectly discreditable to that House and demanded most decided reform. There were only some eighteen seats—a most insufficient number. Even that number of ladies was inconveniently crowded; the place was too limited for comfort and health, and besides being cramped up in a place which really might be compared with the black-hole of Calcutta, the ladies had the benefit of the foul air which ascended from the body of the House. Another reasonable ground of complaint was, that the room to which the ladies retired for refreshment was of the most miserable dimensions and would accommodate only two at a time to get a cup of tea. There was no reason why the grating should be placed in front of the ladies' gallery; he could not imagine on what principle it was placed there. It reminded him of a Jewish synagogue, where the women were supposed to be concealed from the men; but in that House there was no reason for such concealment. Concealment was not considered necessary in the House of Lords; and if not there, why should it be necessary in the House of Commons? The objection as to freedom of debate being interfered with applied equally to both Houses; but it was so ridiculous as scarcely to be worth serious mention. Ladies had a right to a degree of comfort which was impossible with the present amount of accommodation. He hoped that no time would be lost in providing better accommodation for a greater number, a proper retiring room, and in removing the objectionable grating.

Mr. KINNAIRD said, he was much surprised to hear any hon. Member find fault with the accommodation of the House for its Members. Practically, its form was the best adapted for their deliberations. Those who were familiar with the magnificent amphitheatres which had been alluded to were struck with the superior convenience of the House of Commons. As to the inconveniences which had been spoken of, they very seldom occurred; it was probably not oftener than six or seven times a Session that Members were put to real inconvenience. The galleries were admirably adapted for hearing, and he hoped that in any response that might be made to the appeals for additional space nothing would be done to destroy the comfort of hon. Members. When his hon. Friend (Mr. Hankey) made a strong appeal for additional seats for peers, he would remind him that when the "faithful Commons" went to the House of Lords, a much larger chamber, they were treated with great indignity.

Mr. HUNT said, he did not complain of the accommodation for Members. If the seats were placed in a circular form the change might be useful to Members anxious to veer round without observation. The discussion reminded him of the disgraceful scene which took place at the commencement of the Session, when they were summoned to the House of Lords to hear the Queen's Speech. On that occasion he observed that the Speaker was much incommoded, and that the leader of the House (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) got into a back eddy and was unable to reach the Bar of the House of Lords and appear in his proper place. No one could have seen the right hon. Gentleman without regretting his unfortunate position. Some attempt ought to be made to prevent the recurrence of such scenes, for at present it was really a farce that the House should be summoned to hear a Royal Speech, though a part of it was addressed especially to that House. It was not too much to ask that the gallery in the House of Lords usually allotted to Members of the House of Commons should be reserved for them on these occasions. There was ample accommodation for the friends of Peers in the body of the House. It was not creditable to the Members of the House of Commons nor to the country that they should rush to the Bar of the House of Lords like a parcel of schoolboys. They suffered in public estimation from the occurrence of these scenes, and he therefore hoped some assurance would be given that they should not recur.

Mr. COWPER said, he was not moved by the appeal made by the hon. Member for Devizes for enabling a larger number of Members to address the House. He said that no more than 170 Members could get seats from which to address the House in one debate, and this was an inconvenience that might be endured. He had not observed that any one had been deprived of an opportunity of addressing the House because he could not obtain a proper seat; and he did not think that, on that ground, they had lost any speech from the hon. Member for Devizes. Wherever the semi-circular or horse-shoe form was adopted, it was customary for those who spoke to do so from a tribune, for, except at the central point of the semicircle there was no good place to speak from; those in front must speak with their backs to others, and those in the rear must speak to the backs of those in front of them. Hence, in all well-conducted assemblies semi-circularly arranged there was a tribune. But the mere going to the tribune at once produced a sort of theatrical impression, made the speaker feel like an actor, and gave a character to the proceedings very different from that which distinguished the debates of the House of Commons. If any one wished to speak as from a tribune, there was no reason why he should not speak from the gallery. The discourse would perhaps be like a sermon, when the speaker was elevated as in a pulpit above the heads of his congregation; but he remembered a very effective speech made from the gallery by Mr. Gisborne, and there was no good reason why it should not be used as well as the seats below. The voice would be heard perhaps better than it was heard from the floor of the House, and though the Speaker was not accustomed to cast his eye so high, it might be attracted there by perseverance. To speak from the gallery would be to put it to a much better use than to hand it over to the Peers, for whom other accommodation had been provided. The hon. Member for Devizes was anxious that there should be some mechanical means to enable hon. Members to be more independent, or at least to make a show of being more independent; but hon. Members had got to understand the topography of the House very well, and their opinions were known without artificial aid. He had heard speeches from the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) from the very place where the hon. Baronet (Sir George Bowyer) was now sitting [the first seat below the gangway on the Opposition side] which deserved anything but the name of Tory speeches. He had also heard speeches from that (the Ministerial) side which were enough to show thorough independence of any party ties. In fact, the present arrangements of the House were excellent in a practical point of view; hon. Members understood them, and any change might be for the worse. He did not think the hon. Member for Devizes wanted any artificial assistance to make him occupy a more independent position than that which he now held; if the hon. Gentleman moved down further towards the Bar, they would all know what that meant, and if he moved further round towards that (the Ministerial) side, that, too, would be understood. With respect to the gallant appeals made on the subject of the Ladies' Gallery, he might say that a great deal of trouble had been lately taken to improve its ventilation, and he hoped next year that the arrangements would be still further improved. But when the hon. Baronet wished to remove the present separation between the Ladies' Gallery and the House, he seemed to have forgotten that there was no rule of the House which allowed ladies to be present, and it would be a great change in their practice if they were to make one. In the House of Lords it was quite different. Peeresses had rights there as well as the Peers, but it was otherwise in the House of Commons, and his own impression was that most of the ladies who came to attend their debates would not be desirous of being more exposed to public view than at present. He believed that they were thankful for the veil of obscurity, which protected them from publicity, and from the observation of the House. The hon. Member for Devizes had suggested that there should be doors opening for the House into the galleries opposite the gangways. It was very doubtful whether any such change as that proposed by the hon. Gentleman would be advisable. He remembered when this House was first used that there were doors at the top of the central gangways which were afterwards removed because the passing of Members through them produced inconvenience and disturbance. He quite agreed with what had been said about the want of arrangement on those occasions when Her Majesty delivered Her most gracious Speech from the Throne. The difficulty mainly arose from Members of that House who were not selected to go to the House of Lords not being quite prepared to take their turn and go one after the other into the House of Lords. The matter, therefore, did not depend so much upon arrangements of a mechanical character as upon members themselves going in an orderly manner, instead of rushing tumultuously to the Bar of the other House. The thing, therefore, was not so easily managed, but it was worthy of consideration in reference to the dignity of the House, and a remedy ought to be applied. On the late occasion strangers forced their way in among the Members, but if the police kept a clear space Members might follow the Speaker without interruption, and order might be better preserved.

Mr. HORSMAN: I thank my hon. Friend (Mr. D. Griffith) for having reminded the House of the existence of Independent Members, and it is on their behalf that I would call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cowper) to the fact that in former times we were treated with consideration even by those like my hon. Friend near me (Sir Colman O'Loghlen), who prides himself on his excessive liberality. The hon. Member does not believe in the existence of Independent Members; he ignores them, and will not tolerate them. He says all the Members of the House are divided into two parties, and he would not tolerate the idea of any but the usual party divisions. My hon. Friend has not been very long in the House, and when he gave the hon. Member for Devizes a lecture he showed that he did not understand the subject as well as the hon. Gentleman who made the suggestion, for there was a great deal more in what he said than those who criticized his speech were aware of. My hon. Friend is mistaken in supposing that the proposition which he laid down can be established. It is the courtesy of the House which gives even to the Government the undisturbed occupation of that bench, for I apprehend that any Member of this House might go and sit where the Chancellor of the Exchequer is now sitting. But the courtesy of the House allows those who are carrying on the business of the House, and those who sympathize with their views and objects, to sit together in order that they may have the advantage of consulting together during the course of a debate; and so with regard to the Gentlemen on the other side. Therefore, the practice of the House is that Gentlemen will always sit with their own party and behind their own leaders, and that, until recently, has been a law as binding as if it were the rule of the House. But the practical advice of the hon. Member for Devizes is, that as there are certain benches in the House of Lords for persons who do not range themselves under the leaders on either side, so there ought to be neutral benches in this House. I remember formerly there were some benches on the floor for Independent Members, who were not supposed to follow implicitly the leaders of either party. But now those of us on this side who do not range ourselves behind the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) have no place which we can occupy where our own friends can sit, and where Liberal Members who hold an independent position might come occasionally and give us the advantage of their presence. That is not an advantage which we could derive from my hon. Friend (Sir Colman O'Loghlen), for, however liberal he may be, he has not done anything to entitle him to the character of an Independent Member. Yet he occupies one of the seats formerly appropriated to Independent Members. I, for one—and I think the House generally—am indebted to the hon. Member for Devizes for having made a practical suggestion, and having called our attention to what was the usual arrangement of former days. I do not think the House has become more tolerant as it has become more Liberal. My hon. Friend near me (Sir Colman O'Loghlen) is an instance of that. No one can dispute the professed liberality of my hon. Friend, but I must say he has not shown himself equally tolerant. If I have had to take part in the business of Committees upstairs and wish to speak in the debate coming on afterwards in the House, it is a serious inconvenience that I cannot find a seat on this bench unless I come down at half past three o'clock, and I have come at half past three and found my place occupied. I am sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as a working man, will admit that if he had to come down here an hour beforehand for the purpose of getting a seat, that would be a serious interruption to business. Over and over again I have come here an hour before public business began and found it impossible to get a seat. That adds very much to one's toil and discomfort. Independent Members were not formerly subject to this inconvenience. I appeal, therefore, to hon. Members, whether the minority have not some little right to be considered as well as the majority, and the independent Members are not at this moment quite so few as the hon. Baronet supposes. Perhaps he will be sorry to hear we are an increasing party, and it would be really a comfort to any of us that might be allowed as a matter of courtesy to find seats where we could converse with one another freely as the supporters of the Government and the Opposition do, and as in former times Independent Members did. I see, when the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) comes into the House at any time in the evening, hon. Members who may be in his place get up very courteously and let him take his usual seat. I could mention half a dozen instances in which the same thing has been done. I remember the late Sir James Graham thanking hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House for the courtesy which they invariably showed him in leaving his seat for him. I should not ask any Gentleman to give up the place which he occupies, but some room might be spared, and two or three places, at least, might be given on a bench. I thank the hon. Member (Mr. Darby Griffith) for having made a suggestion which brings back the House to the old courtesies and the old practices, in which there was always a great deal of good sense and good feeling, and much of which might be again adopted without taking away in any respect from the comfort and convenience of the House.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: As the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Horsman) has made an appeal to me, I wish to say a few words with respect to the subject under discussion. It is, undoubtedly, a question of serious difficulty, and I am not quite sure that the hon. Gentleman opposite, though he has evidently paid due attention to it, as I think he invariably does to any question which he submits to the House, has comprehended the whole difficulty. At the first sight it would seem that in a hall destined to receive Members delegated by a portion of their countrymen to discharge weighty duties there ought to be provided ample accommodation for all. That would be the most natural conception for any one to form, but it would not be possible for any conception to be more erroneous. My right hon. Friend the Chief Commissioner of Works has given the true explanation of this affair when he says that our present arrangements are to be tested by their working, and that, as upon the whole they work well, they are good arrangements. The House must not look at the maximum number of Members who may occasionally be gathered within these walls, but to the average number that require accommodation. If we were to have the splendid space that would be necessary to provide accommodation, not only for 650

Members, but also, as some Gentlemen desire, for the Peers, for a large number of strangers, and for ladies, there would be nothing more intolerable than the inconvenience of such a state of things to those who habitually attend the debates of this House, and are practically engaged in carrying on its business. If I were to dwell on nothing but the additional physical exertion required during debates extending over, in the course of the Session, from 1,200 to 1,500 hours, it would be manifest that the general principle is a sound one, that only a limited accommodation should be provided. Having said thus much in regard to the magnitude of the building, I then come to the arrangement of the accommodation, and here I differ respectfully from the hon. Member for Devizes with respect to the divisions and subdivisions which prevail now as compared with those which prevailed in former times. It is an undoubted fact, although the result is very different from what many persons anticipated, that the introduction of a more strictly popular representative system, so far from multiplying the sections into which the House is divided, has more and more had the effect of reducing the House to two great parties. I do not think that if we go back 100 years we shall find this House so sharply divided into two great parties as my hon. Friend seems to think. There used to be, first, the party acting with the Government. Then there was the party of the Opposition. Then there was the party calling themselves the King's Friends, and representing the special influence of the Court —a party generally acting with the Government, but maintaining a separate modification of political existence, and which, if attached to the Government at all, was attached to it simply as possessing office and the confidence of the Crown at the time, but taking quite a different relation to the Government from those of its supporters who were attached to it by identity of political feelings. Then there was the Country Party, often a powerful party, and comprising many independent gentlemen, who declined to attach themselves either to the Government or to the Opposition. Then there were others who did not belong to either of these sections. I will only mention two—the first Lord Wharncliffe and Mr. Wilberforce. There is a well-remembered definitition of Mr. Burke's—which, however, I do not apply to my right hon. Friend—that an Independent Member of Parliament was a Member that no one could depend upon. The present arrangement of the seats of the House on two sides, above and below the gangway, has, therefore, the sanction of custom and tradition through the period of an unreformed Parliament, when the lines of party demarcation were far less sharply drawn than at present. Then came the Reform Bill, the effect of which was gradually to get rid of Independent Members. In the first reformed Parliament there were only a few who declined to say "I am of this or that party," and the small party of Independent Members dwindled from year to year. The last of them was Mr. Young, who sat for Tynemouth. He had strong views in connection with the commercial and shipping interests, and he declined for many years to say that he was attached to any party in the House. There was another Member, Mr. Robinson, Member for Worcester, a most excellent and respectable gentleman. He sat for some years as an Independent Member, but he was at length obliged to take part with either one side or the other, and was driven into party. One great difficulty arises out of particular combinations of men and things. My right hon. Friend (Mr. Horsman) is an eminent Member of this House, who has attained to great acceptance as one of our most distinguished Parliamentary orators. He truly says it is a great hardship that a Gentleman in his position, occupied during the day by grave and serious duties, should not be able to count upon a seat in this House, and he says that the two front Benches on both sides of the House below the gangway ought to be assigned to hon. Members who stand in the same position as himself. But no such liberty has been accorded to them since the Reform Act, and for this reason, that there have not existed the political parties who could have filled those Benches. I am not going to say anything personal, as my right hon. Friend says that he has a party and it is an increasing party. Well, we shall see about that by-and-bye. But he draws a comparison between his Friends and the Government. He asks why he and his Friends should not have a Bench of this kind, where they can sit and communicate together as the Government do? But there is this difference, and it is an important one between the two cases. The Treasury Bench is a Bench which it is permitted to us to occupy, but then the House knows who we are. Now, the difference between the Government and the right hon. Gentleman and his party is that the House does not know who they are. If they were formalized as a party, and the House knew who they are, it would be much easier to deal with this question than it is. As regards my right hon. Friend himself, I could wish that as Sir Robert Inglis, as the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck), as Sir James Graham in his later days, and as the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), and the late deeply lamented Mr. Cobden had known and definite seats which they were accustomed to occupy, the courtesy of the House would also allow my right hon. Friend (Mr. Horsman) to enjoy the seat which he wishes to occupy. But when my right hon. Friend speaks of combinations as distinguished from individuals, the matter is much more difficult. It is necessary for Members to know distinctly who are the claimants for seats that are equally open to them all before the seats can be allotted. Were we now to assign a bench to the right hon. Gentleman and his party I have no doubt that the hon. Baronet the Member for Clare would willingly give up his seat; but, then, what would be the consequence? Why, we would find the right hon. Gentleman's seat in a state of utter desolation. If a party combination of any kind were formed, circumstances would adapt themselves to such a state of things. I remember that those who were called "Peelites" in 1852 occupied in very great force that portion of the House below the gangway, and not less than two or three benches were by the courtesy of the House allotted to them. My right hon. Friend has nothing to do but to organize a powerful and growing party, and then he will find no difficulty in obtaining Benches on which he may communicate with the Members around him as the Members of the Government now do. At the same time I agree with my right hon. Friend that it would be a great advantage if, by the courtesy of the House, Members of his standing could have seats on which they could depend, without the necessity of wasting hours in claiming the places which they desire to occupy.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, that the hon. Member for Devizes did not, being a comparatively new Member, know the strength of his own case. The old temporary House of Commons fitted up after the fire of 1834, though, as far as style went, a hideous barn, was larger and more convenient in some respects than the present one. The general system of its arrangement was the same, but at its lower portion, above the bar, there was a series of cross-benches rising into a kind of mountain, and the seats for Members of the House of Lords and other distinguished strangers were not cut off from the rest of the House by the wooden barrier which at present existed, but were simply the higher portion of that mountain, and could be entered by a movable bar, so that when unoccupied by strangers they were directly available for Members. It was the cramped space at that end of the House which chiefly created the inconvenience of the actual House. If they now had the same arrangement there would be very little practical grievance in that matter. With regard, however, to the argument of his right hon. Friend the First Commissioner, he must observe that a semi-circular House did not necessarily require a tribune. The old House of Commons in Ireland was semi-circular, and there the Members used to speak from their places. In the American Senate, which was also semi-circular, the senators likewise spoke from their places. But if they adopted a semi-circular chamber they would risk, after the American model, the introduction of desks, where Members would write their letters and read books and newspapers, turning the chamber in fact into a club instead of a place of business. He did not think they had quite room enough at present, and some First Commissioner of Works would probably some day ask them for a Vote for the enlargement of that Chamber where, as he said, it was now most deficient, by throwing the lobby into the House, so as to provide more elastic accommodation below the Bar. But he trusted they would never see the House of Commons turned into an amphitheatre, with the sure risk which would follow of their being next called upon to provide a tribune for all Members to speak from.

Sir WILLIAM STIRLING-MAXWELL said, he hoped the First Commissioner of Works would not apply for any considerable grant for increasing the size of the House. That building had faults, no doubt; but quite enough money had been spent upon it for some time to come. He wished to express his regret that the First Commissioner of Works should have given any approval to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Hankey) with regard to the opening of doors at the end of each gangway. If that suggestion were carried out it would obviously necessitate the taking away of two, and perhaps three seats on each side of the House, and probably also involve the removal of the fireplace behind the gangway. What occurred at the late debates on the Franchise Bill exemplified the inconveniences to which reference had been made. A great portion of the galleries on each side—which they were told were very good places for hearing—were occupied by Peers, and he himself, with other Members, made a desperate attempt to get into one of those galleries, but found it hopeless. He would, therefore, suggest to those who had charge of these arrangements, seeing that other debates of equal interest were about to come on, that Peers should be requested to keep to that part of the House which was devoted to them, and that the galleries which were supposed to belong to Members should be left free for their accommodation.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN said, that he himself and the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. White) had always given up their places below the gangway to the right hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) and the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) whenever they wished to address the House. He desired to ask the First Commissioner of Works, whether there was any chance of an enlargement of the dining-room, which was now found much too small? The existence of a good dining-room would be recognized as an absolute necessity by the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Brand), for without it the House would be liable to be counted out again and again.

Mr. HORSMAN said, he did not wish to be thought to complain of any want of courtesy on the part of hon. Gentlemen who sat near him. On the contrary, nothing could be greater than the courtesy they had always shown him; but for that very reason it was painful to him on the occasion of any great debate when they had come down three-quarters of an hour before business began to deprive them of a seat when they were, perhaps, unable to find another. He was sorry the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not now in his place, because that right hon. Gentleman's remarks were calculated rather to mislead the House. As to Mr. Burke's saying that an Independent Member was a Member who could not be depended upon, he was then speaking of a man whose opinions, whose principles, could not be depended upon. Therefore, as to that, all that he (Mr. Horsman) need observe was that no man could fairly say there was any variation in the public principles which he held, or any doubt as to the opinions he would express in regard to them. The difference with his party occurred after he had been in the House twenty years, and it was confined to one particular question. No one could say that on any question of public principle there had been any difference between his opinions and those of his party, and so far, therefore, he did not come within Mr. Burke's definition of an Independent Member. With respect to that definition of an Independent Member, which implied that he was a Member whose principles and opinions could not be depended upon, it would probably apply much more accurately to some of the occupants of the Treasury Bench than to himself sitting below the gangway. He was not trying to form a new combination. It had never been his habit to do so; but if he wished to obtain a lesson in that line he knew nobody more qualified by practice and experience to give it than his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He would have liked then to pursue that subject somewhat further, but in the absence of his right hon. Friend he refrained from doing so.

Mr. WHITE said, he gathered from the remarks of the right hon. Member for Stroud that he desired to turn that front bench below the gangway into "a Cave of Adullam." For some time past he had himself occupied the seat which the right hon. Gentleman seemed to covet, but which he had freely yielded to him whenever he wished to address the House from it, and from which he (Mr. Horsman) had lately made his attack on the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). But he desired that the right hon. Gentleman should understand that those who usually occupied that part of the House protested against his converting that front row into an exclusive resort for the advocates of his peculiar opinions.

Mr. LEEMAN said, he wished to draw the attention of hon. Members to the great inconvenience experienced by all persons transacting business in the seventeen Committee-rooms appertaining to the House of Commons. The Committee-rooms of the House of Lords, too, were in no better condition. Complaints had been repeatedly made during the summer months of the vitiated state of the atmosphere in several of those rooms; indeed, the health of gentlemen transacting business in them had been seriously impaired through their present bad arrangement.

Vote *agreed to.*

(6.) £485, to complete the sum for British Embassy Houses, &c., Paris and Madrid.

(7.) £2,000, to complete the sum for British Consulate and Embassy Houses, &c., Constantinople.

(8.) £5,525, to complete the sum for Westminster Bridge.

Mr. BENTINCK said, he wished to ask for an explanation of the item. It appeared that the ordinary charge for the maintenance of the bridge was £2,500; but there was an outstanding claim unsettled of £5,525, and he should like to know why the Committee was called upon to vote that amount? In the discussion which last year took place with respect to the new approaches to the Houses of Parliament his right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works had stated that it was the intention of the architect, Mr. E. Barry, to construct a covered way which would connect the bridge with the proposed railway station. His right hon. Friend had also informed the House on that occasion that the railway station would be erected on the north side of Bridge Street; but, as far as he could ascertain from the hoarding and works which were now in process of construction, it would be on the west side. He should wish to hear from his right hon. Friend whether the present Vote had any reference to the expenses of the covered way to which he alluded, and whether it was still his intention to carry out that work in connection with the approaches between Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament? He would also, perhaps, be good enough to tell the Committee whether it was to be imposed as a condition on the railway company that the architecture of the station was to correspond with that of the Houses of Parliament? If so, the condition would be hard upon them, as well as upon the taxpayers of the country, because every one, whether his taste inclined to the modern style of architecture, or, like that of his hon. Friend the Member for Stoke (Mr. Beresford Hope) to the mediæval, was prepared to condemn the useless patchwork crinkle-crankle style on which the weakmindedness of Members of that House had led them some years ago to expend the public money.

Mr. COWPER said, the item for claims unsettled arose out of certain legal claims which were made by the engineer of the bridge and the contractors, with respect to which proceedings were going on, and to meet which it was deemed desirable to take a Vote in the event of the decision going against the Government, which, however, he did not anticipate would be the case. No part of the Vote would be expended on the subway to which the hon. Gentleman referred. That would be paid for out of the Vote for the Houses of Parliament. The hoarding which might now be observed at the point to which the hon. Gentleman alluded indicated not the station, but the railway cutting, which was to be carried through the surface, and afterwards covered over—forming a tunnel—as far as the station, which was to be placed on the north side of Bridge Street. The style which would be adopted for the buildings was the Tudor, which was exceedingly convenient for chambers, and which was the most suitable for that situation. It would correspond with the neighbouring buildings, and there would be no inconvenience in its adoption.

General DUNNE said, he wished to ask how it was that when, some time ago, the corporation of Dublin sought for a grant for the bridges in that city the application was treated by Government as ridiculous, while the maintenance of Westminster Bridge was paid for out of the Consolidated Fund?

Mr. COWPER said, that there was formerly a corporation known as the Commissioners of Westminster Bridge, whose functions had been imposed upon the Board of Works, and the funds at whose disposal, amounting to £11,000, had been transferred to the Consolidated Fund. There was, therefore, a claim on that Fund for the purposes of the bridge.

Vote *agreed to.*

(9.) £48,500, to complete the sum for New Foreign Office.

(10.) £38,000, to complete the sum for Public Offices, Site.

(11.) £20,500, to complete the sum for Probate Court and Registries.

(12.) £17,070, to complete the sum for Public Record Repository.

Mr. BOVILL: I wish to call attention to the present state of the records. In 1852 all enrolments and records were transferred to the Record Office. Now, if a person goes to the Record Office to inquire about a patent, for instance, it is of no avail that he gives the date and the number of the patent: he must produce its number on the roll. He asks where he will find that. He is sent to the Office of Enrolments. There he is asked whether he wants the patent or the close roll; and as he has come to inquire about a patent he naturally says he wants the patent roll. A number and date are then handed to him, and, armed with these, he goes back to the Record Office, and on presenting them he is handed a roll of grants of baronetages and other dignities. He is referred back to the Enrolment Office, and is then told, "Oh, it is your own fault; you asked for the patent roll; you should have asked for the close roll." That is the state of things at present existing. The person seeking the document has to make five separate applications before he can obtain it. I have gone through the whole process myself, and I am sure it is only necessary to call the attention of the Attorney General to the matter to ensure a remedy.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, he was sure that the Master of the Rolls, when informed of this want of arrangement, would have the matter attended to.

Vote *agreed to.*

(13.) £4,000, to complete the sum for Nelson Column.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £6,600, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1867, for the extension of the Buildings of the Patent Office."

MR. BOVILL said, he wished to call the attention of the Committee to the present state of that office. The proposed Vote opened up a variety of serious and important questions. The present Law of Patents was passed in 1852, and the subject had attracted a great deal of attention on the part both of mercantile and scientific bodies. Without going into the question of the policy of patents, he took the law as it stood, and contended that until the law was altered all parties were bound to uphold it in efficiency. In 1852 the Act of Parliament declared that a place should be provided for the Patent Office and for the accommodation of those requiring to inspect the patents. That place was found in a portion of the old Masters' Offices in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, but in a short time it was felt to be quite inadequate for the purpose, and three houses in Cursitor Street had been taken in addition. The rooms in those houses were now so overladen that the stability of the buildings was endangered, and for some time the further reception of papers and books in them had been prohibited, for fear the houses should fall down. In one year it had been determined to print all the old specifications from James I. downwards, and the sum of £90,000 was expended for that purpose. But since then a large surplus had arisen from fees after the payment of all expenses. The surplus at the present time was upwards of £40,000 a year, and according to the present Estimates, the surplus for the ensuing year was about £60,000. When the fees on patents were fixed by the Act of 1852, they were regulated on two principles. First, with reference to the revenue derived by the Government certain stamp duties were proposed; £5 to be paid in one year, £10 three years afterwards, and £20 three years after that. But it was also provided that there should be other charges to defray the expenses arising out of the passing of the Act. It was necessary, for instance, that there should be a proper office provided, and a proper staff of clerks, and further, that a large public scientific library should be collected. That library was formed, and additions made to it from time to time. In 1858 a strong remonstrance was made by the Commissioners of Patents to the Treasury, in which, having referred to the temporary occupation of the old offices of the Masters of Chancery, and to the free public library, containing books upon inventions abroad and in the colonies, which was collected there, they alleged that these works were consulted by engineers, agents, and barristers interested in patents, and that they could not be accommodated in the two small rooms devoted to the purpose. The memorial pointed out that a largely increased accommodation was required, which could not be found near Southampton Buildings, and urged that the surplus funds derived from patents, amounting to upwards of £40,000 per annum, should be applied to the purchase of a site and erection of buildings suitable for a Patent Office, its library, and the Patent Office Museum. Such an office must be placed conveniently to the Courts of Law and to the offices of the Attorney General and Solicitor General. In 1858 the Commissioners of Patents repeated in their Report the statements which they had made in the previous year with respect to the library, stating that the books were increasing, and that there was room neither for books nor readers. In 1860 and in 1861 the same observations were repeated. In 1862 the matter had become so serious, and the inconvenience so great, that the Commissioners of Patents, including Lord Westbury, the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney General and Solicitor General, then his hon. and learned Friend opposite (Sir Roundell Palmer), urged upon the Government to appropriate for the site of the new offices Burlington House Gardens. Again, in 1862, they reported that the library was in the same wretched condition, and in consequence of a change of plans they recommended a site at Whitehall Gardens for the Patent Library. The difficulty the Thames Embankment presented prevented this appropriation, but the Commissioners in their Report of 1862 pointed out that there was a surplus profit of £40,000 a year from the working of the Patent Office, which could be applied to the purchase of a site. Thus the Commissioners did their utmost to carry into effect the Act of 1852. Reference was made in one of the Reports from the Commissioners of Patents to a petition presented by persons interested in inventions, in which they represented that there was not even standing room for the study of works upon those subjects. Many of the books were stored in piles on the floor, and could not be accessible. This was a deplorable state of things; at a time when manufacturers in France and Germany were competing with Englishmen, and locomotive engines were being supplied to English railways by Belgian houses, it was of primary importance that workmen who desired it should have access to works detailing improvements in inventions. Great improvements had ensued from carrying into effect the Act of 1852. The Commissioners of Patents had fully discharged the duty that fell upon them; they had printed all specifications from the time of James II., and they had prepared an elaborate index to the library, which would compare with any scientific library in Europe, but owing to the miserable accommodation for those visiting the library it was practically useless. As he could scarcely believe the accounts he had heard of the want of accommodation, he determined to visit the library himself. He found the library, the first in the world, stowed away in what had been the passage leading to the offices of the Masters in Chancery. This passage was six feet three inches wide, and was lined with books on both sides from end to end. There was no daylight admitted, and it was lighted with gas. There was no ventilation. The only way to prevent suffocation was to open the door at the end, which was guarded by a policeman. Such a draught ensued from the opening of the door that it was impossible to remain in the passage, and by way of mockery, over the entrance was painted, "Public Free Library." If any one wished to inspect a book he could not sit down, as no one could pass him while he sat at the table, which was eighteen inches wide. In 1864 this state of matters became so grievous that a Committee of the House consisting of fifteen Members was, on the Motion of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn), appointed in the month of May to report upon the subject. In July they drew up their Report, which, after stating that the present office was totally wanting in the accommodation requisite for giving full effect to the Patent Law Amendment Act, 1852, and to the patent system generally, proceeded to say —

> "For this purpose suitable apartments for the Commissioners, law officers, and clerks, with a record office and rooms for inspecting provisional specifications, drawings, and scientific publications should be at once provided; the place now used for the inspection of specifications and drawings, is little better than a dark passage, in which there is barely standing room. With regard to the library your Committee have found that it is one of great value and utility, but that its utility is seriously impaired by its crowded state, and the want of sufficient attendants; the books are now stowed away in a number of small rooms, or rather closets, some on floors, some on tables, some in passages, and some on shelves; while the store-rooms are so overloaded that the floors have already sunk, and the surveyor of the Board of Works has refused to allow them to be loaded any more, lest they should break down. The inconvenience to those who frequent the office and library arising from this state of things is enhanced by the want of a sufficient staff of attendants. Your Committee consider that the necessity for increased accommodation in respect of the Patent Office and library is most urgent, as they have it in evidence that its want is so much felt as to prejudice the due administration of the Patent Law, and they, therefore, recommend that sufficient office room, with an additional reading-room, and an extension of the library, should be provided with the least possible delay."

They went on to state that their attention had been directed to the consideration of the most eligible site for the building of a Patent Office, and they were of opinion that the balance of advantages was in favour of Chancery Lane. They further stated that the surplus of receipts over expenditure at the end of 1862 amounted to £173,044, and that the estimated surplus for 1863 was £37,000, making a total of £210,044 ; and that the estimated outlay for the site in Chancery Lane was £205,000. They also said that the principal object of the office was to provide for the proper working of the Patent Act, and not for increasing the revenue of the country, and that the surplus fund ought to be applied to such an extent as might be necessary to the provision of better accommodation. The Commissioners of Patents had urged the propriety of applying the surplus to the improvement of the office, but the Treasury did not think proper to carry out that recommendation. The result was the appointment of the Committee to which he had called the attention of the House. Neither the Government, the Commissioners of Patents, nor any other persons interested in the question had recommended that the Patent library should be transferred to South Kensington. The site pointed out, as he had already stated, was Chancery Lane. Now, what had the Government done? They had proposed some extension of accommodation by adding a storey to the top of the building at a cost of £14,600, a portion of which was voted last year, and the House was now asked to vote £11,600. He would venture to say that anything more inadequate could not be conceived, for about 40,000 volumes would have to be transferred, and the arrangements would still be very incomplete. The specifications, which ought to be printed within three weeks of being filed, remained unprinted for six months, and were in a place where they could not be inspected. He had himself paid the place a visit, and he believed that any one who was disinterested would bear him out in the opinion that the inconveniences complained of would not be remedied by the proposal of the Government. The Committee had suggested that a suitable site should be purchased and proper offices built. But the evils connected with the Patent Office would not be cured by the simple erection of new offices. The Department was in a state of confusion from beginning to end. When the Act of 1852 was passed, it was proposed that certain Commissioners of Patents should be appointed. Those Commissioners were to be the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, and the Attorney and the Solicitor General for the time being. The Act also provided for the appointment of such other person or persons as Her Majesty should see fit to make Commissioners. Of course, it would be impossible for the Law Officers of the Crown to superintend the administration of the Patent Office ; and it appeared from the answer given by the Master of the Rolls to Question No. 2,786 in the Report of 1852 that it was upon these other persons that the labour would principally fall. The Lord Chancellor and the Master of the Rolls—

> "Would be only occasionally employed for the purpose of checking them or giving them any assistance which, with their knowledge would be found necessary or convenient."

But, notwithstanding the provisions of the Act, and that expression of opinion by the Master of the Rolls, no other person had yet been appointed, and to that omission he attributed much of the existing inconvenience. It would be for the Attorney General to say whether an extra Commissioner or some other official should be appointed head of the office, and held responsible to the Government and Parliament for its proper conduct, and for the expenditure of something like £60,000 a year. To provide an extra storey to the Patent Office, at a cost of £14,000, was simply throwing public money away, because, with that addition, the office would still be inadequate. He did not wish to enter into the question with respect to a gentleman who formerly held a position in that office, and who was permitted to resign. Whether the proceedings of that gentleman had contributed to the present state of things, he would not stop to inquire. But there could be no doubt that the state of the Patent Office had caused considerable dissatisfaction, and that the expenditure now going on was a waste of money, seeing that the arrangement could not be considered a permanent one. There were further difficulties in the way. After the gentleman to whom he had alluded retired, the Commissioners were required to make a Report on the subject of the Patent Office management, and Mr. Greenwood, the solicitor to the Treasury, and Mr. Hindmarch were appointed to inquire into the management of the office, the mode of procedure, the practice and duties of the office, the mode in which those duties were performed, and to point out what improvements might render the office more efficient. Proceeding to the constitution of the office, they said that the establishment for the working of the Patent Law was framed upon a scale much too limited, and it was found necessary to increase the number of officers, and to add two new branches, the library and museum, and they added that it appeared to them that the value and importance of the Patent Office had not been duly appreciated, and that the time had arrived when it ought to be placed upon a different footing. These two gentlemen were appointed to inquire into the matter, deputed by the Treasury and the Commissioners of Patents, and it would be difficult to find two men more competent to deal with the subject, and whose recommendations were entitled to greater weight. He thought he might fairly ask the Government of the day to attend to those recommendations, and to act upon them. The Report was made last year, bearing the date of the 6th July, 1865, and the Treasury, in proposing Votes to that House, had acted upon that part of the Report where a saving might be effected, but had declined to act upon that part where an increase of expenditure had been proposed, in order to fulfil the requirements of the office. Referring to the staff employed at the office, they said the staff had been left to themselves for years without any superintending head in matters of detail, and had had to form a system as well as to work it, and they expressed their opinion that the staff had performed their duties with diligence, intelligence, and conscientiousness. The establishment, however, was one of great and growing importance, and they thought it imperatively required to have the superintendence of a superior officer having the necessary knowledge and skill to enable him to direct and control it. They thought such an officer should be in daily attendance at the office, except during the ordinary vacations, and that his salary should not be less than £1,500 per annum. Here was an expenditure going on at the rate of about £60,000 a year, and at present there was no responsible head to direct it. These gentlemen, after saying they thought the office imperatively required a superior officer at its head, and after describing his duties, went on to say they were satisfied that ample occupation would be afforded to such an officer conscientiously bent on performing his duties, and that he must exercise a control and superintendence that would be cheerfully submitted to by the other officers, to the benefit of the public, and the ultimate decrease of expenditure. Mr. Woodthorpe, a gentleman to whom the country was much indebted with respect to patents, and than whom no man in the country was better qualified to deal with the subject, concurred in this recommendation. Going, then, to the patent division of the office they said that the present staff there consisted of six clerks, but that they were insufficient, and in consequence the business of the office had fallen greatly into arrear. They were satisfied that three additional clerks at least were necessary for the proper discharge of the duties of the office. After paying a well-deserved compliment to the present staff, and recommending that increased remuneration be given to them, they went to the specification division, where the staff consisted of nine permanent clerks, five extra clerks, five writing clerks, and four warehousemen; but there, again, the staff was insufficient, and the consequence was that the printing of specifications and the performance of several other duties fell greatly into arrears. They thought that at least six other clerks were required in the division to perform the duties efficiently. Those recommendations were clear and distinct. Specifications which ought to be in print and in the hands of the public within three weeks after they were filed were at present more that six months in arrear, and he was not certain that they were not eight months in arrear, which led to considerable expense and inconvenience. Both Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Hindmarch were gentlemen of great experience and remarkably economical in their views; yet, while they bore testimony to the ability and diligence of the gentlemen at present employed in the office, they indorsed the proposed appointment of a head of the office. The patentees, the persons who provided the funds, were most anxious that the usefulness of the office should be increased; but the Government, disregarding the recommendations of the Commissioners, applied the surplus revenue to the general purposes of the nation. The present Estimates, instead of contemplating any suitable arrangements, merely proposed the expenditure of about £11,000 for temporary purposes, carrying over a surplus of £60,000 to the Consolidated Fund. There was abundance of funds to provide for these matters; the funds were really enormous. There was upwards of £40,000 a year surplus, and intended to be appropriated for this purpose. It was also desirable that the staff of the office should be sufficient to prepare abstracts of patents, and not leave them, as at present, to persons who had to be employed out of the office. With respect to the library, these gentlemen said it was instituted by the Commissioners in March, 1865, and had proved of great service to the public. After referring to the advantages and importance of the library, they referred to the Museum, and concluded by saying that the Patent Office, in every department, required greatly enlarged space for the business which it had to carry on. The temporary enlargement of the upper storey was in progress at the time the Report was made, but it was not pretended that that would afford adequate accommodation, and it was, in fact, an expenditure of £14,000 of the public money, without any real practical advantage to be obtained from it. They were finally of opinion that the revenue of the Patent Office ought not to form part of the general revenue of the country until proper accommodation and other sources of expenditure to place the office on a proper footing had been amply and liberally provided for. The Commissioners of Patents, so far back as the year 1858 or 1859, suggested precisely the same thing, that the revenue should be applied in the first instance to the wants of the Patent Office. Again, in 1862, they referred to the same thing, and a Committee of this House had declared the same thing, and lastly a commission of two gentlemen appointed to consider the subject had held the same view, and had distinctly told them that the Patent Office was not properly provided for; that there was insufficient accommodation, and an insufficient staff. The revenue of the office year by year had passed to the Consolidated Fund, and in that way up to the present time upwards of £250,000, which ought to have been devoted to providing a proper Patent Office, had passed to the general revenue of the country, while the wants of the Patent Office remained unprovided for. It was proposed now that £60,000 of the surplus for the ensuing year should be carried over to the Consolidated Fund, and though he did not ask the Committee to act upon his opinion in the matter, he thought it was not too much to ask the Committee to consider the Reports of the Commissioners of Patents on two occasions, the Report of the Committee of the House, and the Report of Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Hindmarch. They had acted on the last Report in part, however. Those gentlemen proposed that certain offices should be amalgamated and a certain sum be thereby saved, and it was rather a remarkable thing that the Government should take advantage of the proposal to effect a saving, without at the same time giving effect to the part of the recommendation involving the appointment of an additional staff and an increased expenditure. The matter had been the subject of repeated memorials ever since the year 1853: memorials from almost every part of the kingdom—Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and other large towns—as well as from large manufacturers and other persons. The Commissioners of Patents could not act on these, but the Lords of the Treasury, of course, could do so. And if any Gentleman sitting on the Treasury Bench would take the trouble, as he had done, to verify the statements made in the Report of the Commissioners, he certainly must come to the conclusion that it was monstrous to leave things in their present state. Notwithstanding all the recommendations on the subject, the Government were practically doing nothing; for the Vote now proposed would not supply more than a temporary alleviation at best. It was throwing money away, because, when the building was completed, it would be inadequate for the purpose. A Vote of £400 had already been passed for three houses rented in Cursitor Street, and those houses were so loaded with books and documents that the floors would not bear any further weight. The floor proposed to be added in Southampton Buildings would not afford a space equal to that afforded by those three houses. In America, France, and other countries, buildings like palaces were set apart as Patent Offices. He earnestly hoped that if the Government were not satisfied with the Reports already in their possession, his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, or some other Gentleman in office, would visit the place, because he thought that there could be no second opinion on the part of any one who saw the acommodation that it was altogether insufficient. An important advantage would be secured if the sum obtained, which amounted to between £40,000 and £50,000 a year, instead of being appropriated by the State were applied to the encouragement of science and to the reward of scientific discovery. Under these circumstances, he begged leave to move the postponement of the Vote in order that the Government might have an opportunity of further considering the question.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that as one of the Commissioners of Patents he had no reason to complain of anything that had fallen from his hon. and learned Friend ; but he could not help thinking—and he thought the House and the country would be of the same opinion —that this subject could not be dealt with in the fragmentary manner his hon. and learned Friend proposed. To carry out what he (Mr. Bovill) had suggested would require a permanent arrangement and involve a great cost. He would not now say whether it was fitting that such cost should be incurred and such arrangements made ; but of one thing he was certain—that it would not be advisable to undertake them without an understanding as to whether patents were to be maintained or not, and if they were to be maintained, on what footing the patent system was to be continued. This was a large and important question, and one on which a variety of opinions existed. Many persons thought that the information of which the public were at present in possession was not such as to enable us to form a final opinion on that question. When, therefore, his hon. and learned Friend stated that the differences which now exist on the subject existed in 1852, and that all the questions which his speech dealt with might be treated on the assumption that the law of patents was to be continued, he could not but think his hon. and learned Friend was premature in such an assumption until Parliament had pronounced a decision on that point. Certainly there had been a considerable progress since 1852 in the direction of an opinion that the time had come, or was at hand, when patents might be altogether dispensed with ; and without committing himself prematurely to any opinion he might hold on the subject, he was perfectly certain that the time was not far off when the subject would have to be considered by Parliament. When the subject was so considered, and when they received some indication of the conclusion at which Parliament was likely to arrive, that would be the time to consider how some of the matters to which his hon. and learned Friend had alluded might be most properly dealt with. The House would recollect that a Select Committee had been moved for by Mr. Dillwyn, and that about the same time his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) proposed a Royal Commission on the working of the Patent Laws. Those who had read the Report of the Royal Commission would find that a great number of persons of authority expressed opinions which went a long way towards the total abolition of patents. Some persons suggested that there should be a new mode of investigating patents at the beginning other than the inquiry by the Law Officers, and that the decision on patent rights should be withdrawn from the ordinary legal tribunals. He believed he was justified in saying that the Report raised many more questions than it solved, and that it was felt by some of the Commissioners, who before had entertained an opinion in favour of patents, that the time was come to inquire whether patents should continue or not. Some were against disclaimers, others opposed themselves to renewals, and many other questions of great importance were raised. The Report, in fact, led irresistibly to the conviction that there must be general not partial legislation on the subject. Lord Romilly, one of the most active of the Commissioners of Patents, and one who for a long time had been Law Officer of the Crown, gave an opinion against patents before the Royal Commissioners. Other persons of great authority had expressed themselves to the same effect. The hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns), on whose suggestion the Commission had been appointed, publicly expressed an opinion, if not altogether adverse to patents, certainly in favour of looking at that subject in the face and thoroughly examining it. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) took the same view. If the patent system was to continue as a permanent one, he quite concurred in thinking that the suggestions of his hon. and learned Friend ought to be considered, and, most probably, ought to be adopted ; but to adopt and act on them before the larger question was examined and a final decision come to on it would be, in his opinion, premature. With regard to the constitution of the body of Commissioners, no one could be more sensible than he was that if the patent system were to continue, the superintending authority should be differently constituted. At present it consisted of the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, and the Attorney and Solicitor General. The Master of the Rolls, it was true, paid careful and even minute attention to the Patent Office, and the other Commissioners were greatly indebted to him ; but every one must be aware that the Master of the Rolls had other duties of the utmost importance which made constant demands upon his time. If, therefore, the system were to be continued, not even a man of such diligence and activity as the Master of the Rolls could sufficiently meet the requirements of the office. As to the Lord Chancellor and the Attorney and Solicitor General, all they could do was to meet together when business required their attention and decision, and to give their minds to that business as well as they could. It was, however, impossible for them to exercise a perfect superintendence over the office. It was true that when the Act of 1852 was passed, it was contemplated that there should be other men on the Commission. But, of course, if they were to devote themselves constantly to those duties, it would be necessary that they should be paid, and if working men were appointed and considerable salaries allowed to them, the question at once arose whether the system was to be a permanent one. That was the reason why the superintending body had never been put upon a different footing. The same remark would apply to the recommendation in the Report of Messrs. Greenwood and Hindmarch, to the effect that a superintendent should be appointed with a salary of £1,500 a year. No doubt, the sum proposed was not unreasonable if the present system were to be permanent; but the general question must be determined before such an office was created, which he presumed would be a freehold one, involving compensation in the event of its being abolished. As to the other recommendation of Messrs. Greenwood and Hindmarch, his hon. and learned Friend had been imperfectly informed. Whatever delay had taken place—and it was not so great as his hon. and learned Friend supposed—in acting upon that recommendation as to the increase in the number of clerks and the augmentation of the salaries, the responsibility rested not with the Treasury but with the Commissioners of Patents. The Commissioners had considered the recommendations, and had also, in substance, acted upon them, and he had no reason to doubt that the Treasury would give effect to the recommendations of the Commissioners. With regard to the new offices, his hon. and learned Friend had mentioned a fact which would exonerate the Treasury—namely, that from 1860 there had been a constant discussion on the question of the site. Burlington Gardens, Fife House, and Kensington had been suggested; and in 1864 a Committee of that House recommended Chancery Lane. On such a subject a kind of artistic war naturally arose, and while the discussion about the site was going on, the general question was undecided as to whether it would be necessary to have any building at all. Until that question was decided, it was out of the question to proceed to the erection of a costly building. As to the museum, there was not one worth speaking of, because the models in the Patent Office were borrowed, all or almost all of them being private property, and he did not think there was any prospect of their becoming the property of the nation, although, perhaps, they might for some time to come be exhibited at Kensington. The library, however, was valuable; and whether the patent system were continued or not, it was highly desirable that the library should be deposited in some place where it would be useful to the public. But erecting a building suitable for the preservation of a library was a very different thing from constructing a permanent Patent Office. It would be necessary, therefore, to come to a conclusion as to the requirements of the Patent Office before they determined upon a very large outlay. He quite agreed that whatever expenses were required for the Patent Office should be provided out of the funds raised from fees and stamps upon patents, and that as long as they determined to maintain the system there should be such an expenditure as was necessary for its proper maintenance. His hon. Friend, however, had spoken of these funds as if they were voluntary contributions of the patentees which had been diverted from their proper purposes when they went to the Exchequer. Now, he altogether objected to such a view of the matter. A patentee paid the fees in order to obtain a monopoly, and a more legitimate subject of taxation could hardly be conceived. The fees were not large, and the Royal Commission appointed at the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) had reported that they saw no reason to recommend their reduction. The fees were not voluntary contributions, and the patentees had no right to dictate their distribution. The money was as much public money as any that was raised by public taxation. He trusted that the House would lose no time in taking the general question into consideration. He had had some reason to anticipate that the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), or some other hon. Member, would have brought it before the House, and there had been some reason to expect that a Committee to inquire into the subject might have been moved for in the present Session. At all events, he earnestly hoped that the whole question would be discussed at no great distance of time. No private interests stood in the way. Of course, if it were decided to put an end to the system, existing patentees would retain their patents, and the existing officers would have justice done to them. While the general question remained unsettled, it would be unwise to make a large and irrevocable outlay on the pure assumption that the present system was to be maintained.

Mr. FRESHFIELD said, he had received, as a new Member, a caution from the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to venture an assault upon that impregnable fortress, the Public Revenue, and should have felt some doubt in supporting the proposition of his hon. Friend had he understood that such would be its effects. All that was proposed, however, was that the revenue derived from patents should be applied to afford proper accommodation for the exhibition of patents, and in that view he entirely agreed. It was only right that a building should be erected on a proper scale and in a proper position ; but as the Government had not considered the matter adequately it ought to be postponed. The learned Attorney General said the House ought not to legislate on fragmentary principles, and it was to be hoped he would carry the House with him in a few days with reference to another and a longer measure (the Reform Bill) now before the House. He said that the subject ought to be discussed as a whole. If, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer told an admiring audience at Liverpool, the audit account would secure the legitimate application of the revenues from patents, it was to be hoped there would be a large fund available to provide additional accommodation ; and that would constitute another reason for a brief delay.

Mr. POWELL said, that he was on the Committee of 1864. If the Patent Laws were to continue in their present state, the Government had done too little, and if they were to be abolished, the Government had done too much. The Patent Office, museum, and library could not be separated ; but it had not been determined what was to be the nature of the museum —whether it was to be one of obtained patents or one of mechanical inventions. The Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers of Paris was not a patent museum ; it might be so in one sense, but in essence it was a mere collection of mechanical inventions. Across the Atlantic an attempt had been made to supply a complete collection of models ; but the evidence given before the Committee of 1864 was conclusive as to the utter inutility of any plan of associating a model with every specification. Mr. Webster and Mr. Woodcroft agreed that to produce detailed models, to explain every specification, and furnish a full record of the state of mechanical invention, was impracticable and illusory, merely leading inventors into snares and traps, and causing them to spend money in ill-founded confidence as to the perfection of the museum. He hoped the Government would, instead of leaving it to private Members, take the matter in hand, and make some proposition.

Mr. BENTINCK said, he had no doubt that the Patent Laws required consolidation, and some years ago he was with another gentleman appointed to consolidate the statute, but, though the plan they recommended was approved by the Commission, nothing was done, because it was said that the whole patent was to undergo law revision. Now, this had been virtually said by the Attorney General that night, and yet in the face of this the Government proposed to spend £14,000 in adding and fitting up another storey to the Patent Office. The expenditure under consideration was proposed by a Government professing to act on economical principles, while in another pocket they had a proposition to establish a Patent Museum at Kensington. It was hard upon Members on the Opposition side of the House that they should be left alone to fight the battle of economy. The Estimates had been under discussion since five o'clock, and not one Gentleman on the other side of the House below the gangway had taken an objection. It was on the Opposition side of the House that truly Liberal principles prevailed. On the other side the questions which had occupied attention were, whether the ladies should have more seats, and hon. Members should speak from front Benches. The palmy days of independent Liberal opposition below the gangway were gone by. The Government should distinctly foreshadow their plan in proposing this expenditure, if they did not enter into details. It could not but surprise any visitor to the museum that a nation of our position in the civilized world should have a museum of such a character. The Patent Museum at Kensington was a mere chaos, it was more like the shop of a marine store dealer than anything else. The whole of Kensington was, in fact, a chaos, for one passed from a collection of food to a collection of the high arts, pictures, and so forth. His hon. Friend (Mr. Powell) told him that the steam engine that killed Mr. Stephenson was among the collection. He deplored the want of interest shown by the economical reformers below the gangway on the other side—the hon. Gentlemen sitting in the Cave of Adullam—on this subject. He wished to point out that the Government were not entitled to take this Vote unless they showed the whole details of the plan which they intended to adopt. He would, therefore, give his support to the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Bovill.)

Mr. CHILDERS said, the hon. Gentleman himself appeared rather in a chaos, as he was not aware that Mr. Stephenson was killed by a steam engine. With respect to the particular Vote now before the Committee, if he might recall the attention of hon. Gentlemen to so prosaic a subject, he would beg to remind them that this was not the first Vote for the service, but was to complete a building for which the House had voted a sum of £4,500 last year. A contract had been entered into on the faith of that Vote, part of the money had been paid, and he was informed by the First Commissioner of Works that the building would be completed in a short time. Under these circumstances, he appealed to the hon. and learned Member for Guildford (Mr. Bovill) not to oppose the Vote, as it would be contrary to the practice of the House to do so after the grant which had been made last year. Even supposing the magnificent scheme were carried out, which would involve the spending of £200,000 in purchasing property in Chancery Lane, it would be necessary to carry on the present building. It was absolutely necessary to have something for the immediate purposes of the Patent Office. Whether that would be sufficient or not he would not now discuss. All he would say was that it was indispensable that what at least might be a temporary arrangement should be carried out. Under these circumstances, he would appeal to the Committee not to refuse a Vote for a service which would be completed in a month from the present time. The hon. and learned Gentleman complained that the provision made for the officers of the Patent Office was insufficient and ought to be increased, and he said that such was the opinion of Mr. Hindmarch and Mr. Greenwood. But the Attorney General had explained clearly that, though additional provision had been recommended by the Commissioners, the subject had not been brought before the Treasury in time to deal with it before the Estimates were prepared. The Estimates were prepared this year earlier than usual; they were laid upon the table a few days after the meeting of Parliament, and at that time the Treasury had not had time to come to a conclusion with respect to many of the recommendations of the Commissioners. However, he would undertake that the subject should receive the fullest consideration.

Mr. POWELL said, he wished to ask, whether last year the contract was entered into for the whole amount?

Mr. COWPER said, that when the Committee sanctioned a grant of money for the erection of this building his Department considered itself anthorized to carry out the intentions of the House of Commons by proceeding with the contract at once. By the present mode of procedure the House would not vote the whole sum that might be wanted, but only as much as would be required before the 31st of March. Nevertheless, the House would not shut out from view the consideration that money would be required after the 31st of March. The only effect of refusing this Vote would be that the contractor would lose the money to which he was entitled.

Mr. HENLEY said, the explanation given by the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Childers) was but indifferently consistent with the statement made by the Attorney General. The hon. and learned Member for Guildford (Mr. Bovill) had given various instances of the great inconvenience of the places in which specifications and other matters connected with patents were lodged. Not one of the statements with respect to these inconveniences did the Attorney General attempt to contradict; he admitted them all most fully, and it was quite impossible he could do otherwise consistently with the facts. It was quite true that this Vote was said to be a continuance of one agreed to last year, but then it was the only Vote upon which his hon. and learned Friend could raise this question of making due provision for the convenience of those people who paid considerable sums of money and of the public at large. Now, how did the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General and the Secretary to the Treasury meet the objections of his hon. and learned Friend? The Secretary to the Treasury said, "Don't trouble your heads about the matter; it is merely carrying out what was agreed to be done last year; the recommendations of Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Hindmarch are under the consideration of the Treasury, they will be put in a forward state, and everything will be done as you wish." But the Attorney General took quite a different line, for he said, "We are not going to carry out any of these things; you are quite mistaken; but here is a great question whether there is to be any Patent Office at all." Now, he thought it would be becoming in the Government, seeing the state in which the question was, to say, "We will do something." They ought to give an assurance that they would have the matter looked into, that a decision should be come to, and that the matter should not be kept dangling before the House in such an unsatisfactory manner. The Government ought to say that they would look into the whole question, instead of saying that they would allow the existing inconveniences to continue, and leave it to somebody else to do something. Everyone knew it was very convenient to do things piecemeal. It was all piecemeal now-a-days. He was glad, however, the Attorney General had so great an objection to piecemeal work, and put his objection in so very strong a way, as he always did; and he hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman would carry conviction on that subject to those around him. He thought that the Government ought to give the House some assurance that they would not leave the thing to go on in this haphazard manner. It ought not to be left to the chapter of accidents. So long as the Patent Laws existed proper accommodation should be provided for the specifications and those who desired to consult them.

Mr. CHILDERS said, that the portion of the Report relative to clerks would be considered by the Treasury before the Vote to be taken some months hence.

Mr. HENLEY said, the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Childers) had not, like the Attorney General, touched the question whether patents were to be continued. All that was certain was that everything was to be done in a fragmentary manner.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henley) had misunderstood him. What he did say was, that there ought to be no large expenditure for permanent objects until the whole subject had been considered. But he did not say that they should not pay their way as they went on. They must have clerks and increased accommodation for the immediate wants, which did not require a large expenditure.

General DUNNE said, he wished to know, whether the Government considered themselves pledged to bring this question to an issue, and to determine whether patents were to be continued or not? It was not right for the Government on such an important question to depend upon the action of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) or any other independent Member.

Sir FRANCIS CROSSLEY said, he wished that if the Attorney General thought that patents ought to be abolished he would say so, and not trust to the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn. The hon. and learned Member for Guildford had shown that much larger accommodation was required, and that the money in hand was adequate to provide larger accommodation. He thought the Attorney General had not properly met the statement of the hon. and learned Member for Guildford by expressing a hope that the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn would bring forward a Motion with reference to patents. Surely as long as patents were continued proper accommodation should be provided for people interested in patents, especially when the money paid by patentees was sufficient to provide it. The Attorney General was mistaken in saying that patentees gave nothing in return for the privileges granted to them. Did they not describe in broad daylight the whole of their inventions, so that at the expiration of their patents any one might make use of their inventions?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he did not perceive that there was any very great difference of opinion in this matter. He understood some hon. Gentlemen to claim that the Government should introduce a measure on the subject of the Law of Patents. He admitted, as a general rule, that questions of great importance ought to be dealt with by the Government; but in the present case two things had to be considered. One of those was, what measures the Government had already in their hands ; and the other was, whether independent Members of Parliament did not possess special means of investigating the subject, and whether they had not given such an indication of their intentions in reference to it as to afford the Government a fair reason for leaving it in their hands. There were in that House two hon. Members eminently qualified to deal with this subject—namely, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), and the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns), both of whom sat on the Commission on the Patent Laws. In point of fact, those eminent Gentlemen had superior means of forming conclusive opinions upon this question, and this had made the Government less anxious to bring the matter speedily to an issue. It was, moreover, quite impossible for the Government to take up the question during the present Session. The Law of Bankruptcy had been inquired into by a Committee who sat last year. They had made a Report, and it was the obvious duty of the Government to ask the House to give any time at their disposal to this subject. The Attorney General was prepared to introduce a measure on the subject of the Law of Bankruptcy at the earliest possible moment, but the Patent Law could not be taken up by the Government during the present Session. That was no reason why private Members should not attempt to deal with the subject, and the Government would be glad to give them any assistance. If no private Members took up the subject it would be the duty of the Government at the earliest practicable moment to consider it, and invite the House to act upon the conclusions to which they might come. The present Vote was one to meet the provisional state of things which now existed, and which, therefore, was only of a temporary character.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he wished to know whether the Secretary of the Treasury had referred to that part of the Report of Messrs. Greenwood and Hindmarch which recommended the appointment of a new officer of Patents, with a salary of £1,500 a year?

Mr. CHILDERS said, that the appointment of a new officer of Patents had not been recommended to the Treasury by the Commissioners of Patents. What he had alluded to as being under the consideration of the Government was the question of providing increased accommodation and additional clerks.

Mr. BOVILL said, he was glad of the assurance that had been given that the question should receive the attention of the proper Department of the Government. He saw no inconvenience in the postponement of this Vote. There had been a Vote of £4,500 taken on account to pay the expenses of the contractors, so that no question would arise as to a breach of faith towards them. The Attorney General had assumed an untenable position with regard to the state of feeling now as compared with what prevailed in 1852 in relation to the policy of the Patent Laws. He must remind him that the opinions to which he had referred as to the impolicy of maintaining those laws were entertained in 1851, and that all those points were investigated by a Committee of the House of Lords, which had two Bills before it, and which examined witnesses as to whether it was desirable to repeal the Patent Laws. Moreover, in 1862, ten years after the passing of the Patent Act, the present Attorney General himself, together with the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, and the Attorney General of that day, was actually a party to a memorial which was then addressed to the Treasury, pointing out the serious inconveniences and evils connected with the existing state of the Patent Office, and also joined in recommending that the surplus income of the Office in 1852 and in the succeeding years should be applied to the purposes therein enumerated. But since 1862 that surplus revenue, instead of being set apart as a fund for the erection of more commodious buildings and the like, had been transferred by the Treasury to the Consolidated Fund and spent for the general purposes of the country. Where, then, had been the great change that had taken place since 1862, when the hon. and learned Gentleman concurred in that memorial and recommendation? Again, in 1865, when the Commission over which the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn presided made its Report, it did not report against the policy of the Patent Laws, but recommended that certain things should be done which could only be done on the footing that the Patent Laws were to continue. Those recommendations had, however, been allowed to remain a complete dead letter ; and the Government were receiving a surplus of from £50,000 to £60,000 a year from patentees. Would the Chancellor of the Exchequer give an assurance that those funds would be devoted to the purposes of the Patent Office? For that was substantially the recommendation made to the Government in 1862 by their own Law Officers. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would assure the House that the surplus should be set apart for purposes connected with the Patent Office the House would be satisfied. If it were to be considered a temporary matter, the receipt of the money should be considered as temporary also, and it should be put aside until the whole question had been disposed of. It had been said that these fees were paid by patentees in consideration of advantages conferred on them by the State, but never was a more incorrect statement made. In the Act of 1852 there were two distinct schedules of fees—one for stamp duties, and the other in respect of the Patent Office. It was determined that the revenue should not suffer, and therefore the stamp duty was imposed, but it was also determined that payments should be made to discharge the expenses of the office with a view to its efficient maintenance; and afterwards, for convenience, it was arranged that the whole of the payments should be made by stamps. When examined before the Committee of 1864, Mr. Webster, who had been concerned in the drawing up of the measure, said, that it was never contemplated that the fees on patents should form part of the general revenue of the country. Mr. H. Cole, also a high authority on that subject, gave similar evidence, showing that the surplus profits were to have been applied to purposes directly connected with inventions. Surely, the Report of a Committee of that House which gave it as its opinion that the principal object of the fees levied under the Patent Law Amendment Act was to provide for the proper working of that measure, and not to increase the general revenue of the country, was entitled to some respect. The Report of Messrs. Greenwood and Hindmarch established the same point, and proved that these fees, as distinguished from the original stamp duties, ought not to go to swell the public revenue until the expenses and due working of every department of the Patent Office had been liberally provided for. The surplus last year was £43,000, and this year it was estimated at £60,000. At a very large meeting of delegates from the Chambers of Commerce of different parts of the country, resolutions were unanimously passed in favour of the maintenance of the Patent Laws. In the face of that fact, then, could it be asked to sanction temporary arrangements, while the large sum required for this Department of the public service was being withdrawn from its legitimate use? The Lord Chancellor, the Solicitor General, and other officials, whether from the extraordinary pressure of business, or other causes, had not had the opportunity of investigating the subject as he had done. With respect to the Master of the Rolls, he desired to express his admiration at the manner in which that distinguished Judge had attended to these matters; his time was fully occupied, and it was utterly impossible that he could devote the attention requisite for that office. The only wonder was that he should have succeeded so well under the circumstances; but it was principally owing, he believed, to the good feeling of those concerned in the matter. Here was an expenditure of £50,000 or £60,000, and was not that a matter worthy of proper attention and supervision? His hon. and learned Friend had assumed that if other Commissioners were to be appointed, they would have to be paid; but were there not ex-Solicitors General, and ex-Chancellors, and gentlemen retired from the active pursuits of mechanical science, who would like to be Commissioners? Nothing, however, seemed to have been done in that direction. There were many Members of the House who would not at all object to be Commissioners of Patents, and without receiving any emolument whatever. The Commissioners had distinctly recommended that there should be a responsible head, who should overlook everything, and be accountable to the Government for the money that would pass through his hands. He viewed with satisfaction the assurances which had been given by different Members of the Government in this matter. He believed, however, that it would be more convenient for the public service, and entail no inconvenience on the contractor, if the Vote were to be postponed, especially as the other Votes could not be taken for some time to come.

Mr. BENTINCK said, he wished an answer to his question, whether the Government had made up their minds that the Museum and Patent Office should go together, or whether the Museum was to remain at Kensington and the office in Chancery Lane?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL said, he believed that the Office would remain in Chancery Lane. He was really surprised at the novel mode in which his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Bovill) interpreted the statutes. Instead of inferring the intention of the Act from what it said, he sought to interpret it by what was said by those concerned in preparing it. If such a rule of interpretation were to be adopted in that House or in Westminster Hall, confusion would become a hundred times worse confounded. Passing from what was said by others: what the Legislature had said was this: "That the fees to be paid shall from time to time be paid to the receipts of the Exchequer, and be carried to the account of the Consolidated Fund of this kingdom." The intention of the Legislature evidently was, that out of the fees, which no doubt were calculated to be sufficient for maintaining the Patent Office, enough should be appropriated for its maintenance, and the rest should go to the Exchequer. To turn to the question before the House, it was admitted on all hands that there was great inconvenience, and that there was a pressing necessity for greater accommodation than existed. More room and more clerks were required. To provide them a Vote on account of £4,000 had been taken and expended, and if the additional sum now asked for were not allowed, works that were in progress would be stopped, and the greatest possible inconvenience would arise. Why was it desired to postpone the Vote? The reply which had been made was till some comprehensive measure could be introduced. Did any Gentleman suppose such a measure could be introduced during the present Session? It could not be introduced next Session if it were to be such a measure as his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Guildford had shadowed forth. In the meantime, if the Vote were not agreed to, great inconvenience would be experienced, while a comprehensive measure was being framed. All that was asked was a moderate and reasonable amount for the purpose of keeping the Patent Office going. There was no inconsistency in what was said by the Attorney General and the Secretary for the Treasury. The Attorney General had said, "Before you determine whether or not this comprehensive measure shall be passed relating to the building of a new office you must determine whether patents shall be maintained or not." Till that question was determined, however, whether in the affirmative or the negative, it was equally necessary that the present Vote should be taken. It was a reasonable demand, and he hoped the House would accede to it.

Mr. BOVILL said, that he had not interpreted the intentions of the Legislature in the way his hon. and learned Friend had described. He (the Solicitor General) had not really read the Act. It was true that he had read from Section 46, which said that the fees should be paid to the Exchequer, and carried to and made part of the Consolidated Fund, but he had not read the section which imposed the payment of the fees. He had not referred to the schedule, and he was entirely mistaken in his view. The 44th section imposed certain payments for the use of Her Majesty and other fees besides. The schedule of the Act was in two parts, one relating to stamp duties and the other to the payment of fees; and the question was, for what purpose the schedule was divided into two parts. If an Act of Parliament stated that two different sums were to be paid, and that one was for the use of Her Majesty, the natural inference to be drawn was that the other was not to be for the use of Her Majesty, if the Act contained no provision on that point. It was not a question of legal construction at all; the Act of Parliament was silent. At the time the Act was passed the House of Commons held control over the payments that were made. Though the payments that were made to the Law Officers of the Crown had in the first instance to go into the Treasury, could it be said that they were for purposes of the public revenue, and not to be handed over to those functionaries? Had his hon. and learned Friend taken the trouble to look into the matter, he would have found that the fees which were now actually received into the Treasury were applied in payment of the Law Officers of England, in payment of the Lord Advocate of Scotland, the Attorney and Solicitor General for Ireland, and in payment of compensation to officers who had been displaced. Yet his hon. and learned Friend said this money was public revenue, which could not be maintained. What he (the Solicitor General) had said in reference to the interpretation of an Act of Parliament was perfectly correct. But he (Mr. Bovill) had referred to the Act of Parliament, which his hon. and learned Friend had omitted to do, and cited the Report of the Committee appointed by the

House in the year 1864, which stated distinctly that the fees were imposed and paid, not for purposes of revenue, but for the purposes of the Patent Office. Had his hon. and learned Friend been more considerate he would not have charged him with misconstruing the Act of Parliament.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that his hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General was quite correct in saying that nothing in the Act provided that the money in question was to be appropriated for any specific purpose. They were all agreed that the Patent Office should, while it lasted, be properly maintained. Whether or not the system should be continued as heretofore was for future discussion on the merits of the question.

MR. BOVILL said, he had made no such proposal as that the Vote should be postponed indefinitely until some comprehensive scheme was brought forward by somebody. What he had suggested was that the attention of the Government should without delay be directed to the subject, and that it should be at once inquired into. If that were done, the Vote might be passed at the end of a week. Under the circumstances, he should move that it be postponed.

THE CHAIRMAN said, that the Motion for the postponement of the Vote was one which could not be put in Committee.

MR. BOVILL moved that the Chairman report Progress.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he hoped the Motion would not be persevered with. If Progress were reported the Vote would of course come on again when the House went into Supply. The proper course for the hon. and learned Gentleman to pursue, objecting as he did to the Vote, was to ask that it should be negatived.

MR. BOVILL said, that it was perfectly competent to the Government to postpone the Vote.

MR. AYRTON said, he thought it would be well that his hon. and learned Friend should not pursue his opposition to the Vote further, but should be contented with the good service which he had already done in having brought the points to which he had called attention so forcibly under the notice of the Committee. He saw no alternative but to complete the enlargement of the building. Some might think that they had been remiss in passing so many Votes that night, but he thought they had done good service in getting the Estimates out of the way, and making a clear stage for hon. Gentlemen opposite to show their zeal for the Reform of the House.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Bovill,*)—put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

On the Chairman leaving the Chair, the Clerk informed the House, that Mr. Speaker was advised by his medical attendant that he was not in a condition to return to the House at this late hour.

Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow ;*

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

CROWN LANDS ACTS.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Acts read ; *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he rose to state the effect of certain Resolutions which would have been moved before the vacation but for the unexpected curtailment of the sitting of the House on the last evening. The Resolutions were five in number, and formed the preliminary operation necessary for the introduction of a Bill to give effect to them. The two first constituted the principal matter and occasion of the Act he proposed to introduce ; but there would be several provisions in the Act of secondary importance which it was not necessary to refer to now. There was one provision, however, not of very great importance in effect, except as to its bearing on the local convenience of a portion of the community, and on the express desire of that House ; and that related to the forestal rights of the Crown in Epping Forest. The effect of the provision would be to carry over the supervision of those forestal rights from the Office of Woods to the Office of Works. The Office of Woods was appointed for the management of property, and whatever expenses were undertaken by that office ought to be expenses which had a view simply to the good management of the property. Within that definition the Department was not able to take any steps such as were desired by the House in reference to the forestal rights of Epping Forest. By the management of those rights being placed in the Office of Works, the Government would be in a condition, without any legal limitation, to make any proposal to the House in respect to them in the same manner as any other proposal with regard to any public charge under the care of the Office of Works. The two first Resolutions which he intended to move had an important bearing on the system of management of the Crown lands.' That was regulated by an Act passed in 1829; but since then an important and beneficial change had been introduced into the law of the country with respect to the management of settled estates, the general operation of which was good both to the tenant for life and to the reversioner, and the Government were desirous, by the application of similar principles to the case of the Crown lands, to bring about similar results, and a more full development of the capabilities of the estates. He apprehended that the effect of these provisions would be very decidedly beneficial to the public and likewise to the successor to the Crown, the advantage being divided between both parties. The first Resolution authorized that the costs of improvement within the meaning of the Improvement of Lands Act (1864) might from time to time be charged to the capital of the land revenues of the Crown. Now, with regard to the Duchy of Lancaster, the costs of improvement were at present charged to capital absolutely, and in the case of the Duchy of Cornwall, they were charged to capital with repayment in thirty years. Under the Improvement of Lands Act they were charged to capital with repayment in twenty-five years. The operation of the present system was that the public administered these Crown estates on very liberal principles, and paid very liberally out of the incomes for the improvements. There were certain improvements so called, but which really amounted more to the creation of property than to improvements of property. There was a case of improvement of property in the Isle of Man belonging to the Crown, but the cost of the improvement was so enormous in reference to the present state of value that the Government was not justified in meeting it out of the annual income of the Crown estate. Consequently, in that case the principle which was recognized by Parliament in the Improvement of Lands Act, as being beneficial as regards settled estates, both to the tenant for life and the reversioner, would not hold good, as the immediate and greater shrae of the benefit would be reaped by the public. The second Resolution which he intended to move proposed that one moiety of the net income of the Crown land revenues from mines, quarries, and mineral substances should be from time to time carried to the account of the capital of the said land revenues. By the Act which the Government desired to amend, the scale in this respect was weighted the other way, the whole proceeds of the minerals going to the tenant for life. That was not a desirable or satisfactory arrangement. The rate at which minerals were to be obtained was a matter which ought to be left to be governed simply by commercial considerations. The third Resolution opened an entirely distinct question, but one which had been frequently discussed in that House. It was prepared with reference to the foreshores, which formed a subject of discussion and of conflicting claims between the Crown and local parties. In the opinion of the Government the purchase of these rights would be a great advantage, and as the Crown estates owed a very large sum to the public, they thought a convenient method of making the purchase would be by a deduction from the amount of the debt so owing. It was also their opinion that the management of the foreshores might be more properly placed in the hands of the Board of Trade, and it would therefore be transferred from the Commissioners of Crown Lands to that Board. By the fourth Resolution the House were asked to make a concession to the Crown. At present the public were entitled during the lifetime of Her Majesty to the enjoyment and profit of the estate of Claremont. Now, that estate was originally purchased with money supplied from the Crown estates, and it was provided that upon the death of the Princess Charlotte or the King of the Belgians, or the survivor of them, it should revert to the Crown estates. It was, consequently, not the property of the public, though the public had the enjoyment and beneficial use of it for the remainder of Her Majesty's life. That beneficial use was not a very important matter to the public if Claremont remained in its present form. Though it was a beautiful and desirable estate, and a considerable rent might probably be obtained for it, such a rent would not bear any relation to its supposed capital value. That value could only be realized either by its absolute sale, which would, perhaps, be hardly within the spirit of the arrangement between the Crown and the public, or by a still stronger measure—namely, the cutting it up into a multitude of villas. Considering what Claremont had been, and considering the very large pecuniary benefit which the public derived from the voluntary surrender by the late King of the Belgians of his personal interest in it for a long term of years, and his well-known wishes regarding it, the Government did not think it would be a satisfactory course to carve it into a number of small holdings, to be sold as villas at the best price they could fetch in the general market. The other arrangements under the Bill being decidedly beneficial to the public, and having received the approval of the Prince of Wales, the Government felt satisfied that the House would allow the Crown the enjoyment of Claremont during Her Majesty's life. It was not intended thereby to add Claremont to the list of Royal Palaces in the sense of any charge on the public purse, as there would be no charge on the public for its maintenance. Having explained the principal objects of the Bill, as well as the minor one, respecting the forestal rights, which had formed a matter of public interest, it was not necessary for him at the present stage to go more minutely into the subject. He moved the first Resolution—

"That the costs of improvements on Crown Lands within the meaning of the Improvement of Lands Act, 1864, may, with the consent of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, from time to time be charged to the capital of the Land Revenues of the Crown, subject to such provisions as to repayment as may be prescribed by Parliament."

Resolution *agreed to.*

Resolution 2—

"That one moiety of the net income of the said Land Revenues from mines, quarries, and mineral substances, be from time to time carried to the account of the capital of the said Land Revenues."

Resolution *agreed to.*

Resolution 3—

"That in consideration of the transfer to the Board of Trade, on behalf of the public, of the management of certain rights of the Crown in tidal lands in the United Kingdom, it is expedient that compensation shall be made to the said Land Revenues for such transfer, in such manner as may be prescribed by Parliament."

Mr. HENLEY said, he supposed that the management of certain rights included the receipt of any profit from them?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Yes.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he understood the proposition to be a sort of adjustment between the property of the Crown and of the public, equalizing a liability on the one hand and a debt on the other. The property of the Crown and certain other matters frequently spoken of were all pure legal fiction, for the property of the Crown had been, since the settlement of 1688, arranged by the Civil List, and the Crown could not possibly resume that property. The foreshore rights were of an uncertain character originally, and had been sometimes exercised in a hostile manner to individuals.

Mr. CHILDERS said, the Government were doing their best to remedy the very grievance of which the hon. Gentleman complained with regard to the foreshores, Epping Forest, and certain commons. They proposed to transfer the management of the foreshores to the President of the Board of Trade, and that of Epping Forest to the First Commissioner of Works. The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner had brought in a Bill removing all grievances with regard to the commons.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he was perfectly willing to give the Government credit for doing their best in the matter.

Mr. KINNAIRD said, the hon. Gentleman opposite had acted rightly in drawing attention to these grievances. Government deserved great credit for the way in which they had acted in this matter, as the grievances relating to the foreshores were very oppressive.

Resolution *agreed to.*

Resolution 4—

"That it is expedient to make provision for the enjoyment by Her Majesty, during Her life or pleasure, of Claremont House, together with certain lands settled by the Act of the fifty-sixth year of King George the Third, chapter one hundred and fifteen."

Mr. AYRTON said, he wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount it might be assumed that Claremont would let for as it stood?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he understood from the Commissioners of Crown Lands that, under very favourable circumstances, it would let for about £1,200 per annum.

Mr. AYRTON said, then it might be taken that they were about to add that sum to the Civil List granted to Her Majesty on her accession. It could scarcely be supposed that Her Majesty was dissatisfied with that settlement, and he was afraid that Her Majesty's name was used in this transaction in a way not calculated to give satisfaction to the country. They all knew that these Royal palaces were not used by the Queen herself, but were granted to people about the Court, and he was afraid that by the proposed grant great expense to the country would be incurred without any corresponding dignity being added to the Crown. He saw no necessity for making this addition to the Civil List.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that Claremont was not a house that could be granted away in the manner suggested by the hon. Member. It was desirable in certain instances that Her Majesty should have the power of granting residences to those whom she was anxious to reward, but Claremont would not be used for that purpose. The hon. Member spoke of it as a gift by Parliament to Her Majesty, but it was given in consideration of the pecuniary benefit which the public would receive from the proposed measure, and should not be viewed as unsettling the Civil List. He had already stated the sum the country would gain by letting the house, and that sum it was now proposed to give up in consideration of certain benefits which the public would receive by the measure they were about to pass. It was in consideration of the benefit which the public would receive from this measure that the Government felt themselves justified in recommending the proposed disposal of Claremont. In his opinion, the Bill was one which would be of considerable advantage to the public, although it would likewise grant to Her Majesty the enjoyment of Claremont during her life.

Mr. HENLEY said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing the Resolutions used the expression that the consent of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had been given to the measure.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the words he had used were that the measure had met with the approval of the Prince of Wales.

Mr. HENLEY said, that the approval of his Royal Highness to the measure being required would lead the public to suppose that the rights of the Prince were being dealt with.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the approval of his Royal Highness was not required to this Resolution.

Mr. HENLEY said, the approval of the Prince was unnecessary unless they were about to deal with his reversionary interest. He could not see why His Royal Highness' name had been introduced into the matter at all.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the introduction of the Prince's name had no reference to this portion of the Resolutions.

Mr. HENLEY said, he was sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had named his Royal Highness.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he had not mentioned the name of the Prince in relation to Claremont, but in relation to the other portions of the measure which affected his interests. As a strict matter of fact the approval of the Prince was not requisite, but as the proposed change in reference to some of the estates about to be dealt with affected his interests, and as His Royal Highness was of age and in a position to take cognizance of the matter, it was thought right that he should be made aware of what was taking place, and that his approval should be obtained. Claremont, however, in no way bore upon his interests, and therefore his approval had not been sought for this Resolution.

Mr. HENLEY said, he had misunderstood the matter. It was but right that the Prince should know what was going on with reference to matters by which his interests would be affected.

Mr. THOMSON HANKEY said, that even if the palace were not granted to Her Majesty, the annual cost to the country for keeping up the place would far exceed the sum of £1,200 per annum, at which it was valued.

Mr. AYRTON said, the hon. Gentleman was in error, as the estate would be placed in the hands of the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, whose duty it would be to let it to the highest bidder. What they were about to do was to add £1,200 per annum to the Civil List granted to Her Majesty. Her Majesty had a palace in London, another at Windsor, a third at Osborne, and a fourth in Scotland, and of course if she required another at Claremont for her personal use not the slightest objection would be offered to her having it. It was only necessary to state that Her Majesty had not sufficient palaces to live in, and that she required another, and the House would have immediately granted to her the use of this place. But that was not the suggestion. Her Majesty was not going to live in it, and the real intention was that Her Majesty should grant it to some one as a favour. They were making this addition to the Civil List in order that Her Majesty might make a present of the palace to some one else. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would state that Her Majesty intended to reside in the house he should make no further objection to the Resolution; but if the right hon. Gentleman could not satisfy him upon that point, he should believe that they were merely adding so much to the Civil List to be applied to the purpose he had mentioned.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he was bound to say that he had not found it any part of his duty to inquire of Her Majesty whether she required Claremont for her personal use and enjoyment, or not. He knew that Claremont was an object of the deepest interest to Her Majesty, and without doubt it would be appropriated to her use, or to that of some member of the Royal Family. This concession made to Her Majesty was part of a measure which would result in great pecuniary benefit to the Exchequer of the country. On examination, his hon. Friend would find that the statements which he had made were fully borne out.

Mr. AYRTON said, he would, of course, wait for the Bill. His remarks were entirely founded upon the Resolution before the House.

Resolution *agreed to.*

Resolution 5—

That it is expedient to amend the Acts relating to the Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues of the Crown.

Resolution *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND) BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

Mr. CHILDERS moved for leave to bring in a Bill to extend the provisions of the Acts for the Encouragement of the Sea Fisheries in Ireland by promoting and aiding the Grants of Public Money, the Construction of Piers, Harbours, and other works. He said, that the Government proposed to take powers not only to extend the existing piers, but also to provide for their repair where the repair had been neglected by those who were interested in the matter. The Government did not propose to make any charge upon the Consolidated Fund, but to place the required amounts upon the Estimates, when they would naturally be explained in due course.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to extend the provisions of the Acts for the Encouragement of the Sea Fisheries in Ireland by promoting and aiding the Grants of Public Money, the construction of Piers, Harbours, and other works, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Childers, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 93.]

LABOURING CLASSES DWELLINGS (IRELAND) BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

Mr. CHILDERS moved for leave to bring in a Bill to encourage the establishment of Lodging Houses for the Labouring Classes in Ireland. He said, that the provisions of the Bill were similar to those of a measure before the House bearing upon the same subject in England.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to encourage the establishment of Lodging Houses for the Labouring Classes in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Childers and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 94.]

DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE (IRELAND) BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

Mr. CHILDERS moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the better maintenance of works executed under the Acts for the drainage of lands in Ireland. He said, that the law as it at present stood made ample provision for establishing drainage works, but was defective in those provisions which related to their maintenance. These defects would be obviated by the present measure.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to provide for the better maintenance of works executed under the Acts for the Drainage of Lands in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Childers and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 95.]

LOCAL OFFICERS SUPERANNUATION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN, Bill to enable corporate and other public bodies in Ireland to grant Superannuation Allowances to Officers in their service in certain cases, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN and Sir JOHN GRAY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 92.]

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES BILL.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Bill do consist of seventeen Members:—Committee *nominated*:—Lord CLARENCE PAGET, Sir JOHN PAKINGTON, Mr. WALPOLE, Mr. HUNT, Lord HOTHAM, Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, General PEEL, Sir HARRY VERNEY, Admiral ERSKINE, Sir MORTON PETO, Mr. AYRTON, Mr. KINNAIRD, Mr. LOCKE, The Marquess of HARTINGTON, Sir GEORGE GREY, Colonel HERBERT, and Mr. MORLEY:—Five to be the quorum.

House adjourned at One o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, April 10, 1866.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBERS SWORN—The Right hon. Chichester Samuel Fortescue, *for* Louth; Nathaniel Eckersley, esquire, *for* Wigan.

SELECT COMMITTEE—On Mortality of Troops (China), *nominated.*

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee—Resolutions* [April 9] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolutions* [April 9] *reported*—Crown Lands Acts.

Ordered — Finsbury Estate; Marriages (Ireland)*; Crown Lands Acts.*

First Reading — Finsbury Estate [97]; Crown Lands* [98]; Marriages (Ireland)* [99]; Art [*Lords*]* [100].

Second Reading—Superannuations (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards)* [52]; Poor Persons Burial (Ireland)* [154].

Committee—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases* [86].

Report—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases* [86].

Third Reading—Labouring Classes' Dwellings* [67], and *passed.*

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, and read the following Letter, which he had this day received:—

Speaker's House, April 10, 1866.

Sir,—I am directed by my Medical Advisers to abstain from attending the House this day and to-morrow. They think this important for my speedy recovery.

I trust the House will permit me to obey their directions.

Two days of rest will enable me, I make sure, to enter on my duties with efficiency on Thursday next.—I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servant, J. EVELYN DENISON.

To Sir Denis Le Marchant, Bart.

Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

NOTTINGHAM TOWN ELECTION. JAMES PRINGLE.

MR. ADAIR, from the Select Committee appointed to try the Nottingham Town Election Petition, informed the House, That it appeared from evidence adduced before the Committee on Monday the 2nd day of April, that James Pringle having been duly summoned by the Speaker's Warrant, had disobeyed such Warrant, and had not appeared before the said Committee. He begged, therefore, to move that James Pringle, having been duly summoned by the Speaker's Warrant to attend the said Committee, and having disobeyed such Warrant, had been guilty of a contempt and breach of the privileges of that House.

MR. WATKIN asked, whether it was usual to make such a Motion in cases of that kind; because he recollected that that course had not been followed in the case of Great Yarmouth, when two important witnesses, who were both served with the Speaker's Warrant, had absented themselves.

MR. HADFIELD thought it desirable that some prompt power should be given to the Chairman of a Committee to issue a warrant for the apprehension of a witness who disobeyed the Speaker's Warrant. A person who would bribe an elector was quite competent to bribe a person not to appear before a Committee.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER believed that in the case of the Great Yarmouth Election Committee, to which the hon. Member for Stockport had referred, no report had been made to the House like that which had just emanated from the Nottingham Election Committee.

Motion *agreed to.*

Resolved, That James Pringle having been duly summoned by the Speaker's Warrant to attend the said Committee, and having disobeyed such Warrant, and not having appeared before the said Committee, has been guilty of contempt and of a breach of the privileges of this House.

Ordered, That James Pringle, having been guilty of contempt, and of a breach of the privileges of this House, be for his said offence taken into the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms attending this House; and that Mr. Deputy Speaker do issue his Warrant accordingly.

METROPOLIS—INCLOSURE IN LEICESTER SQUARE.—QUESTION.

Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE said, he wished to ask the First Commissioner of Works, Whether there is any intention of causing the inclosure in Leicester Square to be turned into a garden or ornamental ground, under the provisions of the Gardens in Towns Protection Act, 1863? He also wished to know, whether the equestrian statue within the inclosure is one of the public statues committed to the hon. Gentleman's care under another Act of Parliament?

Mr. COWPER, in reply, said, the Act of 1863 imposed no duties whatever upon himself or upon the office he held; but as regarded Leicester Square, the Metropolitan Board of Works had power to execute the provisions of the Act. His hon. Friend doubtless knew that he (Mr. Cowper) had no control over that body, and he was not responsible for their proceedings. He was, however, happy to furnish his hon. Friend with what information he possessed on the subject, and he could state that the Metropolitan Board had put up a notice in Leicester Square in accordance with the provisions of the Act, and that had been followed by legal proceedings being instituted against the Board. Those proceedings were instituted by the gentleman who claimed possession of the soil of Leicester Square, and probably the case would be decided shortly. With regard to the statue, which had only one leg and one arm, it was not under his (Mr. Cowper's) jurisdiction. It was private property, and it seemed that the person to whom it belonged had not taken that decent care of it which he ought to have done.

WRECK OF THE SHIP "ST. ABBS." QUESTION.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, he rose to put a Question to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in which three families were deeply concerned. Eleven years ago the ship *St. Abbs* was wrecked off the coast of Africa, 600 miles from the main land. The captain and a certain number of the crew who put off in boats were saved, but the rest of the sailors and five young cadets going to Bombay remained in the ship. The British Consul at Zanzibar, Colonel Rigby, had received communications which led him to suppose that some of the survivors of the wreck were detained among the Somaali. Portions of the cargo of the lost ship had actually been sent to Zanzibar. He wished to point out to the House that this was a case of deep interest to the families of the young men who had been wrecked in the ship. [" Order, order!"]

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman must, in conformity with the rules of the House, confine himself to the terms of the question which he intends to ask.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE: Then, I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Foreign Office have received any Despatches to justify the hope that there are some survivors of the ship *St. Abbs,* which was wrecked off Tenadi Nuova in 1855, still detained as prisoners among the Somaali on the coast of Africa; and, if so, whether the Government will take any steps to procure their release?

Mr. LAYARD, in reply, said, he could assure his hon. Friend that the Government felt the deepest sympathy for the families of those persons to whom his Question referred, and who were supposed, he was afraid on insufficient grounds, to be alive. The wreck of the ship *St. Abbs* took place eleven years ago, and it was believed that, with the exception of some who had escaped in the boats, all on board had perished; but in 1861 a report was received from Colonel Rigby to the effect that there were some white persons in the interior of the Somaali country whom he assumed to be others who had escaped from the wreck. The Foreign Office thereupon communicated with the India Office, whose particular business it was to make inquiries on the subject through their agents at Zanzibar and Aden. Inquiries were instituted, but the result was that the report was believed not to have been well founded. About a year ago, however, some hides were brought down to some part of the coast from the interior, on which European letters were said to have been cut, and the report was revived that there were some persons—it might be survivors from the wreck of the *St. Abbs*—still living in the interior, in a part of the country which was unfortunately inhabited by very wild tribes, and quite inaccessible to Europeans. Under these circumstances, the Foreign Office had requested Dr. Livingstone and Dr. Kirk, who was recently appointed surgeon to the residency at Zanzibar, to take any means of ascertaining whether there were any white persons in the interior who might be survivors from the wreck. He could assure his hon. Friend that if there was the least reason to believe that there were any such persons still living, everything would be done to effect their release.

INCOME OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

QUESTION.

Mr. BANKS STANHOPE said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What information exists as to the amount of the aggregate income of the working men of this country, and on what basis that amount has been calculated ?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER : Sir, I am not aware of anything in the nature of information, or that can properly be called information, on the subject of the aggregate income of the working classes of this country. It is a matter which at various times has been made the subject of very interesting inquiries by statisticians, and there are certain materials upon which such inquiries may be based, particularly the enumeration in the Census of the different classes of labourers, and upon the knowledge of the numbers belonging to those different classes, and upon the knowledge of the wages usually received by them, computations may be made, but they are mere computations and ought not to be considered as in the nature of information. I never propounded, and I never should propound, anything of the sort as information. I have recently given an opinion upon it, and for financial purposes I have looked into the circumstances on former occasions, and I have given an opinion—I do not call it more than an opinion—upon a recent occasion, which I am bound to say I believe to be a very moderate conjecture, which I will maintain against all opponents—but I cannot claim for it any higher rank than that of an opinion.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE.—QUESTIONS.

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU said, he rose to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in fulfilment of the promise given by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, any measure has been prepared to give compensation to those persons whose cattle have been killed under the Orders of the Privy Council previous to the passing of the Act of this Session ; and, if so, when that measure will be introduced ?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, the promise referred to by the noble Lord was that the subject should receive further consideration. It was necessary that minute inquiry should, in the first instance, be made with a view to ascertain not only the value of the animals, but the circumstances under which they were slaughtered. When that inquiry had been completed it would be for the Government to determine what course they should take.

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU said, he wished to know, whether the Government have taken any steps to ascertain the various particulars which they deem to be necessary to become acquainted with before arriving at a determination on the subject of his Question ?

Sir GEORGE GREY replied that no inquiries had as yet been made as to what sums, if any, had already been paid to the persons to whom the noble Lord referred. No time would be lost in instituting the necessary inquiries on the subject.

Mr. HENRY BAILLIE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is the intention of the Government to maintain the prohibition of the conveyance of cattle by Railway after the 16th April ; and, if so, whether the northern counties of Scotland, where the plague does not exist, might be allowed to send cattle to the south by Railway so long as they remained free from disease ?

Sir GEORGE GREY, in reply, said, it was not proposed to continue beyond the 16th of April the absolute prohibition of the removal of cattle by railway. It was proposed to substitute for that prohibition regulations authorizing their removal under certain restrictions.

ARMY—NOTTINGHAM BARRACKS.

QUESTION.

Mr. LOCKE said, in the absence of his hon. Friend (Sir Robert Clifton), he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, When the Government intend to build barracks at Nottingham on the land which was purchased from the Duke of Newcastle in 1862 for the sum of £5,200?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: Sir, the building of those barracks was suspended for want of funds pending the completion of others of considerably more importance. No money has been taken for their construction this year in the Estimates, and it is impossible for me to say at what time it will be in the power of the Secretary of State to take money for the purpose. The project of building the barracks has not, at the same time, been abandoned.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (IRELAND).

RESOLUTION.

Sir JOHN GRAY said—Sir, I rise to propose the Motion of which I gave notice some time since, for the purpose of asking this House to give its earnest attention to the subject of the Irish Church Establishment. I am conscious, Sir, that it involves many collateral questions, each one of which is of deep importance, not only to the Irish people, but to the English people, and possibly not very remotely to the Empire at large. No man who reflects upon the condition of the Church question in Ireland, affecting so large a number of the subjects of the Queen, can feel otherwise than that it is an important question to have considered, and one upon the decision of which much of the future of that country, and possibly something of the future honour of this country, must depend. The social position of the great mass of the Irish people is largely affected by that question. There is a large money question involved in the consideration of the revenues; but that is as nothing compared with the great broad principle which is at stake—a principle which involves that which Englishmen have always held most dear, the right to worship God according to their consciences, and the right of being perfectly free and unfettered because of religious opinion. That right and that liberty I hold to be altogether inconsistent with the existence of the ascendancy of one class of religionists over another. In venturing to bring this question under the consideration of the House, I feel that, though there are important financial details to be considered, the great and paramount question that lies at the root of all is the question of equal citizenship as evidenced by perfect religious equality. It rests with this House now to determine shall we or shall we not have an united people, a sympathetic people, a people in thorough and hearty unity, the one with the other, because of the existence of equal laws, equal rights, equal liberties, civil and religious; or shall we have a great surging mass of discontent created, fostered, and rendered active by the continuance of unequal laws—of laws which, if they do not actually injure the person, affect the social position and the future progress in life by putting the brand of degradation and of inferiority upon one class, and giving an odious and hateful ascendancy to the other. I feel, Sir, that there are so many large considerations, analogous to those I have indicated, involved in this Church question, that I could wish some person better qualified to deal with it had charge of the subject, and that the humble position of supporting him by my vote alone remained for me. But it is a question to which I have given much attention during a very long period, and I feel so strongly upon it that, however conscious I am of my own incapacity, I do not shrink from discussing it, feeling that there is in this House a spirit of indulgence and forbearance to which I will not appeal in vain, especially when I tell the House that I bring it forward not for the purpose of creating any unpleasant feelings or any acrimonious discussion either inside of this House or outside of it. On the contrary, I hope sincerely that during this discussion, and I certainly promise, so far as I myself am concerned, that not one word calculated to give offence to the most delicate sensibilities of a single Member of the Irish Established Church, either inside or outside this House, shall fall from my lips. I and my Colleagues from Ireland are not here to-night to assail individuals, but to assert a principle. We war not with the ecclesiastics, but against a system, and for that principle, and against that unjust system, we intend to contend strenuously, and earnestly, and continuously. And though we may not be as successful on each successive effort for redress as we could wish, our cause must finally triumph. I believe I speak the sentiments of those who act with me, when I say that we are fully determined never to let this question rest—never to let this question rest until Church ascendancy is abolished, and until perfect religious equality is established in Ireland. If any man here were asked to-day—even the most earnest advocate of the Irish Church Establishment—if he were asked to-day would he block out a system analogous to that State institution which now exists in Ireland, I believe even the youngest statesman on the Opposition Benches would say decidedly no. The only pretence upon which a continuance of the Establishment is defended is that an old wrong, an old injustice, an old abuse, has continued for so lengthened a period that there would be serious difficulty in removing that injustice now, that there are, in fact, certain established rights of injustice, and that these rights of injustice must be preserved and conserved because of their long continuance. This question has been so often discussed in Parliament, so fully discussed, and by men of great ability, that I am aware it is impossible for me to hope that I can present before you any very novel views of the case. But inasmuch as this is a new Parliament, and the form of the Notice which I have given asks this House to consider the question, I feel it necessary to place some facts and figures before the House as the grounds upon which I ask the House to adopt the declaration contained in my Motion, that the State Church is unsatisfactory, and that Parliament should carefully consider what remedy should be applied. Every man in Ireland, excepting those immediately connected with the Establishment itself, admits that the Established Church of Ireland has failed most signally, failed as to every one of the purposes for which it was imported into that country. It has failed polemically, for it has not increased in numbers save by importation and natural increment. It has not brought into religious communion with it any large portion of the people, amongst whom it was planted for the purpose of their conversion. It has failed politically, for it has not succeeded in producing that amount of sympathy and union of opinion, of hope, of feeling, and of sentiment between the people of Ireland and the people of England, which were expected as the fruits that would spring from the importing, planting, and endowing that Church in Ireland. And now, after you have tried that experiment for three centuries, and proved it to be a failure, we ask you to try it no longer. That experiment, permit me to say, was your experiment, and has cost England more treasure and more blood, and has produced more of heart-burning, of sorrow, and of misery both to the families of English settlers in Ireland and to the native Irish race than resulted from the greatest war in which England was ever engaged. It is your duty, then, as well as your interest, to abandon a policy which is insulting to Ireland and dishonouring to you. Whatever may be thought of the terms of the Resolution which I have placed on the Notice paper, I do believe that upon a just and full consideration of the question—a consideration which I trust this House will not refuse to give—there will, of necessity, crop up these questions. Are you prepared to continue that fatal experiment, or are you prepared to admit that it has been a failure and a blunder, and that the time has at length come when the abolition of an ascendancy Church as a State institution must take place? If the failure be disputed, there are several modes by which we can test the question as to whether or not that State institution has been a failure. Perhaps one of the most simple, as it is the most obvious, is to deal with the official Returns of the numbers of the several religious denominations of the population of Ireland. I will take the figures as to the population of Ireland at present, and ascertain whether or not the Established Church in Ireland has succeeded in accomplishing one of the two great objects for which it was introduced into and forced upon the people of Ireland. It was, professedly at least, designed to accomplish the conversion of the Irish people, and to root itself in the hearts and affections of that people. I will not go into the details of figures that belong to the past, but I cannot avoid comparing with the figures of the present time some that were quoted in the course of last year by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer when discussing the question of the Irish Church. It was then stated by him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), upon the authority of Sir William Petty, that the respective numbers of Catholics and of Protestants in Ireland in his time stood thus—800,000 Catholics and 300,000 Protestants of all denominations. According to the computation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer — and I am sure this House will willingly accept his calculations as correct—if the proportion represented by these figures had continued unaltered to the present time, the number of Protestants would now stand at 2,400,000. Now, let us test by these figures, and the computation based on them, whether or not the Church established by law in Ireland has succeeded in gaining over such numbers of the Catholic population of Ireland as to justify its continuance as a State instrument. If we find it has not, let us then ask, has it even succeeded in maintaining its own position as to relative numbers? The total population of Ireland, according to the Census of 1861, was, in round numbers, 5,798,000. Now, omitting the millions altogether, even the odd hundreds of thousands exceed the number of the members of the Church established by law. The odd thousands are 798,000, and there are only 693,000 Church Protestants, while there are 599,000 Dissenters, and 4,505,265 Roman Catholics. That series of figures must give to the mind of reflecting and unprejudiced Members of this House a most conclusive answer to the question — has the Established Church succeeded in increasing its proportionate numbers, and in winning over to it the Catholic population? Comparing the figures that were given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the Returns of the Census of 1861, the answer to that question must be that it has miserably failed in winning over the Catholic population, and has as shamefully failed in holding its own. I know that Gentlemen who strenuously advocate the claims of the Established Church in Ireland to an entire and absolute monopoly of the Church revenues of that country, may tell this House now, as they have told a former Parliament, that to take the aggregate of the population of Ireland does not give a just and accurate estimate of the true relative conditions of the Protestants and Catholics in that country, but that you must take the country in the divisions of north and south; and that if you look to the Returns for what has been called the Protestant North, you will find such a modification of the relative proportions as will indicate great Church strength in the prosperous district of Ulster. To meet that argument, I have taken the relative numbers in Ulster and in the other Provinces. When in former debates the champions of the Church Establishment spoke of Ulster as the great stronghold of Church-of-Englandism, they ought in fairness to have stated the peculiar condition of Ulster, past and present. They ought to have explained that the soil of Ulster, every broad acre within its limits, was confiscated; that every Catholic proprietor in Ulster was driven from his home and from his lands; that a colony was imported from England, and another from Scotland, to be planted in Ulster, and placed in occupation as owners of the lands from which the Catholic proprietary had been expelled. No words that I could use would tell you more expressively the sad story of that process than the mere repetition of the phrase by which that process is known in English as well as in Irish history, "The plantation of Ulster"—the planting therein of a Protestant garrison imported from England and from Scotland, and the expelling of the Catholic proprietors from the broad lands of that entire province. If, under such circumstances, and with the additional fact before your minds that the persons so imported and planted in Ulster got their lands upon the express condition that they should not alienate or otherwise transfer any of them to any person who did not conform to the Church as by law established, and that no tradesman should take an apprentice except the certified son of a certified conforming Churchman—if, under such circumstances, there were no such thing to be found within the boundaries of Ulster as a Roman Catholic, you could not, and would not, be surprised. What, however, are the facts? Did the State Church, established by these means, and aided by all the terror of the law in its special operations, and with all the advantages of that large Protestant importation and plantation to which I have thus briefly alluded, did it succeed in keeping out Catholicism—did it succeed, as was intended, in trampling it out, or, to use a phrase common of late in this House in reference to a malignant plague, did it stamp out Roman Catholicism? Look to the Census Returns from Ulster for an answer. The Church population are in the proportion of 20·42 per cent, while the Nonconformists, including Catholics, are 79·58 per cent. But it may be said the "Nonconformists" include a large number of Protestants, although Nonconforming, and that the figures I have stated do not fairly indicate the position of the State Church in that province in relation to the Catholics. Well, then, I will take the case of Ulster in another form to meet that plausible objection. The Church of England Protestants are 20·42 per cent. The Catholics are 50·44 per cent, showing that even in that province where it was attempted to stamp out the Catholic population, and with them the Catholic faith, by the confiscation of the land, and the expulsion of the Catholics, and the granting the lands to the imported Protestants upon the express condition that they should not alienate or assign to any person who did not conform to the Church as by law established — that even with all these advantages and all these appliances designed to stamp out "Romanism," the State Church has not been able to hold its own, while the Catholics, in that very province so "planted," have so increased as to be 2½ to 1 of the Church population. In speaking of the Church, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I draw a broad line of demarcation between the Church as a church simple, and the Church as a State institution. In this Assembly, consisting of men of all creeds and persuasions, it is not my desire to enter into anything like a polemical discussion. I therefore confine myself in dealing with the Church Establishment to considering the State institution, and altogether exclude from consideration the Church as a church *per se*. That State institution which was established in Ireland as a State instrument for the double purpose of evangelizing the Catholics and anglicizing the Irish, failed, as you have seen, in the Church province of Ulster to the discreditable extent represented by the figures I have just quoted. Let us look now to the figures as to Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. I find that in Leinster, the especial province of the "Pale," the State institution members are equal to 11·89 per cent, while the Nonconforming population are 88·11 per cent. In Munster the Church population dwindled down to 5·10 per cent, while the Nonconforming population are equal to 94·90 per cent. In Connaught the Church population is still less, the proportion being only 4·25, and the remaining 95·75 being, with a fractional exception, all Catholics. I know from the course taken on former debates, and from the many very able and brilliant speeches delivered outside of this House by some of the right hon. Gentlemen who took part in those debates, that we shall probably be told that in giving these figures I have taken the civil and not the ecclesiastical divisions of the country, and that if I had taken the ecclesiastical there might be a different result. Having met with that observation, I felt it my duty to examine the facts by taking the figures for each Church of England diocese as given in the Returns of the Census Commissioners. There are now twelve dioceses in Ireland, and I will classify them into two divisions. Taking as the first group the four dioceses which contain the largest Church populations—namely, Armagh, Down, Derry, and Dublin—I find that these four taken together, although the most State Church of the twelve dioceses contain a Church population only equal to 19·03 per cent, the Nonconforming population being equal to 80·97 per cent. So that whatever way we take it—whether you take it in provinces, or take it in the aggregate, or in the ecclesiastical divisions of the Church itself, you still find the Church has failed, most signally failed, in producing conversions to its opinions, or winning over the Catholics to its fold. In the remaining eight of the twelve dioceses of Ireland the failure is more marked, the Church population being only equal to 5·95 per cent, and the Nonconforming population amounting to 94·05 per cent. Perhaps it would be well to give some reason why Dublin stands amongst the four dioceses in the group of which the Church populations attain the percentage of 19·03, which is so seemingly large when compared with that of the other group. Dublin was the chief city of the Pale, and a large number of the English settlers did conform to the Church adopted as the national Church in England when it was imported into Ireland; and, accordingly, I find that in the year 1644, so large was the number of Protestants in Dublin belonging to the State Church, that, in Dublin city, they were to the Catholics in the proportion of more than two to one. A certain amount of that strength of numbers has continued ever since, but still so steadily and continuously decreasing that in 1861 the Church population of Dublin was 19·04 per cent, while the Catholic population was 77·2 per cent. So that, whether you examine it *in globo* or in detail, the one condemnatory result is always ascertained, that the State Church has most signally failed, and, speaking of it in a religious sense, has most shamefully failed in the mission for which it was imported into Ireland. It may be said tonight, as it has been said before, and repeated in every form, that in point of fact, taking the aggregate of the population, the proportion of Church Protestants in 1834 was but 10 per cent, whereas it is now 11·7 per cent, and that, therefore, there has been from 1834 to 1861 a gradual relative increase of State Churchism, showing a progress sufficiently satisfactory to induce Parliament to continue the experiment for some time longer. I do not think it is creditable to the Church Establishment to advance such an argument. The naked statement of the fact that the Church proportion has relatively increased from 10 to 11·7 per cent would seem to give some colour to the allegation that the experiment has proved somewhat more effective as to results for the last thirty years than before that period. But when you come to examine the facts, and when you discover the fallacies, you find, by taking the whole Church population in 1834, and the whole Church population in 1861, that, instead of there being an absolute increase as would be indicated to ordinary minds by the statement of those stereotyped percentages, there is, on the contrary, an absolute decrease in the number of Church Protestants to the extent of 114,000. It is true that there has been a large decrease in the numbers of the Catholic population. But has that decrease been the result of conversions from the Catholic Church to the State Church? No. It has been the undoubted result, the distinctly consequential result, of the system pursued towards Ireland during the 300 years of the experiment of which the maintenance of this very Church Establishment was the leading feature — an experiment which you will doubtless be asked to-night by the Church champions opposite to continue. The Catholic population has diminished, Sir, not by conversion, but by the operations of famine, and of pestilence, and of emigration. What produced that famine and that emigration? What were the causes that compelled so many Irish Catholics to leave their native land and seek a more hospitable home in a foreign soil? These evils originated in the continued application by England to Ireland of the principle of rule which produced the establishment of this State Church and the plantation of Ulster, and the driving to and imprisonment of Catholics in Connaught. [*Cries of* "No, no!" *from the Opposition Benches.*] I repeat they arose as the natural consequence of the enforcement of the principles that suggested an ascendancy Church and the Ulster plantation. If you go into Ulster, and inquire amongst the tenant-farmers of that province, as I have done, they will tell you that they attribute the existence of their tenant-right and the recognition of the rights of industry amongst them to the fact that they are the descendants of the farmers who were planted in Ulster by the undertakers, and that they consider they have a species of title to remain upon the soil. The tenant-right is now in Ulster extended to all classes, but there are still some landlords, descendants of the undertakers, who must have Protestant tenants and no other. The old "plantation" feeling survives the memory of the event, and the condition of the Catholic tenantry of the other three provinces—without leases and without tenant-right—is the traditionary result of the spirit that induced penal laws and confiscation, while the secure condition of the Ulster tenantry is the traditionary result of the Ulster plantation and the other encouragements given to what is called the "Protestant interest," for the purpose of sustaining the Church. I am therefore, I submit, justified in saying that Church ascendancy lies at the root of the land difficulty in Ireland as it does at the root of all the discord and discontent that exist in that country. There will be hardly any question raised as to the fact of the failure of the Church after the figures I have put before you, but a question may be raised as to what have been the causes of the failure these figures demonstrate. It may be of interest to Gentlemen who have to defend the Church to know some of the causes assigned, not by Catholic writers, but by Established Church ecclesiastics. "I believe that the Church as a State institution was implanted in Ireland for political purposes." That avowal was made a few months since by no less an authority than the Rev. Dr. Butcher—one of the senior fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, and Regius Professor of Divinity in that institution. At the recent Church Congress in Norwich he stated that a twofold purpose was in the minds of those who implanted the Church Establishment in Ireland—the political purpose and the religious purpose—and though his position prevented him from stating the facts in terms, it is plain that he felt that the political was at one time considered the more important purpose of the two. I think the course pursued in the earlier stages of the Establishment indicates that the religious was not looked upon as the more important purpose, and that the imported bishops and clergy thought so too. In 1593-8, Spencer, speaking of the then clergy, thus described their course of conduct, which does not exhibit much zeal for religion—

> "They neither read the Scriptures, nor preach to the people, nor administer the Communion."

What, then, do they do if they serve no clerical functions? Spencer tells us—

"Only they take the tithes and offerings, and gather what fruit else they may of their livings, the which they convert as badly."

That is his description of the clergy at that time. God forbid that I should suggest, even inferentially, for if I did I would be suggesting what is contrary to my own convictions, that that description represents, or would be at all applicable to, the State Church clergymen of the present day in Ireland. I have the pleasure of knowing many of them personally, and I respect all whom I do know. I would be exceedingly sorry to be understood for one moment as indicating, even indirectly, that one word of what Spencer wrote of the State Church divines of his day applied to the educated and honourable men who constitute the present Irish Protestant ecclesiastical body. I have given you Spencer's description of the imported clergy, or the native clergy of the imported Church. But what were the bishops—the overseers of the flock? Were not they of a different class? Here is his description of the bishops of his time—

"Some of them whose dioceses are in remote parts, somewhat out of the world's eye, do not at all bestow the benefices which are in their own donation upon any, but keep them in their own hands, and set up their own servants and horse-boys to take up the tithes and fruits of them, with which some of them purchase great lands and build fair castles upon the same."

If that was the mode of proceeding pursued by this Church, by its bishops, and by its clergy, and if rapacity and confiscation signalized its members, I ask any Gentleman, no matter what his religious opinions may be, but I especially ask Gentlemen, who, like myself, are members of the Church of England, do they believe it was possible for persons administering after that fashion—neither reading the Scriptures, nor catechizing, nor preaching, nor teaching, nor doing anything whatever to instruct the people—to win converts and gain the confidence of the native race? If the bishops instead of overseeing the clergy and inducing them by example to perform their allotted duties, signalized their religious zeal by retaining the benefices, and sending their horse-boys to scour the country for the collection of the tithes and the rents of their episcopal territories, which they applied to the purchase of lands and the erection of mansions for themselves and their families and their descendants to enjoy, and possibly come in here to defend the Church as in duty and gratitude bound, must not failure result? Could there possibly be any other result from such a course of conduct than signal and discreditable failure? But I have more than the authority of Spencer. Sir John Davies, the Attorney General of his day, writing in 1607 an account of his visit to Ulster, says of the Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, Robert Draper, who was appointed by King James I.—

"He doth live here now in these parts where he hath two bishoprics; but there is no divine service or sermon to be heard within either of his dioceses."

In two whole dioceses the bishop appointed to the charge of both applies himself in receiving the espiscopal revenues and enjoying the episcopal property, and instead of appointing clergymen to the several benefices under his control who would apply themselves to the catechizing and instruction of the "benighted" people who were to be "converted," he keeps the benefices in his own hands, collects all the tithes as well as all episcopal profits of the sees, and uses the several parishes as other draw-farms for his own gross love of gain—parishes in which there was, in the language of Sir John Davies, "no divine service or sermon to be heard" in either of the two dioceses. Perhaps it will be said there was a better state of things in the Irish metropolis. I have stated on these authorities the system that prevailed in Ulster, the pet province of the Church. Bishop Bramhall, writing some forty years after to Bishop Laud, gives a description of the state of affairs in Dublin, the centre of the State Church operations. [Lord ROBERT MONTAGU: What time?] 1633. The passage I am about to read is from a letter of Dr. Bramhall, who was at one time Archbishop of Armagh, written in August, 1633, from Dublin Castle, to Bishop Laud, giving the result of a visitation of certain districts. He writes—

"First for the fabrics, it is hard to say whether the churches be more ruinous and sordid, or the people irreverent, even in Dublin, the metropolis of this kingdom and seat of justice; we find one parochial church converted to the Lord Deputy's stable; a second to a nobleman's dwelling-house; the choir of a third to a tennis court, and the vicar acts as keeper. In Christ's Church, the principal church in Ireland, whither the Lord Deputy and Council repair every Sunday, the vaults from one end of the minster to the other are made into tippling rooms for beer, wine, and tobacco, demised all to Popish recusants, and by them and others so much frequented during time of Divine Service, that though there is no danger of blowing up the assembly above their heads, yet there is of poisoning them with the fumes. The table used for the administration of the Blessed Sacrament in the midst of the choir made an ordinary seat for maids and apprentices."

The descriptions given by these ecclesiastical authorities show that the divines imported into Ireland to constitute the State Church did not endeavour to establish it by preaching the Gospel, by catechizing the adults or the youth, or by reading the Scriptures to the people. How, then, did they try to effect the great object they had in view? I will not quote from any Catholic authorities for the purpose of showing you the course they took, but I will quote from Mosheim, the Church historian, whose ecclesiastical history is the text-book in Trinity College, Dublin, for divinity students. I will give you his description of the mode in which it was attempted to convert the Irish people to the State Church—

"The Irish Romanists had been reduced by various confiscations, and by intolerant statutes to protect a new race of proprietors, to a state of abject vassalage and degradation. In the reign of James I. the whole province of Ulster was confiscated. When Cromwell's power was consolidated by victory, the native Irish received orders to remove into Connaught, and were forbidden to repass the Shannon under pain of death. Their estates were divided amongst the conquerors, as were those of every one who had been engaged in the rebellion, or who had acted as a partizan of the exiled Royal Family. In Ireland there were circumstances that prevented the gradual amalgamation of the pillaged and the pillagers."

I would hardly venture, in describing in this House the reformatory process adopted, to use such strong language; but when I find one of the highest Protestant authorities using such language, I think it right to tell this House that it expresses what is the feeling in Ireland—the feeling that the State Church and its partizans were the pillagers, and the Irish Catholics were the pillaged. Mosheim goes on to say—

"William's Parliament, in addition to the English enactments against Romanists, disarmed them, banished their priests, forbade their marriages with Protestants, would not allow them to act as solicitors, or even as gamekeepers, and allowed any Protestant discoverer of a horse in their hands or power, to seize it under a magisterial warrant, and retain it on payment of £5 to its owner. Under Anne, Romanists were disabled from purchasing any of the forfeited lands, and even from taking any lease of them beyond two acres. They were also rendered unable to purchase, inherit, or take by gift any lands in the hands of Protestants, and all their own lands were made descendible in gavel-kind, but if the eldest son embraced the established religion, his father was reduced to a tenancy for life, without power to sell or mortgage, or even to provide, except under the control of the Chancellor, for his younger children. A similar invasion upon domestic comfort was made by another Act, which enabled the Chancellor to call on the Romish parent of a Protestant child to declare upon oath the value of his whole property, and to make such assignment out of it to the Protestant child as he should think proper. The conforming wife of a Romanist might also obtain from the Chancellor as a jointure the full extent of any settlement that her husband could make upon her. These with other such measures designed for extermination, reduced the Romanists to such a pitiable situation that the common feelings of humanity came to their relief."

Now, Sir, that is a summary of the Penal Code established in Ireland for the establishment and maintenance of the Church—a summary given, not by a Roman Catholic authority, but given on the authority and in the words of the historian whose history is the text-book for divinity students preparing for the service of that very Church. But it has been said recently, and will, no doubt, be said again, that these were laws enacted by the Irish Parliament, controlled by the English Privy Council, and that the Established Church in Ireland is in no way responsible for the special means adopted to promote the Reformation in Ireland. An eminent divine, Dr. Wordsworth, Archdeacon of Westminster, whose lectures upon the Irish Church have been thought of so much importance by those who are anxious for its sustainment, that they have recently, even since this Notice was placed on the books, published an abridged addition to meet what is called the crisis, and have had it largely circulated for the advantage of what used to be called the "Protestant Interest." He says, speaking of the failure of the State Church in Ireland—

"The Reformation has not been rejected by Ireland, for it has never been fairly offered to Ireland. The Reformation has not failed in Ireland. . . But those persons failed who managed its concerns in Ireland. England failed, morally failed, in her duty to God's truth and to Ireland at that time. . . . To serve her own worldly interest, she was untrue to God, to Ireland, and to herself. She made severe but abortive laws against Irish Roman Catholics, which made them more obstinate, but she did little to win them by milder measures."

Thus the whole blame of the persecuting system, and of the failure that followed, is, with gross ingratitude, placed upon England, by the men for whom she long played a wicked and cruel part in this terrible story. The defenders of the Church and the palliators of its failure will tell you that for the Penal Code, a summary of which I read for you, the English Privy Council and the English and the Irish Parliaments are responsible, and not the Church. I join issue with them on that assertion, and I state, as I think I can state, upon the most definite and distinct authority, that, however blamable England was, the State Church is directly and specifically answerable for some of the worst portions of that cruel code. No man would be more unwilling than I am to take off England any portion of the blame connected with that infamous code which will and ought to rest upon her until she sets herself right by abolishing this ascendant and condemned institution, and establishing religious equality in Ireland. Every portion of the blame that Archdeacon Wordsworth places upon England she deserves—richly deserves—though in a different sense from that stated by him; but I hope this Parliament will adopt a course which will enable the Irish people to say that England is no longer to be blamed, but has at length done her duty to justice and to the cause of religious liberty. But when the whole blame is put upon the English Council and upon the Irish Parliament as being the originators of these penal laws, I think it right for one to protest against that, knowing it not to be true, and to state to the House that which is unquestionably the fact, that the Irish Church is responsible, and that she framed by the hands of her bishops the worst of these penal laws. I assert that, not upon vague authority of some casual historian who may possibly write history according as it may suit his purpose—I state it not upon Roman Catholic authority, not upon Nonconformist authority, but upon the confession of the criminal himself. There is a name which was long respected in Dublin because of some munificent acts which marked the career of its owner. One of the most valuable libraries in Dublin is known by the name of Marsh's Library; and there is extant and published, not in Roman Catholic collections, not in Nonconformist collections, but in the *Church History of Ireland*, published by Dr. Mant, the late Bishop of Down and Connor, a letter from Dr. Marsh, Archbishop of Dublin, taking credit to himself for having been the framer of portions of the Penal Code. I wish that there may be no misunderstanding about this; and in order to satisfy Gentlemen who may be disposed to doubt the fact, I give my authority. I quote from page 72 of the second volume of *Mant's History of the Church*, published in 1840. Dr. Marsh says, writing to his friend the Rev. Dr. Smith—

> "We, having Parliaments but seldom in Ireland, it might be supposed that there is occasion for many Acts to be passed when we do meet, all which are prepared in this Council and sent to that in England before they can be brought into our Parliament to be passed into laws. And my Lord Primate, being above eighty-seven years old, and almost deprived of sight and hearing, you cannot imagine but that the weight of business to prepare Bills to be passed into Acts of Parliament for the Church, which nobody but Churchmen will mind, hath lain, and still doth lay, heavy upon me, insomuch that for four months past I have not been able to command almost a minute's time from public business. And I thank God I have a great many Bills prepared for the good of our Church, whereof some are already passed, and the others I hope will suddenly be passed into laws for the better establishment of this poor distressed Church."

Dr. Mant, referring to this letter, describes Dr. Marsh as the framer of certain Acts, and then gives a summary account of the laws which were passed in the Parliament referred to by Dr. Marsh in his letter as the laws which were prepared by him and the other Churchmen who alone assisted him. I will give you Dr. Mant's summary of the enactments, and you will see how exactly they coincide with the Acts of William III., the Acts principally spoken of in the passage from Mosheim. Referring to the letter of the Archbishop of Dublin, he describes him as "the framer" of the laws referred to, and adds—

> "The following statutes, passed in the Parliament of 1697, were manifestly intended by the foregoing communication."

Amongst the provisions of the statutes which Dr. Mant states to have been the Acts framed by the Archbishop and the Churchmen, who alone of the Council would give up time to aid him, he gives the following summary:—

> "It was enacted that 'all Popish archbishops, vicars-general, deans, Jesuits, monks, friars, and other regular Popish clergy, and all Papists exercising any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, should depart out of the kingdom before the 1st of May, 1698, on pain of imprisonment till transportation, and that returning after transportation, they should be guilty of high treason.'"

The penalty of high treason consisted at that time of the mild process of hanging and disembowelling, and this was the process suggested by "the Church" for the reformation of Irish priests—

> "Any Popish ecclesiastic not actually in the kingdom was prohibited to come in on pain of twelve months' imprisonment, to be followed by transportation, and of high treason if returning after being transported."

Any person who should "harbour, relieve, conceal, or entertain such Popish clergy" was subject to a fine of "£20" for the first, "£50" for the second offence, and "the forfeiture of lands and goods for life" for the third offence—

> "All justices of the peace should, from time to time, issue their warrants for apprehending and committing all Popish ecclesiastics whatsoever that should remain in the kingdom contrary to the Act, and for suppressing all monasteries, friaries, nunneries, and other Popish fraternities and societies."

Dr. Mant omits to say that any informer could receive £100 fine from a negligent justice—

> "Any 'female' marrying a person not certified to be a Protestant, was by law declared to 'be incapable of holding their estates or interests, and the property pass to the next of kin, as if the heir were dead.'"
>
> "Any Protestant marrying 'a woman not certified to be a known Protestant, should be deemed a Papist or Popish recusant, and disabled from being heir, executor, administrator, or guardian, or from sitting in Parliament, or bearing office or employment, unless he should, within one year after such marriage, procure a certificate that his wife had renounced the Popish religion, and become a Protestant.'"
>
> "Any Popish priest or Protestant minister who shall marry any soldier to any wife without certificate of her being a Protestant, should forfeit £20 for every such offence."
>
> "If any common labourer, or other servant retained, shall refuse to work upon any other day than the several days mentioned, or than such days as shall be set apart by order of the King or chief governor, shall forfeit 2*s*. for the poor of the parish."

Dr. Mant forgets to say that if he refused to pay the 2*s*. he was liable (for I have looked at the clause of the statute) to be publicly whipped. These enactments Dr. Mant describes as "not being penal statutes against the Romanists," but "protective." Protective of what? Not of the Crown, not of the English interest, not of the Constitution, but "protective of the National Church." I think, Sir, that if language can express anything distinctly, we have in the letter I have just quoted to you a confession, or rather a boast, by Dr. Marsh, that for four consecutive months he was so busy preparing the penal statutes of William "for the protection of the Church," that he could not attend to even the writing of private letters to his friends. He tells you, moreover, that no person in the Council except Churchmen would give their attention to the subject. Then, Dr. Mant, writing nearly 160 years after, records that letter in his history of the Irish Church, and tells you that the statutes which were penned and framed by Archbishop Marsh, assisted by Churchmen, were those statutes which I have read, and, I think, under the circumstances, it is rather hard—though possibly not harder than the English Government of the time deserved—that the whole blame of these statutes should be placed upon England, and that the defenders of the Irish Church should tell us, which no doubt they would do if the letter of Archbishop Marsh had not come to light, that the Church had nothing to do with those enactments. It may, however, be said that is only one instance, and that although Dr. Marsh, from some peculiar idiosyncracy of his own had a taste for hunting priests in that way, yet that ecclesiastical heads of the Church were free from it. That is equally inaccurate as a matter of history. I find that in the time of Charles I., the English Lord Deputy called together the leading men of the country, irrespective of religious opinions, held a council in Dublin Castle, and announced to the assembly that it was the intention of the Government in England to mitigate the penalties against Catholics, and permit them the free exercise of their religion. This announcement so made by the Lord Deputy very soon became generally known, and the Church took alarm. Archbishop Ussher immediately called an assembly of the prelates. The whole body of the prelates came together, and they adopted a document which they called, not a resolution, not a protest, but the whole "judgment" of the Church. It is a curious fact, and was commented on as such by the historian, that the judgment was signed by twelve prelates, and that the number of prelates at present in Ireland is twelve. The bishops who attended the meeting were unanimous in adopting the judgment, and all of them signed it. This judgment states—

> "The religion of the Papists is superstitious and idolatrous; their faith and doctrine erroneous and heretical; their Church, in respect to both, apostatical. To give them, therefore, a toleration, or to consent that they may freely exercise their religion and profess their faith and doctrine, is a grievous sin."

And ends by beseeching the Almighty to cause all in authority to be

> "Zealous, resolute, and courageous, against all Popery, superstition, and idolatry. Amen."

When Dr. Marsh stated that he, as Archbishop, acting on behalf of the Primate, assisted by all the Churchmen in the Council—for none but Churchmen would give their attention to that business concerning what was called "the poor distressed Church"—was engaged in the preparation of penal statutes, it may be said that was their own individual act, and not an act by the Church as a Church. But it cannot be said this "judgment" of the prelates was of such a character. It was the act of the prelates of the State Church, sitting in council for the purpose—it was an act of convocation—a general council of the Church, issuing their declaration that no toleration, no freedom should be allowed to those whom they called the Papists in the free exercise of their religion, which was characterized as superstitious and idolatrous. But the results of that judgment are even far more significant than the judgment itself. For, what course did one of these prelates take with reference to the "judgment?" He went to Christ Church, where the Lord Deputy attended service on the succeeding Sunday. He preached from the pulpit of that Church, and in the course of his sermon he read this judgment against the English Lord Deputy, denouncing him and the English Crown as committers of sin and offenders against God for daring to think of giving toleration to the Irish Catholics. I gave you a while ago the figures as to the population of Dublin about that period which will account for the remarkable conduct of the prelacy at that time. The Protestant population of Dublin at that time numbered more than two to one of the Catholics, and, stirred up to fanaticism by the prelates and clergy, they assembled in the Church to control the Government, and the Bishop of Down and Connor, writing so late as 1840, records with the utmost complacency and pride the fact that the announcement of that judgment was received in that Cathedral of Dublin with shouts and plaudits. The result was that the prelates who held their convocation, or synod, or whatever else you may please to call it, brought out the mob of Dublin. They also assembled their clergy from the different parts of the country, and they so overawed the Lord Deputy and the English authorities in Dublin Castle that the promised graces were withdrawn, and in a few months after that same Lord Deputy, under the compulsion of the Church established by law in Ireland, issued a proclamation closing up all Popish "mass-houses." [Mr. BERESFORD HOPE: Who was the Lord Deputy at that time?] Lord Falkland. I give you these facts as illustrative of the general principle. I asserted that not only was the Church responsible for these penal Acts, but framed the Acts, and boasted of them as great services rendered to religion; and the most recent historian of the Irish Established Church glories in the fact that such things were done. I will give you another illustration of the fact. It is an illustration afforded by a letter of Primate Boulter, written under similar circumstances. I fear I have already trespassed too long upon you, and I will, therefore, not occupy time by reading the letter, but simply state the substance. Primate Boulter, writing some few years after for the purpose of inducing the then Duke of Newcastle to assist him in the hurrying through the English Council, for the purpose of having it speedily passed by the Irish Parliament, the Act known as the "Six Clerks' Act," speaks of "the Bills we have been preparing." This Bill was intended to shut out from becoming solicitors or Six Clerks Catholics, pretended converts, who were forced by the penal laws either to abandon all hopes in life or to assume the garb of Protestantism. He says he hopes this Bill "will be granted us, or the Protestant interest must suffer extremely here," and thus concludes—

> "I should flatter myself that as in this Bill we have not meddled with Papists, but only with persons professing themselves Protestants, the Foreign Minister cannot, with any reason or decency, make any application to his Majesty against this Bill."

Such being the facts with regard to the State Church in Ireland, having possessed itself of vast wealth, having secured for its votaries every place of power and emolument, having excluded the Catholics from every position and office, deprived them of the right to have or to hold land, of the right to inherit, of the right to act as executors—having given to the Catholic son, who would abandon the faith of his fathers and become a Protestant, the power to take unto himself the property of his Catholic father, to deprive his younger brethren of their birthright, and his mother of the right of dower—I think you will say that when it is known and felt in Ireland that those were Acts procured by the influence of the Church, framed by the bishops themselves, and passed in the interest of the Church, it was impossible there could be any success for that Church in Ireland, and that it is utterly impossible it can ever be submitted to by the people of Ireland. Having given you this brief summary of the mode of evangelizing adopted by the imported Churchmen, as shown by the history and working of the Church, I come now to the question of its present revenues with a view to ascertain their actual amount. This question has been so mystified—I will not say wilfully misrepresented, but it has been so mystified that it is impossible, without a great deal of investigation, to arrive at an accurate conclusion as to the real amount of the revenue. The London *Clerical Journal*, in a leading article on the subject, says it seems strange that no accurate account has yet been given of the value of the Irish benefices. The gross and net value of the benefices are so confusedly put in the Returns furnished, that it would be a task of weeks to compare the figures and compute the true amount. However, as I desire to avoid all chances of contradiction, I will state no figures as the result of any computation of my own, but will give you a calculation, the figures of which are taken from the highest ecclesiastical authorities. To exhibit the discrepancies in the statements put forward, I will give you a few of the contradictory computations. The Rev. Dr. Lee, the Dean of Connor, represents the net income of the beneficed clergy as £393,833; Lord Dufferin, speaking recently in another place, represents the income as £420,000. I have taken the figures of the various items which constitute the Church revenue from different authorities, and totted them together to arrive at the sum total. The Rev. Dr. Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, gives, in a schedule attached to a charge recently delivered by him, the gross income of the benefices as £506,368, and he gives the gross value of the present Episcopal Sees as £80,059. These two items — the revenue of the bishoprics and benefices — amount to the sum of £586,427. I may state that the table adopted by the Archbishop is one of great value, which was prepared by one of the best informed, most liberal-minded, and accomplished clergymen in Ireland, the Rev. Dr. Brady, who has taken an active part in the discussion of Church affairs with a view to the best interests of the Church itself. The Lord Primate, Dr. Beresford, in a charge of his, represents the funds in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners available for various Church purposes as being £93,650. The salaries and other office expenses amount to a total sum of £10,085, which, added to the figures previously given, amount to £690,162 as the probable gross revenue of the Established Church in Ireland. That £690,000 ought to be supplemented by a sum of about £21,000, which the Lord Primate represents as the difference between the fund available from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and their gross receipts *communibus annis*. Deducting £5,209, private funds, there will be a gross total of £707,953, as the cost of the Church to the public. I may say the total sum is, in round numbers, £700,000, so far as can be ascertained from the imperfect data given in the clerical Returns. These figures are substantiated by another ecclesiastical authority, Archdeacon Stopford, who gives the available income of the whole Establishment as £510,000, but if his figures are properly analyzed they make the gross income £700,390. But this does not represent the total of the property and money given to the ascendancy Church. There is, in addition, to be considered the great wealth of Trinity College, given also to sustain Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. There are the revenues of the Royal and other endowed schools, and the grants to the charter schools, and for the building of churches, and the million loan which was remitted. All these grants are fairly to be considered as for the purposes of the Established Church, so that £700,000 a year may be taken as being considerably under the total amount of public property applied for the sustainment of the ascendancy represented by the Established Church. It is worth stating, even at the risk of being a little tedious, the distinction drawn between net and gross income by the parties who take upon themselves to defend this institution. I will give an illustration of the manner in which the gross is reduced to what is called the net income. A parish in Limerick was represented by the diocesan registrar as having a gross income of £1,033 a year, but he made deductions for two curates, £180, and a series of other analogous deductions, which, no doubt, reduced the fund available for the purposes of the incumbent himself and his family, but these cannot be regarded as deductions from the fund available for Church purposes. The net income, therefore, does not represent the sum available for Church purposes. The salaries paid to curates, the fees paid to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and for other purposes, are fairly to be considered as forming part of the sum given to the Church by the public. I now proceed to deal with a question of much more importance—the question of the allocation of the revenues. I find by the two charges I have just referred to—the charge of the present Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Trench, and the charge of the Primate, Dr. Beresford—that the total number of benefices in Ireland is set down as 1,510, including perpetual curacies. A distinction is drawn by these authorities between a benefice and a parish. The Census Returns represent 199 parishes as being devoid altogether of any Church residents. That is, there were in Ireland 199 parishes, in not one of which was there to be found a single member of the State Church. That was a fact that was not agreeable to parties interested in the maintenance of the character of the Church, and they took a good deal of trouble, and displayed a deal of ingenuity in endeavouring to get rid of that fact. A very remarkable pamphlet has been published by the Rev. Mr. Lee, Dean of Connor, in which he endeavours to set aside that fact by stating that, whilst there are 2,428 civil parishes in Ireland, there are in fact only 1,510 benefices, and that there was a broad distinction to be drawn between benefices and civil parishes. He adds—

> "If we remember this important fact (that there are more civil parishes than benefices), the statement of which we have lately heard so much, that there are 199 parishes in Ireland without any Church population, loses all its significance. For whilst it may be perfectly true that there are some portions of benefices in this state, there is but a single benefice in all Ireland to be found, and that one particularly circumstanced, in which there are not several Members of the Established Church."

Now, that statement is very distinct and emphatic, and I have no doubt the Dean of Connor would not have made it if not perfectly satisfied that it was correct. But it unfortunately happens that the statement is not correct, although it has been published and re-published in every possible form for the purpose of giving the most extensive and most explicit contradiction to the allegation that there was such a large territory as that represented by 199 parishes in Ireland without any Church resident. The Dean of Connor makes the statement positively, but not more so than it is made in the charge delivered by the Lord Primate to the clergy of Armagh and Clogher in 1864, and published in 1865. After dealing with the civil parishes, he says—

> "Thus, then, we find the formidable statement that there are 199 parishes belonging to the Established Church in Ireland without any members of that communion, met, upon examination, by the undeniable fact that there was but one parish, in the ordinary sense of the word, in that position in all Ireland."

And, not content with that emphatic denial, he gives tables of thirty-two "parishes," of three "parishes," and of eighteen "parishes" to support his denial, and then says—

> "One Established Church 'benefice' in 1861 contained no Member of the Established Church, the income of which was payable to the incumbent."

He admits there was one; but asserts, as positively as Dr. Lee does, that there was but one "benefice" in that condition. Now, amongst the many pamphlets published for the purpose of meeting this crisis of the Church, as it is called, there is one published by the Rev. Philip Dwyer, vicar of Drumcliffe, in the diocese of Killaloe. It has been published within the last four or five days, and was written for the purpose of sustaining the cause of the Church. In one of his concluding sentences, the reverend writer says—

> "There is no ground for appropriation clauses, and far less for the revolutionary and sacrilegious process of spoliation and confiscation."

I read that sentence to the House not for the purpose of expressing any opinion upon it, but to show the animus and intentions of the writer, to show that he is a writer upon whom I may safely rely as an unquestionable Protestant and Church authority. I think that a gentleman who speaks in the terms which I have read of any attempt to deal with what is called Church property, may fairly be regarded as such an authority. He speaks of the distinction which has been for the last three or four years drawn between benefices and civil parishes, and under the head benefices with a net annual income of £500 and more, he gives one benefice in which there is no Church Protestant. That so far corresponds with the statement positively made by the Primate and by the Rev. Dr. Lee. In another table, given in the Rev. Mr. Dwyer's pamphlet, who, I may observe, represents the net income as being 20 per cent under the gross income, there is one benefice, the net income of which is £300 a year and upwards, without any Church Protestants. In the table of benefices whose net income is from £200 to £300 per annum, he gives five without any Church population.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: The five parishes, is it?

SIR JOHN GRAY: No; five benefices. One is in the archdiocese of Armagh, another is in the archdiocese of Dublin, and three in the diocese of Killaloe. [An hon. MEMBER: Does he give the names of the parishes?] He does not, but he sets them out in tables, as I am giving them to the House. In the table of benefices whose net income is from £100 to £200 per annum, he gives seven benefices without any Church population.

SIR ROBERT PEEL asked if it were given as seven benefices without a Church population?

SIR JOHN GRAY: I will read it again for the hon. Member. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] I am glad that the House will permit me to do so.

SIR ROBERT PEEL intimated it was not necessary.

SIR JOHN GRAY: In the table of benefices whose net income is under £100 per annum, the Rev. Mr. Dwyer gives five benefices in the same condition, making altogether eighteen benefices without any Church population. It was positively stated by the Primate in his charge, and by the Rev. Dr. Lee in his pamphlet, which was represented as containing nothing but facts, and both which important documents had been extensively circulated, that there was only one benefice in Ireland which had no resident member of the State Church within its limits. The Rev. Mr. Dwyer, however, shows by his tables—tables prepared in support of the Church—that these eighteen "benefices"—not parishes, but "benefices"—were in that condition. He shows, too, that the incumbents had some £500 a year net income, some £300 a year net income, some £200, and some under £100 a year, these incomes being paid to incumbents for doing nothing. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" An hon. MEMBER: When was that published?] The pamphlet was published last week. The Primate, in discussing the subject of civil parishes, uses a remarkable passage with reference to the 199 civil parishes which are returned by the Census Commissioners as not having any Church Protestant residing in them. His Grace, in drawing a distinction between the civil parishes and the benefices, says of the former—

> "Some are the sites of ancient monastic buildings, as St. Doologes in Ferns, which is only forty yards square, and the parishes of St. John of Jerusalem, and St. Dominick of Cork, one of which is covered by a brewery, and the other by a flour mill."

Well, now it appears to be a very sad upset to the argument based upon the Returns of the Census Commissioners to have these 199 parishes described by so high an authority as the Lord Primate as being of such a character that they are fairly represented by parishes, one of which is forty yards square, another of which is covered by a brewery, and the third covered by a flour mill. But what are the facts? Not one of these three parishes so described by his Grace is included in the 199 returned as having no Church Protestants in them. One of these three parishes, St. Doologes, had two Protestants residing in it, and some hundreds of Catholics, and, so far as I can learn, the other two are not parishes at all, and are certainly not named as Cork parishes in the Returns. They could not, therefore, be included in the 199. I will not be understood as imputing any intentional inaccuracy to Dr. Lee or to the Primate. I am sure both are above the possibility of trying to mislead; but this shows how inaccuracies will be published, and get circulation upon eminent authority, and be relied upon as facts, although they are not facts. There are 2,428 civil parishes in Ireland. "Civil parishes" is a new phrase, specially adopted for drawing a distinction between the benefices and the parishes, which used to be called in other times the benefices of pluralists. Some of them have been united so as to make but one benefice, while there is really a plurality of parishes yielding tithes to the incumbent, who is said, however, to have only a benefice. The 199 of the civil parishes without any Church population represent one in twelve of the whole number of parishes, but an impression would be produced by the passage I read from the Primate's charge, that these 199 parishes were small in point of extent, and were analogous to the fanciful pictures of parishes drawn by his Grace, one of which is forty yards square, another of which is described as covered by a brewery, and the third by a flour mill, but which descriptions I have shown to be mythical, and neither of the three districts are included in the 199 parishes referred to by the Census Commissioners. I have already shown that these three parishes are not at all included in the 199, and I have now to state that the 199 parishes, which it was sought to represent as of insignificant importance, actually contain a Catholic population of 98,017. What is the proportion of these 98,000 Catholics to the whole of the Protestant population? They are in the proportion of one to seven of the whole Protestant population of Ireland—that is, these 199 parishes which were represented by Dr. Lee and his Grace the Primate—unintentionally I am sure by both of them—as being of such a character that they were fairly described to the public by the fancy sketches I have spoken of, actually contain so large a population as 98,000 Catholics, equal to one-seventh of the whole Protestant population of Ireland, while these same parishes are only equal in number to one-twelfth of the whole of the parishes of Ireland, and do not contain a single Church Protestant. I may state that in the diocese of Ossory, in which the city I represent is situated, no less than twenty-three of the civil parishes, as they are called, exist, all of them having large Catholic populations. Some of these parishes in Mayo have as many as from 2,000 to 3,000 Catholics in each of them, numbers which show that they comprise large territorial districts. Respecting the question of allocation, I find that of the 1,510 benefices in Ireland there are 615, the Church population of each of which is 200 or less, giving an average population, taking them in the aggregate, of seventy-seven Church Protestants in each—615 not civil parishes, but benefices, or united parishes, including more than 1,000 parishes. The average Protestant population of each is seventy-seven, some of course having more, and some less. The Rev. Mr. Dwyer gives the number of benefices which have a Church population of 200 or under as 781; but I do not take his figures, although they would be more favourable for my views. I have preferred to take the figures which I know to have been carefully compiled, and on which I can rely as being perfectly accurate. The Church revenue for these 615 benefices is represented by £257,000 per annum. If you divide the Church revenues amongst the Church population, deducting of course the families of the ministers and the clerks who are paid for their services—[Mr. T. B. POTTER: But the clerk has a soul to be saved.] No doubt he has, but he is paid a salary for assisting in the saving of the souls in the parish, including his own, and I do not think it reasonable therefore to include him and his family amongst resident Protestants of the parish in estimating the cost per family of five persons to the country. The Church revenue of these 615 benefices, containing the average Church population I have stated, and making the deductions I have mentioned, is equal to £31 per family per annum. I will now take another series of benefices, which puts the case of the Church in even a worse light. There are 229 benefices in Ireland having an income of £83,071. I deduct from the average population of these benefices the families of the incumbents and of the clerks, who are officials paid for residing there, and who are brought there for that purpose, and ought not to be estimated in the list of persons ministered to. Having done this, I find that the total amount of income apportioned to the remaining families gives an average of £131 12*s*. per family per annum as the cost for religious ministrations to the Protestant population for 229 benefices, or one-seventh of the whole territorial extent of Ireland, assuming each benefice on an average to be of the same size. There is another calculation so astounding in its results, that I will not venture to give it to you upon less than a high ecclesiastical authority, the Rev. Thomas Hincks, Archdeacon of Connor. In a synoptical table of the Established Church in Ireland, published by him in a folding sheet, he describes 114 benefices as being in the condition that the largest Church population in any one of them does not number more than twenty-five. He also gives the net income of the incumbents of those benefices, but we have seen that the net income is something more than 25 per cent below the gross income. As we are not dealing here with personal or family matters relating to the incumbents, but dealing with the cost of the Church in Ireland to the public, I take the gross income in my calculations, and not the net income. Giving to these 114 benefices, in addition to the gross income, their fair proportion of the episcopal charges—for I think that if they are entitled to incumbents, they are equally entitled to the advantages of episcopal supervision—the total cost to the public of the charge for these 114 benefices is £36,365. In ascertaining the rate per family in this instance, I will not ask the House to deduct the clerk, as it is probable, from the paucity of the Protestant population, that some relative or domestic of the incumbent acts as clerk. I will merely deduct the family of the incumbent, and, making this deduction, there will remain a Church population for these

114 benefices of 1,019 persons, or 204 families; and, distributing the total Church revenue amongst them, I find that every family costs the country £178 per annum for its religious ministration. In that calculation I did not deduct the family of the parish clerk, but I really do not see on what principle the clerk should receive a salary for his services, and be then entitled to have £178 a year allocated for religious ministrations for his own benefit; and, therefore, if I take his family from the Church population of each benefice, we arrive at the extraordinary result that the total number of Church Protestants in the 114 benefices are not quite equal to one family for each benefice, and the total revenue apportioned amongst them represents £400 per annum per family. I ask, is there not something very gross in that state of things? Is it not utterly indefensible? Is there any Gentleman who will stand up to defend the continuance of such a system? If the House feels it cannot be defended, I ask you in the name of common sense, in the name of everything fair, just, and reasonable, will you refuse to assent to my Resolution, declaring simply that the position of the Established Church in Ireland is such as to demand the consideration of Parliament? I do not presume to ask the House to adopt in haste any declaration in favour of any particular plan or course. All I ask you to do is, looking to the facts I have placed before you, to deal with them as facts, or to prove them not to be facts if you can; but until you have done so, I ask you to deal with them as facts, and to say, are not these facts sufficient to warrant the moderate Resolution I place before you? As I have already stated, I have taken scrupulous care that every fact I have put before you should be on the authority of eminent divines of the Established Church — eminent not merely for their abilities, eminent for the purity of their lives as most of them are, but men eminent also as defenders of the Church Establishment — divines who have placed themselves in the van as the champions of the Church. With these facts before you, can you say that a case is not made out calling for the serious consideration of Parliament? I know there are those who think that Parliament is not the place to deal with great questions affecting Ireland; but I thank God that there is growing up in Ireland a spirit which recognizes the propriety of looking to Parliament as the place where redress is to be sought and may be found. I ask you to encourage and strengthen that feeling in Ireland, by showing that when a case is made before you which is reasonable, and which is sustained by facts, that you are ready to listen to it and give it consideration. I do not call on you to adopt the views which this man or the views which that man may put forward, but merely to give a serious and attentive consideration to the subject, and to deal with it as practical men, honestly and sincerely anxious to create in the Irish public confidence in the justice of Parliament. It has been said, and perhaps it may be well to remind the House of it, that the Church question is beyond the reach of Parliament. I do not belong to those who think so. I believe Parliament can deal with it. I believe this Parliament contains men capable of dealing with even larger questions than that of the Church. I repudiate the doctrines of those who say that Parliament is not competent to deal with it. It has been stated that the only mode of dealing with this subject is by revolution. I do not hold that doctrine, although it has been promulgated openly; aye, and even promulgated in this House. Even in this House it has been stated that the case of the Irish Church is beyond the reach of any power for its settlement, save that of revolution. I will not paraphrase, but I will give you the words of the eminent individual to whom I refer, in order that you may yourself judge of their meaning and import. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "That dense population in extreme distress inhabited an island where there was an Established Church, which was not their Church, and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom lived is distant capitals. Thus they had a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church, and, in addition, the weakest Executive in the world. That was the Irish question. Well, then, what would hon. Gentlemen say if they were reading of a country in that position? They would say at once—the remedy is revolution; but the Irish could not have a revolution, and why? Because Ireland was connected with another and more powerful country. Then what was the consequence? The connection with England thus became the cause of the present state of Ireland. If the connection with England prevented a revolution, and a revolution were the only remedy, England logically was in the odious position of being the cause of all the misery in Ireland. What, then, was the duty of an English Minister? To effect by his policy all those changes which a revolution would do by force. That was the Irish question in its integrity. . . . . . . The moment they had a strong Executive, a just administration, and ecclesiastical equality, they would have order in Ireland, and the improve-

ment of the physical condition of the people would follow."

I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman who uttered these sentiments to carry them now into effect—to carry them into effect to-night by his vote. I do not ask him to go even so far as he went in his speech from which I quote. I do not ask him to declare that a revolution is necessary to establish ecclesiastical equality. If he wants time to consider the remedy, there is time given by this Resolution, which merely asks that Parliament should declare that the subject ought to be considered—considered with a view to do that which is just. I ask him to support the Resolution in furtherance of his own principles, so strongly expressed in that speech. I would ask him to do so if he would avoid the giving cause for revolution, or attempt at revolution in Ireland, and if he would desire, by the conduct of this House on this question, to defeat those who tell the people to have no faith in Parliament, but to look to the hope of revolution. [Several hon. Members here called out for the name of the Member who had spoken the words just quoted.] I name the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. I fear I have already trespassed too long on the patience of the House. ["No, no!"] I feel that I have, and therefore I will not read some extracts from the statements of eminent persons on this question, but I will give you the substance of a very few. Dr. Whately, the late Archbishop of Dublin, declared in the most distinct and emphatic manner that it was the right and duty of Parliament to settle this question, and that he and his clergy would gladly support any measure for its final adjustment, rather than continue the Church in its present odious position. I would appeal to some Members of Her Majesty's Government, who have also expressed themselves strongly on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade said—

> "Do what they would for Ireland, so long as the Establishment remained there, it must be looked on by the bulk of the population as a badge of conquest and degradation. . . . . How could they expect peace or harmony while they deliberately degraded a large portion of the community? There must be religious equality."

The right hon. Secretary for Ireland the Member for Louth (Mr. Chichester Fortescue) expressed within the last year a strong opinion that no religious establishment in any country could be justified unless it were rooted in the hearts of the majority of the people. Nothing has occurred since then to alter the condition of the figures with respect to the Church in Ireland, except, indeed, that it has been said, and may be repeated, that there has been a large number of conversions. But what do these boasted conversions represent even upon the statement of the most zealous friends of the movement? The Rev. Dr. Hume, of Liverpool, who has been eulogized by the hon. Member for Oxford as one to whom the Church in Ireland is deeply indebted, in his work on the Irish Census states that the total number of converts made for the last thirty years, as the result of all the united efforts of the various societies, is 3,090. The same figures are given by the secretary to the West Connaught Mission Society, the Rev. W. C. Plunket, as the absolute figures, though he supposes there were 6,000 converts in all. That is the total produced by the labours of ten different societies. No other change has taken place, except the unfortunate change so often boasted of by Gentlemen supporting the Church—the change of the proportions caused by the diminution of the Catholic population. But there has been also an absolute diminution of Protestants to the extent of 114,000. It is a cruel and heartless thing for men to defend the position of the Established Church in Ireland by arguments based upon the reduction of the Catholic population by the agencies of famine, disease, and emigration. It is, in effect, calling on these agencies to do that which the penal laws failed to do. I ask Protestants, who are apprehensive of the effect that would be produced upon their religion by the abolition of the Church Establishment, to look to the results of the voluntary system, and banish their fears. In bringing forward this Motion I repudiate the idea of seeking to have any portion of the Church revenues appropriated to the Catholic Church of Ireland—such an idea never entered my mind. I advocate nothing that would seem to savour of such an arrangement. I totally repudiate it in the words of the 160,000 of the people of Ireland who petitioned this House for the disendowment of the Established Church. I and my Colleagues from Ireland unite in repudiating it in the name of the Municipal corporations of Ireland; in the name of the corporation of Dublin, in which Protestants once preponderated, and which has sent this day to the Bar of this House a deputation to present a petition praying for the disendowment of the Church Establishment. In the name of all these I repudiate the intention that one single sixpence of Church property should go to the Catholic Church. I ask Protestants who doubt their own Church, and I do not doubt it, to have faith in it — to believe in its power. I believe there is an innate power in anything sincere, honest, honourable, and upright, that will sustain it and make way. I ask Protestant Gentlemen, if they have faith in their Church, not to be afraid of the results arising from its disendowment; if they believe that it has the faith once delivered to the saints, let them depend upon that faith. There are twenty-three voluntary churches in Dublin in connection with the Church of England, and within the last four or five years these voluntary churches have furnished to the Established Church no less than three bishops, one selected by the Gentlemen on the opposite Benches when they were in office, and two others selected by the present Government. I should state that within the last six weeks there have been published a series of valuable articles in the *London Review*, containing a mass of information well worth the while of Gentlemen who wish to understand this question to read, and to read with care. More carefully prepared and more accurate statistical information it would be scarcely possible to find than is contained in that series of articles. If my right hon. Friend the late Member for the University of Dublin and late Chancellor of Ireland were here, I would appeal to him as one of the worshipping members in one of these voluntary churches in Dublin, whether they are not crowded, while the parochial churches generally are almost deserted. With reference to this subject, I will mention a matter which will serve as a curious illustration of the state of Church affairs in Dublin. There is well known in that city a rev. gentleman, named Tresham Gregg. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin knows him well. He is celebrated for his controversial encounter with the well known Father Tom Maguire; the discussion which took place between them is familiarly known in every household in Ireland. The Rev. Mr. Gregg is the incumbent of a parish in the immediate vicinity of St. Patrick's Cathedral, which has been lately restored by the princely munificence of an hon. Member of this House. The Rev. Mr. Gregg is set down in the *Ecclesiastical Directory* as having a net income of £150 a year from the parish of St. Nicholas Within. Some time since there was a controversy in the Courts with respect to this parish. Mr. Gregg claimed to have been properly appointed by the votes of the Protestants, while another clergyman claimed the appointment, alleging that the Catholic inhabitants of the parish were entitled to vote, and they had given him a large majority. Upon legal investigation it appeared that a pious Catholic had left the funds which produce the income of the benefice, on the condition that there should be a celebration of masses for his soul on every Sunday. It was declared by the Courts in Dublin that the pious purposes for which the money was left were superstitious; that the Catholic inhabitants were not entitled to vote, and that in fact the Rev. Mr. Gregg was virtually entitled to pocket the amount annually, and to disregard the conditions of the bequest. That rev. gentleman now receives the income, and so far from performing the conditions attached by the testator, he spends nearly all his time in publicly denouncing the mass as superstitious, damnable, and idolatrous. Referring to this reminds me of a remarkable passage which I was sorry to see in the charge of the Primate, Dr. Beresford —who is, by the way, an ecclesiastic almost by birth. His family have reaped more advantages from the Established Church than perhaps any other family in Ireland. I believe it is recorded that at one time there were living members of that family who had amongst them netted over a million of money from Church property. This right rev. Prelate, in speaking of the title of the Church to her present property, made an assertion, the truth of which I will not discuss, but which is not very unlike in its principle the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Gregg. His Grace describes the tithes at present claimed by the Church in Ireland as part of the splendid bribe for acknowledging the Papal supremacy. [An hon. MEMBER: As what?] As part of the splendid bribe given by Henry II. for the purpose of inducing the Church to acknowledge the Papal supremacy. Yet he who prides himself upon denying the Papal supremacy claims those tithes as his legitimate and rightful property. He says it was given for recognizing Papal supremacy, yet he and his brethren pocket the proceeds, and never cease to deny the Papal supremacy. I ask the House to pardon me for having trespassed so long upon its forbearance. ["No!"] I feel I have drawn more largely upon its patience and indulgence than I should have done, and am deeply indebted for the kind and generous courtesy with which I have been heard. I ask you to remember that this question is looked upon in Ireland as being at the root of all the evils of that country. It is at the root of the education difficulty in Ireland. The bishops and clergy of the Established Church have laboured strenuously from time to time, and are labouring still, to keep Catholics from the advantages of education and office. It is at the root of the land question, for we find that the laws enacted to sustain the Church prevented Catholics from holding land, from being tenants of land—prevented Catholics from getting leases, and thereby engendered a habit in the country of granting no leases ; so that you find that the Catholic tenants of the south and west of Ireland are practically without leases, while in the north, that was planted with Protestants, leases have been the rule, and tenant-right exists to preserve the rights of industry. In fact, the Catholics were looked upon as slaves and serfs by the landlords who were planted in that country after the expulsion of the Catholic owners, and out of all this a spirit of hostility was engendered, which has been since fostered by the continuance of the Establishment in Ireland. That Establishment, well described as an alien Church, never did, and never could, take root in the land, introduced and maintained as it has been upon such principles as I have exhibited before you. The Catholics of Ireland trace to that Church Establishment all the evils under which they suffered, and the social degradation and brand of inferiority imposed upon them as Catholics. I ask you to deal with this not simply as an Irish question, but as an Imperial question, as one affecting the interests of England hardly less than it affects the interests of Ireland. Your honour is involved in it. You are the dominant country, and if you have inflicted much suffering in trying to establish the Anglican Church in Ireland, you have also lost much of character, because of the means you sanctioned for attaining that object. You are bound now to redeem your own reputation by putting an end to that Church ascendancy in Ireland. I do not ask you now to adopt any specific plan, but simply to declare by your vote that you are ready to give a fair, full, and just consideration to this important subject. The hon. Member concluded by moving his Resolution.

COLONEL GREVILLE : In seconding the Motion of my hon. Friend I feel the difficulty of the task which we have undertaken. I know the prejudice which exists on this subject, and the disinclination of the House to deal with it—but it is one of such vast importance, and so nearly affects the well being of Ireland, and therefore the security of the Empire, that I am sure I shall not ask in vain for the kind indulgence of the House while I venture to make a few observations. I agree with the late Sir George Lewis, who states in his work on the Irish Church, that this is not a question of degree but one of principle. The objection is that provision should be made out of the public funds for the support of the clergy of the minority, while no provision is made for the clergy of the majority. The right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) said, last Session, that Ireland was the Question of Questions—and that she was bound to us by a tie which we would perish rather than allow any one to break. If that be true, as I doubt not it is, then surely it must be admitted that it is our duty to remove all impediments to her prosperity which have been created by us, and to endeavour to place her in as good a position as other more favoured portions of the Empire. As a Protestant, a member of the Church of England, I rejoice to think that I am not precluded from taking part in this debate by any oath to which I have subscribed, and I hope the day is not far distant when it will be out of the power of even the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) to say that any Member of this House, be his religious creed what it may, is debarred from taking part in our deliberations on this subject. I hope that ere long we may all take the same oath at that table with equal rights and equal responsibilities. Irish Members have often been challenged to point out the grievances under which Ireland labours. The Irish Church Establishment is a grievance. Our most eminent statesmen have, with wonderful accord, admitted it, andh ave used, some of them, very strong language on this subject. Now, what is the state of Ireland as to Ecclesiastical matters. You have the Church of England, established by law, in the exclusive enjoyment of the whole

Ecclesiastical revenues of the country, while it numbers within its communion but one-tenth of the population. The Presbyterian body, numbering another tenth, receive an endowment from the State of £40,000, voted annually by this House under the name of the Regium Donum. The remaining four-fifths of the population are Roman Catholics, whose Church has no endowments whatever, and no share of the Ecclesiastical revenues, and is, to all intents and purposes, as much ignored as if it did not exist. Can this state of things be deemed satisfactory? We are often asked why the Irish people should have any greater reason to complain of the Established Church than the Dissenters of England. I beg here to say that we are not now discussing the Established Church of England, but the Church Establishment in Ireland—a very different thing. But in reality there is the greatest difference, and for this reason—The Reformation in England was the work of the nation. It was embraced by the people; and the Dissenters left the Church, long after its establishment, for causes which they deemed sufficient, and into which it is not necessary that I should enter. So with the Free Church in Scotland, who left the Presbyterian Established Church of Scotland on a question of patronage. But the case was far different with Ireland. There you made the people Dissenters in their own country from a religion which they never professed. If any one doubts this, I do not wish him to take it on my statement alone. Fortunately, we are not left in ignorance on this point; for I can cite the words of one who will be acknowledged an authority by this House. Mr. Hallam, in his *Constitutional History of England*, has distinctly told us how and why this was done. He says that the Protestant religion was introduced compulsorily, at a time when erroneous opinions prevailed upon this as on other subjects, and when it was supposed that the State had a better right to order what doctrine the people should believe than they could have to choose for themselves—when it was held that the interests of Ireland should be made subservient in all respects to the interests of England. But those maxims, according to Mr. Hallam, involve a principle so essentially unjust that they have enormously aggravated the calamities and the disaffection of Ireland. We invite you to assist us in removing a cause of calamity to Ireland, and the constant source of her disaffection. To be of advantage to the community where it exists, an Ecclesiastical Establishment should be the means of teaching religious truth, and should promote good order and virtue, but to do this effectually it must be the religion not of the State but of the people among whom it exists. What is the good of maintaining an Establishment within whose walls the people will not enter, and with whose presentation of the truth they will have nothing to do? Various remedies have been suggested for this state of things. Amongst others, one mode of settling this question that has been, and still is, advocated by many persons, is the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy out of funds to be provided by the State. I confess that I am entirely opposed to such a course, which, besides, I consider impracticable. No one who reads the spirit of the times aright can imagine that Parliament will make a grant for such a purpose. The tendency of the present day is rather to take away all religious endowments so far as is practicable, and the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy would be undesirable for many reasons.

1st. They refuse it. It is impossible for them to accept the money of the State. They would lose caste if they did. It would diminish their influence with the people, and it would be a misfortune if their influence were lost; because, when the Irish people cease to have respect for the authority of religion it will not be long before they throw off the authority of the State.

2nd. It would give rise to a renewal of those unfortunate debates in this House which we all recollect to have occurred Session after Session with respect to the increased grant to Maynooth, in which occasion was taken to hold up to odium the doctrines and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, and which being read, as those debates are, by every one almost in Ireland, did more to engender a bitter feeling of hostility towards this country than you can imagine.

3rd. Because it is unjust that the people should be taxed to pay the clergy of any denomination in Ireland, where the Ecclesiastical revenues, if properly and fairly applied, would suffice for the religious requirements of all. And in this view I am borne out by the noble Lord at the head of the Government Earl Russell. In the Introduction to his work on the *English Government and Constitution*, 1865, he says—

"The measure introduced in 1835, granting a portion of the Church revenues of Ireland to purposes of education, was unpopular in England, and was not carried in the House of Lords. But it is hardly possible that a Church Establishment should be preserved undiminished for about one-ninth of the population of Ireland. When England shall examine this question dispassionately, it may be expected that, although the State will not entangle itself with the support of a Roman Catholic clergy, as Mr. Pitt projected, the whole people of Ireland will be allowed to derive some benefit from so large a revenue. National education and public improvements of various kinds might receive at least a portion of the revenue raised from the land for the benefit of the people."

Well, then, is the present state of things in Ireland to continue for ever, because you will not establish the religion of the majority, and because you cannot pay this clergy by an endowment from the State? Is there no other course that you can adopt? The Irish are a quick and intelligent people, and now well educated, thanks to the national system of education, and when they look abroad to see what is done in other countries of Europe, where there is a mixed population of Roman Catholics and Protestants, as for instance in Würtemberg, Bavaria, Prussia, they find their Church the acknowledged Church of that portion of the people who belong to it. But England is a rich and powerful country, having possessions in every part of the world, and when they examine how you treat your dependencies they find that you have no scruple of conscience in upholding the Roman Catholic religion as the established religion of Malta. That in your Australian colonies you leave them free to settle those matters themselves, and in Cape Town and Natal you acknowledge that your letters patent creating Bishops are null and void. But when they regard Canada, that country which now engrosses so much attention, and which from being the most turbulent is now the most contented and attached, perhaps, of all your colonies, they find a state of things the very opposite of what prevails with them. In 1853 the Government of Lord Aberdeen introduced the Canada Clergy Reserves Bill, and if it had done nothing more it would have deserved well of the country for that Act. That Bill, somewhat shorter than the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, consisted of but two clauses. One enabling the Canadian Legislature to deal with those reserves, which had been devoted to the exclusive support of the Protestant clergy, as they thought fit. The other guaranteeing to the clergy the enjoyment of their stipends for their lives. It was introduced into this House on the 15th of February, 1853, by the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Frederick Peel), who said—

"Regarding the Church of England as a body of individual clergy in that country, we have taken ample guarantees for their continued enjoyment of the stipend now allotted to them, and we have the full concurrence of the Legislature and the Executive of Canada in doing so. . . . But looking at the Church of England not as a collection of individual clergy but as an establishment, as an incorporated institution; if you ask us to maintain a Church Establishment in Canada against the wishes of the people of that country, I, for one, would shrink from such an undertaking. If you were to engage in it, I undertake to say that you would never issue from it with either credit or success. I am convinced, Sir, that we are taking the right course even in the interests of the Church of England herself."—[3 *Hansard*, cxxiiii. 143.]

Now, are not these words applicable to the Church Establishment in Ireland? Are we not maintaining in Ireland a Church Establishment against the wishes of the people, and which does not administer to their religious requirements? Well, then, how can the Parliament of this country, which has passed that Bill into a law, insist upon maintaining in Ireland an establishment of precisely the same description? The Imperial Parliament passed two Acts, one to empower the Canadian Parliament to alter the constitution of the Legislative Council, and the other the "Canada Clergy Reserves Act," and in the very next Session of the Canadian Parliament, the Governor General, Lord Elgin, on the 6th September, 1854, addressing that Parliament on its opening, said—

"The other Act of the Imperial Parliament removes the restrictions which have for some time past prevented the Provincial Legislature from dealing with the Clergy reserves. From an early period in the history of Upper Canada this provision, which was originally intended for the support of the Protestant faith, has been a source of discord and agitation in that section of the province. It is most desirable, in the interest of religion and social harmony, that a final and conclusive adjustment of this long pending controversy should take place without delay."

Now, do not these words also apply to the condition of Ireland? Is it not true that a provision intended for the support of the Protestant faith has been a source of discord and agitation in Ireland? And is it not most desirable in the interest of religion and social harmony that a final and conclusive adjustment of this long pending controversy should take place? And what has been the consequence as regards Canada? You are now reaping the advantage of what you have done in the affection and loyalty of the Canadian people. At this moment, when a most wicked and unwarrantable attack was contemplated by American citizens of, I regret to say, Irish birth, upon a peaceful and unoffending country, and when the Governor General made a call upon the people, in twenty-four hours there arose a force of 10,000 armed men for the protection of their native land. Now, not many years ago Canada was a source of great trouble to this country, and if Ireland is now a source of trouble, is it not reasonable to suppose that, if we had pursued the same policy towards Ireland that we pursued towards Canada thirteen years ago, we should now be reaping the like fruits? Instead of being obliged to proclaim the country from one end to the other, instead of taking away arms from the people, and pouring in Scotch and English regiments to keep them down, instead of suspending the constitution and taking from Irishmen the dearest rights of British subjects, we might say to them, "Come forward and defend the Constitution, in which you have a share as well as your Protestant fellow-subjects," and I undertake to say that we should not have in any part of the Empire a people more ready to defend with their lives the institutions of this country than we should have in Ireland.

In one respect I differ from my hon. Friend who introduced the subject, and who called this an Imperial question. I prefer to consider it as a local question, and hope the House will look upon it as an Irish Parliament would, and deal with it in like manner. It has been often said that the Irish Church Establishment has existed for 300 years, and, therefore, Parliament cannot interfere with it. But Parliament had already interfered with it—and even supposing that it had not, the same objection would apply to every improvement which has been effected for years past, and thus the beneficent effects of recent legislation would have been entirely lost. Again, it was said that great stress was laid upon the argument that the Articles of the Act of Union forbade the House of Commons to deal with this question. But I do not think there is any statesman on this side of the House, and but few upon the other, who will cite that Act as a bar, because Lord Derby, when Mr. Stanley, under Lord Grey's Government, had charge of a Bill which interfered most extensively with the position and property of the Established Church in Ireland. By the Act of 1833 you suppressed ten Bishoprics, two Archbishops, and abolished vestry cess. By the Act of 1834 you suspended numerous dignities and benefices. By the Act of 1838 you extinguished 25 per cent of the tithes, and since then you have got rid of minister's money. It is idle, then, to talk of the Act of Union as a bar. I, for one, refuse to look upon that Act, passed in an unreformed Parliament, at a time when men sold their country for place, for patronage, and for money, as more sacred than any other Act. We sit here as the supreme council of the nation, and we have a right, nay more, it is our bounden duty to take into consideration the petitions of the people, their wishes and requirements, and so to amend the laws as to give additional strength to the Empire, and happiness and contentment to the people.

We are often told, in justification of the present state of things, that the majority of the landed proprietors of Ireland who pay the tithe are Protestant, and therefore it is no hardship on the people. It should be borne in mind, however, that the land is held subject to the payment of tithe, and that it is not the property of the landlord, but at the disposal of the State for the benefit of the community. But such an argument is ungenerous when we consider the extensive confiscations on account of religion which forced the land into the hands of the Protestants, and the enactment of those cruel penal laws which deprived the Roman Catholics of all hopes of acquiring any property, thus taking from them the greatest incentive to industry, and condemning them in their own land to remain hewers of wood, and drawers of water.

My hon. Friend has alluded to an alien Church and an absentee aristocracy. Well, if there is any force at all in the argument that the tithe is no burden upon the people, it comes to this—that we are determined to maintain an alien Church for an absent aristocracy. We hear it often said that the Puritanical feeling of Scotland will not allow of any change being made. I do not believe it. I am sure the Scotch Members will assist us in obtaining for Ireland that justice which they have obtained already for themselves, and to which so much of their prosperity is due. They have not forgotten the memorable words of their distinguished countryman, once an ornament of this House, now no more, Lord Macaulay, who said, speaking of England and Scotland—

> "For all the ends of government the nations are one, and why? The nations are one for all the ends of government, because in their union the true ends of government alone were kept in sight. The nations are one because the Churches are two."

These were the words of Lord Macaulay in reviewing a work by Mr. Gladstone on *Church and State.* Might it not be said of England and Ireland, on the other hand, that the nations are two, because the Churches are one? The Government had said that they wished to be judged by the spirit they evinced, and the mode in which they treated Irish questions as they arose, and Parliament had been told that while the interests of each part of the Empire should give way to those of the whole, the opinions and wishes of one portion should not be allowed to override the opinions and wishes of the other. If Ireland had a Parliament of her own, no one could doubt what the result would be. The truth is, that Ireland at present has all the disadvantages of Colonial Government without any of its advantages. She has a mock Court. Not that I would say one word against the nobleman who now fills the arduous office of Lord Lieutenant, and who, I am bound to admit, has, at a period of very great difficulty, acted in such a manner as to acquire the confidence and support of every loyal man in the country. But I object to the system altogether. The question is not one of religious faith at all—but of reason and common sense, and justice, of doing to others as we would they should do unto us, and of not forcing upon others a religion against their will. The consequence is, that Ireland is in a chronic state of disaffection and discontent, so that when any trouble arises she becomes England's difficulty. But if Parliament did justice to the Irish people, as it had done justice to Canada, what would be the result? You would save the £40,000 annually voted for the Regium Donum, and the £30,000 voted for Maynooth. You might do away with the Lord Lieutenancy and save £30,000 there. If Ireland were like England and Scotland, Parliament might do away with the resident stipendiary magistracy, which cost £50,000 a year. Many of these functionaries are utterly unfit for their posts, and the result of appointing them, is, that the local magistracy will not act. You might also get rid of the necessity of maintaining so large an army. There are now near 30,000 troops in Ireland, and it is not too much to say that if they could be dispensed with the country would save £1,000,000 a year. Let Parliament, at all events, give Ireland the trial, and deal with her as with England and Scotland. A state of things the very opposite of that which now prevails would be the result. The Irish Members will never cease to agitate until they obtain justice for Ireland, and they appeal to the Liberal party in the House to help them. The Irish Members have assisted the English Liberals in obtaining free trade and other Liberal measures, and they now ask for assistance in return to enable them to obtain a satisfactory settlement of this question. The representatives of Ireland have faith in the Imperial Parliament, and they now appeal constitutionally to it to remove this stigma from England, and this injury and cruel infliction from Ireland.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That the position of the Established Church in Ireland is a just cause of dissatisfaction to the people of that country, and urgently demands the consideration of Parliament."—(*Sir John Gray.*)

MR. CHICHESTER FORTESCUE: Sir, my position on the present occasion as representing Her Majesty's Government is very different from that of the hon. Mover and Seconder of this Resolution, who have placed their views on this vital subject so ably before the House. It is also very different from the position of those hon. Gentlemen who will follow me in this debate. The hon. Mover and Seconder have brought this subject forward in the shape of a Resolution, as has been done on other occasions, and as they were fully entitled to do—a Resolution which in their hands is an instrument proper and legitimate for raising a discussion in this House, and ascertaining the amount of Parliamentary support which their proposal is likely to obtain. But a Resolution of this kind, however carefully it may be worded, would, if adopted by Her Majesty's Government, become not an instrument of discussion, but of immediate action. It would be contrary to the duty of the Government to take such a Resolution into their hands unless they saw their way to use it for the purpose of action, and of bringing about an important change in our institutions, if not immediately, yet within a brief period, and with a distinct view not only of what should be undone, but of what should be done—not only of what is to be pulled down, but also of what is to be built up—and with a distinct knowledge of the state of public opinion no only in England and

Scotland, but also in Ireland itself, as being sufficiently strong, powerful, and mature to enable them to bring their decision to some practical issue. That is the distinction between my position and that of those hon. Gentlemen. My hon. Friends have with great ability urged upon the Government and upon the House a vital change in the institutions of Ireland upon grounds of principle, of equity, and of permanent policy. I confess that I approach the Resolution personally with feelings of sympathy and concurrence. Ever since I entered public life I have felt dissatisfied as a Protestant, even more perhaps than Roman Catholics could have felt dissatisfied, with the position of things to which the first part of my hon. Friend's Resolution relates. And while, as I have said, my responsibility is different from that of my hon. Friends, I must yet decline on my own part, and I think I may decline on the part of the Government, to oppose this Resolution on any principle of abstract equity or justice, or upon any ground of lasting and permanent policy. In fulfilling my duty, and in declining on the part of the Government to accept this Resolution, and take it into their hands, I base that refusal solely, so far as I am concerned, upon considerations of common sense, possibility, time, and circumstance. Few, I think, will blame Her Majesty's Government if they have not reached the point at which it is possible for them, consistently with their duty, to take into their hands a Resolution such as this, which would be binding on them as a matter of immediate action. Few will blame them, because I think few will maintain that public opinion has attained so clear and so ripe a state on this subject as would enable the Government to know, first of all, what is possible; in the next place, what would be most acceptable to those who are most interested in the matter—namely, the people of Ireland, and especially the Roman Catholic people of Ireland; and lastly, what would be the best mode of effecting the great object in view, and the one involving at the same time the smallest possible amount of that which inevitably must follow—of conflict and passion on either side. Now, what is the object in view? The object in view, whatever the methods to be pursued in attaining it, I conceive to be this—that all classes of the people of Ireland should for the future be placed, in the matter of religious and ecclesiastical endowments and privileges, upon that same footing of absolute equality one with the other which they already occupy in other respects. In other words, the result to be aimed at is that which is commonly and intelligibly described as religious equality. It would not be necessary for that purpose that Parliament should bind itself down to any rigid arithmetical allocation of the religious endowments of Ireland, provided the great end which I have mentioned is obtained—namely, that the treatment of the people of Ireland in this respect on the part of the Imperial Legislature should be so substantially equal and just as to remove that sense of wrong which has long rankled, and which still rankles, in the minds of a great part of the population, and as to bring about that state of equal citizenship which infers an absence of all ascendancy on the one side, and of irritation and indignity on the other. The question is—and it is not one upon which it is my duty to-night to enter at any length—in what way shall we attain that great object, and what shall be the nature and the amount of the change? Upon that point I confess that the able and elaborate speech of the Mover of the Resolution has not much enlightened the House or myself. I do not blame him for that, for I believe that he intentionally omitted to deal with that portion of the subject; but I gathered that he, differing, I think, considerably from my hon. and gallant Friend who followed him (Colonel Greville), in the able speech to which we have just listened, would recommend to us a very simple remedy—namely, the total suppression of all endowments for religious purposes in Ireland—the total and absolute disendowment of the Anglican Church Establishment, and the handing over of its revenues, not—as has already happened, unfortunately, in regard to some portion of them, to private individuals—but for some public purposes wholly alien from those of religion. Now, I confess that that is not my own view of the policy to be pursued. My own general view of the subject, supposing the day to come when so great a change shall be accomplished, would be something like this—that the Irish Established Church should make up its mind to part with a certain portion of its endowments, and to depend to a certain degree—as so many other Churches already do, and as, indeed, every Church that has ever existed when in a small minority, and when not protected and sustained by some external power must do—upon the voluntary contributions and the zeal and attachment of its own adherents. Such a course of proceeding would enable the State to obtain a very considerable fund, which, to my mind, should not be diverted from those religious purposes and uses to which the piety of earlier times set it apart, but which would form a substantial assistance and benefit to that great disendowed and unassisted Church of the majority in Ireland. That substantial assistance and benefit to be drawn from the religious and ecclesiastical funds of the Irish nation itself—which I take to be the real morality of the case—ought not, I should say, to be given in the shape of payments to individual clergymen of the Roman Catholic Church, so as in any way to put them in the position of what are sometimes called pensioners of the State, but should be placed in the hands of some body fairly representing the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, to be used as they should think best for the benefit of their Church. At the same time, it certainly would not be of such an amount as to withdraw the clergy of that Church from that connection with their flocks which they themselves would not wish to see disturbed, but would still leave them to depend to a considerable extent upon the voluntary support of their people. That, speaking generally, is my own idea of the policy to be pursued in future on this subject. But in whatever way the object in view should be attained, I think there can be no doubt as to what that object should be—namely, the attainment of substantial equality among all classes of Irish citizens in this respect as in all others. And, Sir, I must express my conviction that it is hardly possible for this House to set before itself a greater or more important object. I am not one of those who can think or speak lightly of the fact that the Established Church being the Church of the minority, should possess the exclusive enjoyment of the ecclesiastical revenues of Ireland. I never have looked upon this as a mere sentimental grievance, as if in these matters injustice were not worse than injury. I never have looked upon it as a grievance the removal of which would not contribute in any material degree (as is asserted by some) to the promotion of peace and goodwill in Ireland. On the contrary, Sir, it is my belief that there is no part of the Irish question which underlies so completely and radically, and which pervades so extensively, the whole condition of Ireland as the fact which may be embodied in the word "ascendancy," and which, if it does not now press hardly in its daily effects upon the peasantry and farmers of the country, yet influences and colours every subject of public discussion, and most deeply affects the minds of the most educated and intelligent portion of the community. I decline, therefore, Sir, on my own part, to maintain and defend in my place in Parliament that condition of affairs, as I have said, upon grounds of abstract equity and permanent policy. It is indeed my duty, speaking on behalf of the Government, to refuse to bind ourselves by the Resolution which is now offered to us, and that upon the ground of the great difference of opinion shown even to-night in the speeches that we have heard, and also evinced in all the discussions upon this subject, as to the mode to be adopted for obtaining the object in view; and, above all, upon the ground that public opinion not only in England and Scotland, but in Ireland itself, has not yet become so strong, so clear, and so mature as to support and justify the Government in binding themselves on a question of this kind to immediate or early action. But in so declining to adopt this Resolution, I must say I cannot resist it upon grounds on which some have resisted it. For instance, I cannot resist the Resolution on the ground that the Irish Church, meaning the bishops and clergy of the Irish Established Church, are the descendants of St. Patrick. This is a favourite ground now-a-days, an alleged ground with which many of us are familiar—based, I believe, on a historical fact, but one which, in my mind, has no connection with our duty in relation to this question—namely, that the bishops and clergy of the Irish Church did, for the most part, at the period of the Reformation, conform to the new religion and went over to the Anglican Church, but were not followed by their people. Again, I decline to resist such a Motion as this, and permanently to support the present state of Church temporalities in Ireland on a plea which is often used—namely, that although the Anglican Church in Ireland is in a minority there, yet, taking the three kingdoms, her members are in a great majority. On the contrary, Sir, I hold that for the purposes of this argument, and in connection with this subject, Ireland, as has been properly said to-night, ought to be treated by us as a separate country. I do not go quite as far as my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Greville), who appears to think that you are to look at this as though it were simply a local, and not at all an Imperial question; but I do maintain that you cannot fairly shut out from your view what is due to Ireland as a body politic, what Ireland as a body politic is entitled to, and what Ireland might and would do for herself on such a subject. I cannot, for purposes of argument, do what we see done every day—take the figures of the population and the revenue, and so on, and throw them together into a sort of arithmetical hodge podge, and then assert that the Establishment of the minority in Ireland is fair and just, because it is connected with the majority of the United Kingdom. If common sense and justice oppose such a line of argument, surely history will as strongly condemn it. It is hardly possible for an Irishman to deal with this question without turning his eyes, as he does on many other subjects, with pain and envy to the happier sister kingdom—happier in the history with which Providence has blessed her, and in the treatment she has received from this country—I refer to Scotland. I must say that I trust our Scotch friends in dealing with this subject now, or on any future occasion, will not forget what happened in their own case—how happy they were when able to shake off a prelatical Establishment to which they were strongly opposed. Again, I must decline to resist such a Motion as that now before the House on another ground. We frequently hear it urged that the Established Church in Ireland is to be looked upon as a sort of outwork of the Church of England; but I hold a contrary view—that it is perfectly consistent, nay, that we are imperatively called upon, in taking a fair view of the facts of the case, to draw the broadest line between the conditions of the two branches of the Church. I speak now, of course, of nothing but the worldly aspect of the Establishment—the claim for the exclusive possession of temporal endowments. The fact is patent to everybody who has examined the subject that the arguments which support and justify the existence of the Established Church in England condemn the existence of the Established Church in Ireland. I cannot help adding that in any ordinary case the questions of political justice and expediency connected with this matter could not even arise; because, except where a country is subject to some foreign or external compulsion, the exclusive endowment of a minority is simply an impossibility. I trust that the discussion which has been so properly raised on this great subject to-night will not be without some good effects, and that it will conduce to the final settlement of the question. I, for one, am greatly rejoiced that the discussion of this subject is gradually increasing, and that it is being taken up more and more by Members of both Houses of Parliament, and by the ablest and most intelligent organs of public opinion in the press. I am also exceedingly gratified that the subject has lately been brought forward for discussion in the other House by a noble Friend of mine (Earl Grey), who can never be suspected of taking up the subject for party purposes. The motives and character of that noble Earl must command the respect of all who know him; and I may add that he is one of the last men in either House of Parliament to be suspected of any indifference to the true interests of religion in general, or the true interests of that Church in particular of which he and I are members. I trust, without being able, I must confess, clearly to see the date at which this great and beneficial change will be brought about in Ireland, or the precise mode and direction which that change may take, that the discussion we are conducting this evening will contribute to that end. It has been my duty, on the part of the Government, upon such grounds only as I have ventured to lay before the House—and I concur in the resolution they have taken—to decline to bind ourselves by the Resolution proposed; but I have not felt it my duty, as far as my contribution to this debate goes, to take any course which would hinder the progress of this cause, or throw any obstacle in its way. I wish it well; I wish it God speed. I hold that the day when a just and permanent settlement of this great question shall be brought about will be the happiest that for many years has dawned upon Ireland, and that such a settlement would of all events be the one that would most contribute to the social, political, yes, and the religious interests of that country.

Mr. PEEL DAWSON said, that some years ago he expressed his opinion at length upon the subject before the House, and he would now reiterate his determination to sustain in its integrity the position of the Church of England and Ireland as now established by law. The views to which he gave utterance on the occasion he referred to had been confirmed by the experience of subsequent years. It was not upon any grounds of general expediency, or from a fear of disturbing the present system, that he found reasons for the defence of the Church in Ireland, but he took a wider and more exalted basis. He desired the extension of true religion, and the strengthening of that social connection which bound together the two distinct portions of the United Kingdom. If the attacks which had been made upon the Church in Ireland were to be successful, he could not hold at much value those securities which were supposed to environ the Church in England. Both branches of the Establishment were assailed by the same inquiries, and ought to be defended by the same friends. In the words of the Latin poet—

> "Quo res cunque cadent, unum et commune periclum,
> Una salus ambobus erit."

The hon. Member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray) had alluded to the anomalies in the Irish Church; but he would like to ask whether anomalies were confined to Ireland? It was only the other night, upon the second reading of the Church Rates Abolition Bill, that he heard, upon no less authority than that of the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), that in the Principality of Wales, while the Church congregations numbered only 21 per cent of the population, the Nonconformists were rated at 75 per cent. How could numerical anomalies be avoided in free countries, where there were great opportunities for emigration, and where the seats of commercial enterprize were continually shifting? A number of philanthropists, among whom was his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Maguire), were now engaged in the laudable undertaking of planting manufactures, and promoting the cultivation of flax in the southern and western counties. He hoped they would be successful, and that the movement would have the effect of re-placing the population which for so long a period had been leaving the country. If the theory of the re-distribution of clerical incomes were to be carried out, it would lead to the adoption of the congregational system, which he thought was objectionable on many grounds. It would be easy to imagine that a church might be effectually performing all its duties, and yet from an unusual fluctuation in the population not be able to point to satisfactory results. Although emigration had been peculiarly severe upon the Roman Catholic population, it had yet carried off many thousands of Protestants. The Church in Ireland during the last thirty years, notwithstanding an annual loss of revenue to the extent of £200,000, had shown a great amount of vitality. Within that period 133 new incumbencies had been formed, 306 new churches had been built, and 171 enlarged; and the total number of non-residents had decreased from 368 to 150. He had himself, he might add, known instances in which pluralities had been willingly and conscientiously given up by the incumbents; while, taking the tithe rent charge in Ireland at £400,000 in round numbers, he found it was paid in proportion of £355,000 by Protestants to £45,000 by Roman Catholics. In the dioceses, too, with which he was best acquainted—those of Down and Derry, and especially in the former—the Church was manifestly advancing; parishes had been sub-divided, and chapels of ease were becoming rapidly erected. In the town of Belfast alone arrangements had been made for building five new chapels, for the endowment of which £17,500 had been subscribed. But while he was happy to be able to inform the House that such was the case, he was one of the last to desire to widen religious differences. His wish, on the contrary, was to soften down all asperities in connection with religion. When such questions as that under discussion were raised it was, however, impossible to ignore altogether the vast amount of industry by which the northern and Protestant province of Ulster was characterized as contrasted with the misery and insolvency which so largely prevailed in the south and west of Ireland. Nor must the police establishment be left out of consideration in dealing with the subject, for in connection with the facts which he had mentioned, it spoke volumes for the usefulness of the Church in Ireland, that the number of police required for the county of Londonderry was less than one-half that found necessary in the western county of Limerick, which was about the same size. If a Church Establishment was to be maintained at all in Ireland it must be Protestant. He had yet to learn that the Church in Ireland was regarded with dissatisfaction by the people at large, or that it was the object of any well-grounded expression of complaint. That such was not the case was proved by the smallness of the number of petitions against it, and of those petitions he might observe in passing that they were for the most part got up by the National Association, the signatures to them were known to be in many instances in the same handwriting. But be that as it might, he had never heard the question satisfactorily answered what was to replace, if the Church Establishment were abolished, the loss even in a single parish of the clergyman brought up and educated as a gentleman who, with his family, contributed to the relief of the distressed population, and was their adviser in the time of trouble. He believed, for his own part, no adequate substitute could be found; and he would not therefore, for the prospect of any problematical advantage which might be offered, consent to incur the risk of such a fatality as the promoters of the present Resolution sought to bring about.

Mr. POLLARD-URQUHART:* Sir, I have heard the speech of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret—of pleasure, because I see that he is fully aware of the importance of the Motion before the House, and of the magnitude of the evils arising from the existing state of Ecclesiastical Endowments in Ireland—of regret, because he holds forth no hopes to us of the Government of which he is a Member dealing with the question. The right hon. Gentleman has said, indeed, that public opinion is not sufficiently ripe to enable any Government to take it in hand. Why, Sir, what progress could our legislation ever make if Government were never to deal with any question till they thought public opinion ripe for it? We have heard in old times of Governments incurring a vast amount of unpopularity by endeavouring to remove great abuses which were still upheld by a considerable force of public prestige, and declaring they would stand or fall by their success. This was the way in which the old Whigs dealt with the question of free trade in 1841. True, public opinion was not prepared for the measure at the time, and they were obliged to give up their places in consequence; but, nevertheless, they have since met with ample reward, for public opinion very soon took a turn in their favour—wafted them back to office in 1846—and has kept them there with a very slight intermission for a period of nearly twenty years. Such were the rewards of honesty and courage then, and depend upon it such would be the rewards of a similar display of honesty and courage now, even though it might involve temporary loss of power.

Now, Sir, with respect to the question before us, I recollect once hearing a person who was tolerably well acquainted with this House saying that there were two subjects on which no one should attempt to speak who had been more than two years in Parliament—namely, Poland and the Irish Church Establishment—for that as there were no two themes concerning which it was easier to utter specious generalities and fine sounding platitudes, in every way well suited for maiden speeches—so on the other hand there were no two subjects on which it was more difficult to find anything new—and I certainly do not now rise with the expectation of being able to say anything fresh about the iniquity of, or mischief arising from, the Establishment that is now the subject of discussion—indeed, it would be difficult to state either in a more forcible manner than was stated by the noble Lord who is now Prime Minister when he led this House, in the time of Lord Melbourne's Government, and when he declared with so much truth that there never was anything like it in the world, except Scotland in the reign of the Stuarts—and I, for one, cannot help thinking that it is a matter of deep regret that the conduct of some of the great leaders on this question—taking it up and throwing it aside for party purposes—has given too much appearance of truth to the allegation now so frequently set forth by mischievous men, that it was in vain to look to Parliamentary action for redress for any of the injustices of Ireland; and it seems to me not unlikely that if the same ecclesiastical policy had been continued in Scotland that unfortunately has hitherto existed in Ireland, it would have been the destined point of attack of any mischievous marauding expedition got up by the enemies of England in the New World, and possibly they might have met with more encouragement there than they have received in Ireland. I would now, however, address a few words to my brother Protestants on both sides of the House, who believe that by maintaining the existing state of religious endowments in Ireland, they are doing any service to the form of Christianity which they and I believe to be true. I would therefore seriously put the question to them—Does the experience of the past—does the state of religious feeling of the present moment justify them in the belief that by upholding the present institution they really are promoting Protestantism? Take the very first argument that is so frequently put forward by the defenders of this institution—namely, that the existing Protestant Church in Ireland is the identical old Catholic Church established there long before what we call the Reformation, and in ancient times the Church of the majority of the people. Why, Sir, admitting this to be the case for argument's sake, and only for argument's sake, for I for one do not believe in it, what does it show? Simply this, that this old Establishment has alienated the majority of the people from it, driven them away to the Church of Rome, from the Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is said to be identical in doctrine and authority with the Church of England. "Oh," say some in reply, "you are only referring to what has been its effects in corrupt times now long gone by. No doubt such may have been its effects in the times of Primate Boulter and Primate Stone, and such, too, may have been the effect of the Church at the time its heads were so notoriously bad, that Dean Swift said, that he firmly believed that the Bishops who had been actually appointed by the English Government had been waylaid at Hounslow Heath by robbers, who had pulled them out of their coaches, and sent in their places chosen men out of their own bands to personify them in Ireland; but now the Bishops and the Pastors of the Church are quite different from what they were in the last century." Especially during the last thirty years it is asserted they have been animated with a zeal which cannot fail, if proper time be allowed it, to produce great effects. I, for one, cheerfully bear testimony to the high character, the zeal, fervour, and untiring industry of the present clergy of the Establishment in Ireland; such certainly has been their character during, at least, the existing generation? But have they with all their zeal, piety, and industry, succeeded in sensibly altering the proportion of Protestants and Catholics? Has not the Census of 1861 shown how very little that proportion has altered during the last quarter of a century—and this too during a period which has pressed with great severity upon the lower orders in Ireland, who were almost exclusively Catholics? Why, Sir, I recollect when this subject was brought forward in the year 1853, the first Session that I had the honour of a seat in this House, the leading journal in England remarking that it was very unwise to open the question of Ecclesiastical Endowments in Ireland, at a season when all circumstances seemed to indicate that the Catholic Celt was likely to disappear from the land, and become a tradition of the past. Well, Sir, in spite of the high character and the zeal of the Protestant clergy, in spite of the disappearance of large numbers of the Catholics and Celts, the religious proportion remains almost unaltered. Can it be said, then, that the Established Church in Ireland has answered its purpose? Can it be said that it seems likely to answer its purpose? The late Sir Robert Peel in discussing this subject, argued it should be recollected that England did show a preference for Protestantism. Can it any longer be defended on the ground of preference for Protestantism? Why, Sir, where is it that the Irish Celt really becomes a Protestant? Is it in Ireland where a Protestant Establishment for the benefit of a small minority exists? No! Is it in England where it exists in unison with the religious feelings and sentiments of a majority? No! But he does become a Protestant in the United States of America, where there is no Established Church. The hon. Member who preceded me has spoken of the vitality of Protestantism in some parts of Ireland. We constantly hear zealous Protestants appeal to the large number of churches that are or have been recently erected in Kingstown, and other places in the vicinity of Dublin. But pray how are these new churches erected, and how are the clergymen generally paid? Is it not to a great extent by voluntary contributions, in some form or other, either by direct subscriptions —or by pew-rents—or by the funds of the Additional Curates' Society? One more fact will I mention to show how mistaken the friends of Protestantism are, in imagining that the existence and extent of their religion depends on the Church Establishment. I have taken it from the religious Census of 1851. I will not trouble the House with figures, but the facts are simply these:—While the Church of England, in England, has more nominal members than all the other religious bodies put together, yet, the number of attendances at Church services by the latter, is greater than the number of attendances by the former. Do not these facts read a plain lesson to those friends of Protestantism who believe the connection with the Establishment to be beneficial to their religion? Do not they say, as plain as facts can say, "the Establishment has failed, try what you can do by the infusion of a little more of the leaven of voluntaryism." Sir, I know that one of the most common objections to dealing with this question, made use of by the defenders of the existing system is—What will you do with the revenues which you propose to alienate? We must verily have come to a strange pass, if we are at a loss how to make some good use of that which undoubtedly is national property. Nor do I think that much doubt can exist as to the best and most appropriate mode of turning them to account. The property was originally meant for the religious services of the nation: let it still be applied to the religious services of the nation. How much better would it be that both the Maynooth Grant and the Regium Donum were paid out of it, than out of Imperial revenues. Let part of it, if you like, go to aid the voluntary efforts made by the Episcopalians in Ireland, in the same manner that the Regium Donum now aids the voluntary efforts made by the Presbyterians. And let a fair share of it go in aid of the voluntary efforts made by the Roman Catholics to support their Church. I am aware, of course, that the Roman Catholic clergy, as a body, have expressed great repugnance to accept any stipend from the State, and many are of opinion that by trying to force any such salaries on them we should greatly diminish their useful influence with the people. Now, Sir, when we recollect that twice within a recent period—namely, in 1848 and at the present crisis—we have been indebted to the peace maintaining power of the Roman Catholic clergy, for having been able to quell what would otherwise have been most formidable insurrections—almost without bloodshed on the former occasion—and entirely without bloodshed on the latter—we should be very foolish if we were to attempt to place them in a position that would in any way weaken their power over their flocks; but surely, no considerations of this nature could apply to a grant for the erection, maintenance, and repair of places of Catholic worship, or even to providing the parochial priests with glebes; and, I do not believe there would be on their part any objection to availing themselves of State assistance for these purposes. With respect to the working Protestant clergy themselves, I am strongly of opinion that the majority of them would, by some such arrangement as that which I have indicated, be placed in a position of greater comfort and independence than they occupy at present. Sir, I firmly believe that as regards their incomes, no body of men have ever been more hardly dealt with by legislation during the last forty years than the parochial Incumbents in Ireland. Though I am no friend of the Establishment, yet I think justice should be done to all individuals connected with the Establishment; and I think that but a very scant measure of justice has been meted out to them. Take all the measures affecting them that have been enacted during the period I have named — the Tithe Commutation Act, passed, I think, in the year 1826; the deduction of 25 per cent made from their incomes on putting the rent-charge on the landlords in the year 1836; the subjecting their incomes thus diminished to the whole of the poor rate, which since the year 1846 has in some places occasionally amounted to another 20 per cent; and finally, the deduction made from it by the income tax—take the conjoint effect, I say, of all these laws, and I think it is no exaggeration to say that in many instances the incomes of individual clergymen who have remained in possession of the same benefices during the whole of this period has been diminished in some cases 50 per cent and I believe in no case less than 30 per cent—a serious deduction from any income, but especially from one that is regarded by the recipients more or less in the light of a fixed annuity, out of which the recipients naturally would make arrangements to provide for their families—and falling on a class of men subjected to more calls in proportion to their incomes than most others. Now, Sir, I think it is evident that the reason why they have been thus hardly dealt with is this:—many of their friends have felt that there was something strangely anomalous if not indefensible in their position, and have recommended them from time to time to make compromises in order to maintain their existing status, which compromises have ended in their incomes being cut down from 30 to 50 per cent. How much better would they have fared if the whole question had been faced on its merits long ago, and some settlement arrived at based on equity and justice, in which, of course, due consideration would have been shown for the life interests of individuals? But to proceed from the past to their present position and their future prospects, I believe I am rather overstating than understating the net incomes of the working clergy of the Established Church of Ireland, if I put it at £200 per annum. Now, Sir, can any one believe that if some such arrangement as that which I have suggested were made, their net incomes would not be at least as much as they are at present? And as regards future prospects, if the law remains as it is now, their incomes will remain stationary, no matter how much the prosperity and wealth of the country may increase, unless, indeed, the price of grain should rise very much; indeed, with the present tendency of prices, it is possible they may receive less than they do at present, for wheat is falling, while the other things are becoming dearer, so that under the present law it may come to pass that their incomes will be diminished while the expenses of living increase. How different would their prospects be if they were paid by an arrangement partaking as much of the nature of voluntaryism as that which I have ventured to propose? for then their incomes could not but increase with the progressive wealth of the community.

Sir, of course I do not mean to say that the observations I have made about the incomes of the working clergy in Ireland would apply to the great prizes of the Church. Possibly, some may point to the many illustrious men by whom these prizes have been held, and may say—" Would you do away with an institution which has brought the virtues and talents of men such as these to light?" Sir, I for one bear willing testimony to the high character of many of the prelates, both past and present, of the Irish Church. I believe there never was a man more respected by all classes than the late Archbishop of Armagh, and, according to all accounts, he has found a very worthy successor. Perhaps, too, it will be difficult to find two men of higher reputation for talents and attainments than the late and the present Archbishop of Dublin. But, in bearing this willing tribute to their merits, I for one cannot but think that it is a matter of deep regret that such excellent and eminent men have been placed in a decidedly false position. I have very little doubt but that their virtue and their talents would have raised them to a high place in any branch of the Established Church, or in any other profession they had embraced—where they would, doubtless, have had equal scope for the exercise of their faculties, without being weighed down by the many disadvantages which a connection with an undeniably vicious institution must necessarily entail. Now, Sir, this is no singular notion of mine. Every reader of Dr. Arnold's Life must have been struck with his remarks about one of the eminent Divines to whom I have just alluded, who was one of his most intimate friends; I mean, of course, the late Archbishop Whately. His words are as follows—

> "Where is the knowledge—where the wisdom—and where the goodness which combine to form a great man? I know of no man who approaches to this character except Whately, and he is taken away from the place where he was wanted, and sent where the highest greatness would struggle in vain against the overpowering disadvantages of his position."

Perhaps there are some other eminent Archbishops of whom their friends might now write in the same strain.

Sir, I believe that there are those who will say that the existing state of Ecclesiastical Endowments in Ireland is after all only a sentimental grievance, and that Ireland has too many physical and material evils to take any thought about sentiment. But I should like to know when was there yet any great moral grievance that was not a prolific of material ills. Take the very subject now on which the people of Ireland complain most, and which I believe is to form the subject of special legislation this year, the existing system of land tenure in that country. We have the evidence of Dr. Keane, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, to the effect, that he does not believe there would be any necessity for special legislation on that subject, if it was not for the want of confidence that had arisen in consequence of the former political treatment of Ireland. And depend upon it, as long as you maintain a great moral, or sentimental, or Ecclesiastical grievance, in any part of the United Kingdom, you will continue to have an abundant harvest of practical evils requiring special legislation. How is it that landlords and tenants have managed among themselves to arrange a suitable system of land tenure in Scotland? And how is it that Scotland has so prospered since its union with England, while Ireland has not? Scotland labours under many of the disadvantages which are complained of as impediments to the well-being of Ireland; representation by a small number—smaller indeed than those allotted to Ireland, in the Imperial Legislature — the drawing away to London of a great deal of the wealth, society, native talent, and native energy of that kingdom—immediate contact and competition with a rich country;

how is it, I say, that Scotland has flourished under the identical disadvantages to which so many people are inclined to attribute the languishing state of Ireland? What other reason can there be, except that in the former country no violence has been done to the religious feelings of the people by an unsuitable system of Ecclesiastical Endowments, whereas a church, regarded by three-fourths of the nation as heretical, has been maintained at the cost of so much ill will in the latter? I know, too, there are many who look upon the Irish Church as an establishment utterly indefensible *per se*, but consider it as being so united with the Church of England, that the two institutions must flourish or fall together. Sir, I cannot but regard this as very short-sighted policy on the part of the friends of the Church of England. Depend upon it that those who adopt it so far from strengthening, take the very surest means of undermining their Church. Let those who revere the Church of England —let those who look upon it as an institution very much in consonance with the habits and affections of a large portion of the English people, and as contributing in no small degree to the stability and permanency of our social system, beware how they connect it with an unsound branch which must soon come down, and may, if maintained too long, drag down the parent tree in its fall. Far better preserve the parent tree by lopping off the unsound branch.

> " —— immedicabile vulnus
> Ense recidendum est ne pars sincera trahetur."

Sir, I recollect a former occasion when this subject was brought before the House the noble Lord who is now Prime Minister saying, from the Bench below me, that, while he admitted the present state of things to be unsatisfactory, he would not attempt to remedy it in consequence of the influence that had been exercised, or attempted to be exercised, by the Roman Catholic Church in this country. Well, Sir, whatever the noble Lord might have thought of the exercise of this influence at that time, he will not say much against it now, for during the past winter and spring it has been exerted entirely in defence of law, order, and property. Without the exercise of this influence we should most likely have had a sanguinary insurrection. The Government has, therefore, an opportunity of dealing with an admitted abuse, which many great and wise men have wished for, and wished for in vain. Let them not neglect the occasion. Let the noble Lord now add to his many great achievements the facing of a difficulty which many believe is an indispensable step towards the future tranquillity, prosperity, and social advancement of Ireland.

The O'DONOGHUE said, he had listened with a great deal of pain to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, because he had anticipated, after the statements which had been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Government would have taken a very different course on this subject. But he now found that Her Majesty's Government had no more intention of dealing with the grievance of the Irish Church than those Governments with which we had recently been blessed. Last year when his hon. Friend the Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) made a Motion analogous to that they were now discussing, he (the O'Donoghue) had endeavoured to treat the Irish Church in a manner the most fair, practical, and intelligible, and at the same time to avoid all topics which were either irrelevant or calculated only to embitter the conflict of opinion. Now, as then, he approached the question with a certain amount of reluctance, because he was aware that many of his countrymen regarded the proposed interference with the Irish Established Church almost as an attack on themselves. On the other hand, it was consolatory to reflect that never was there a period when sectarian animosity prevailed less than at present; and, consequently, there never was a period when the public mind was more favourably disposed to consider and adjudicate on this question, which was most important in itself, and was well-known to excite the absorbing sympathies of millions. There was a growing predisposition to discuss the question of the Established Church in Ireland and dispose of it in some way or other. This, no doubt, on the whole, was a most cheering symptom; although, in his mind, at least, it was qualified by the reflection that it might be so disposed of that it would be much better to leave it for some time longer in its original position. He felt it, therefore, incumbent on him to declare that his object in dealing with the Irish Church Establishment was twofold—he was anxious not only to settle the question, but to settle it in the only way that could be satisfactory to the vast majority of the Irish people, and the sincere advocates of religious equality among Her Majesty's subjects of all creeds. The position of those who were opposed to the maintenance of the Protestant Established Church seemed to be so strong and unassailable as almost to render argument unnecessary. He would ask the House to look back for a moment at the religious history of Ireland, and recall to its recollection the fact that the ecclesiastical revenues were originally granted to those who ministered to the spiritual wants of the people; whereas they were now enjoyed by persons who were not the pastors of the people, and who did not minister to their spiritual necessities. There were other historical questions which would, perhaps, form the subject of controversy till the end of time; but this was a fact, the authenticity of which was universally recognized, and it was sufficient of itself to stamp the Irish Church as one of the most extraordinary and incomprehensible institutions in the world. He might safely challenge any one to produce a parallel to it in any quarter of the globe. Those, therefore, who opposed the Irish Church had an easy task, for they were backed by justice, common sense, and universal practice; while those who sought to justify and uphold it, were driven from the field of reason and logic, and were obliged to take refuge behind every kind of sophism. He would state the case against the Establishment in this way. The Roman Catholics of Ireland numbered something over 4,500,000; the members of the Established Church numbered something over 600,000; and the revenues set apart for ecclesiastical purposes amounted to about £580,000 per annum. If a person unacquainted with this anomalous institution heard these figures for the first time he would naturally conclude that the ecclesiastical revenues of the country were possessed by the Catholics, or, at any rate, that they were shared in due proportion between Catholics and Protestants. If he were then informed that they were monopolized by the small Protestant minority, he would account for this by supposing that the Catholics were rich and able to support their clergy by voluntary contributions, while the Protestants were poor and could not dispense with State support. If this stranger were told that the very reverse was the case—that the great Catholic majority being very poor, and the small Protestant minority immensely rich in comparison with them, and if he were further told that these revenues were originally granted to the pastors of the people, but that they had been appropriated by persons who were not their pastors, his amazement would be greatly increased. He would naturally ask for an explanation of so unprecedented an arrangement; but no explanation could be given that did not aggravate the anomaly. If people could not see that such a state of things was flagrantly unjust and absolutely indefensible, their powers of comprehension must be strangely defective. It was a fact worthy the attention of the House that no one could be cited as a defender of the Established Church who was not or had not been interested in its maintenance. Intelligent and impartial men condemned it the moment they became acquainted with the facts of the case, and for any one to prove its unjust and anomalous character would be about as equivocal a compliment to his auditory as to prove that two and two did not make five. Under these circumstances, the course taken by the supporters of the present Irish Establishment depended mainly on the individual cast of mind; but there was one point on which they showed remarkable unanimity, and that was in keeping wide of the real question at issue. Some adopted the theological and controversial line, others the mere pettifogging line, and others one which, though apparently more comprehensive and statesmanlike, was really quite as untenable. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University (Mr. Whiteside) did not attempt to argue that the Established Church was in a majority, for the statistics were beyond dispute. Neither did he attempt to argue that it was ever likely to attain a majority, for the experience of 300 years had shown it as a missionary Church to be a failure. The right hon. Gentleman, however, was of a controversial turn, and on all occasions of this kind, his practice was to go back to the days of St. Patrick, and endeavour to prove that St. Patrick was a Protestant. His next position was that in the early ages the Irish Church did not recognize the supremacy of the See of Rome; and then, coming down to the time of Queen Elizabeth, his assertion was that the Irish bishops embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. [Mr. WHITESIDE: Hear, hear!] The right hon. Gentleman said "hear, hear!" but even if all these assertions were true—which he (the O'Donoghue) was far from admitting—they would not in the slightest degree affect the merits of the question. For the purposes of this argument it did not matter whether St.

Patrick was a Protestant or not, whether the early Irish Church repudiated the supremacy of the Pope, or whether the bishops of the Elizabethan era embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. The fact was perfectly incontestable that the Irish people did not embrace, and never had embraced, those doctrines; and from that time the clergy ceased to be, and have never since been, the pastors of the people, and have forfeited all right and title to revenues which were granted to them in that capacity. The simple question, therefore, for the House to decide was whether those revenues should be possessed by the Church of a small minority, and they were bound to decide this question as they decided all others, in accordance with justice and common sense. The views of St. Patrick or of the early Church had no more to do with the present question than what was taking place in China or Timbuctoo. With the remembrance of former debates on this subject in his mind, he had braced up his nerves against the horrors which were invariably prédicted by the champions of the Establishment as the certain consequence if Parliament refused to provide future generations of parsons with those nice incomes which had been hitherto enjoyed by the Irish clergy with little or no accompanying labour. Those incomes, no doubt, had been a source of comfort and consolation under the most discouraging circumstances; for there was nothing profane in the supposition that many a zealous Anglican divine would have succumbed in despair at the sight of his empty church and at the extreme rarity of neophytes, had not his spirit of Christian meekness and resignation been sustained by those material comforts to which even the most exalted beings could not be altogether insensible. Still, while rejoicing at the alleviation of suffering in any form, the fact remained that the ecclesiastical revenues of Ireland were intended for those of whose ministrations the people availed themselves, and the inevitable deduction from this fact was that persons who did not answer this description, were they never so amiable or estimable, could have no title to the enjoyment of these revenues. The domestic felicity of the clergy was not, he believed, among the contingencies for which the founders of these revenues provided; and if the Legislature should resolve to devote them to other purposes on the demise of their present possessors the obvious result would be that the Protestant clergy would have to depend on other sources for their income, in the same way as the clergy of other denominations in England, Ireland, and other countries. There would then be an opportunity of judging whether the Protestant Church possessed sufficient vitality to exist without State aid. For his own part, he believed that it did so. Many of the supporters of the Establishment predicted the occurrence of calamities and social convulsions, too dreadful to contemplate, and which would reduce society to a state of primeval chaos should they be daring enough to lay their hands upon the temporalities of the Irish Church. They were warned that in such an event there would be no security for individual property; that every man's estate would be torn from him by his neighbour, or that the State would seize it in order to appropriate it to charitable purposes, and that unruly millions would finally rush in and bear down all social landmarks, and would divide among themselves the good things of the earth. It was true that there was no attempt to show the connection between the cause and the effect; but, perhaps, it was thought that a little mystery would lend weight to the argument. It was unnecessary for him to point out the absurdity of such arguments, or the weakness of the cause in whose defence they were put forward; and he would therefore only remind the House that the Irish Church had already been deprived of a portion of its temporalities, and that none of the threatened horrors had resulted. But he should not stop at refuting such arguments—he took a higher ground, and declared that the title of the Irish Protestant Church Establishment to the ecclesiastical revenues of Ireland was bad, and that in justice it could not stand. If there were any other corporations with titles as bad they ought not to stand, and further, he would say, they would not stand if they were brought under the cognizance of Parliament. The ecclesiastical revenues of Ireland were the property of the Irish nation. No statute of limitations could bar the nation's claims or diminish the original injustice. There were acts of confiscation perpetrated in former times of which time had obliterated the injustice or made it impossible to atone for them: the man who should now attempt to disturb the settlement of property in Ireland in order to assert his claim to lands which he supposed his family formerly held he would hold to be a crazed visionary or a dangerous public enemy. But the nation's claim to the ecclesiastical revenues of the country were of quite a different character. The nature of the claim was universally known, and was universally acknowledged to be just. The claimant was one, the Irish nation, whose identity no one would dispute; all competitors were immeasurably dwarfed, and its claim rested upon principles so manifestly just that they were strengthened by every attempt to question their validity. That claim might be withheld now, as it had been heretofore, by the attempt to uphold a petty ascendancy; but if that were so, he declared, though more in sorrow than in anger, that this could only be done by an injustice that might one day prove fatal to the peace and the prosperity of the Empire. He had lately observed on the part of some of the more distinguished friends of the Established Church a disposition to get rid of the individuality of that Church, and to persuade the people of England that the Protestant Establishment of Ireland was the Protestant Church and something else. They heard much now of the United Church of England and Ireland; and they were told that they were united by some inscrutable bond of union, and that by some mysterious decree of fate they were bound to stand or fall together. He thought the attempt to defend the Established Church on that ground was a distinct admission that it had no merits of its own, and that it could only be maintained by the sympathies of the English Protestants being enlisted in its favour. What was the logical inference from that argument? Why, that the Protestant Establishment must be maintained in Ireland though there was not a single Protestant outside of these who were in possession of its benefices. There were already several clergymen without congregations; why might there not be a whole hierarchy and clergy in a similarly unfortunate position of having nothing to do and being well paid for doing it. How could the Church of England depend upon the Church of Ireland more than upon the Church of Canada, or of Australia, or of New Zealand, or of Scotland. The reality of that union was not assumed on religious grounds, but only in order that the clergy might pocket the temporalities. It was said that the safety of our institutions required the union of Church and State; and the interpretation of that sounding phrase, so far as it related to Ireland, was that the authority of the State was strengthened, and loyalty fostered, by the existence of an institution which was the source of profound discontent to a population of four millions and a half out of a population of little more than five millions and a half, of an ecclesiastical system which was considered by the majority of the people of Ireland as a huge State engine of proselytism, and as a degradation imposed upon them to which they must submit as a homage to the peculiar religious views of England. These were some of the extraordinary advantages conferred on Irish society by the maintenance of a Protestant establishment. They were so extraordinary that no one could thoroughly understand them who was not a man of great genius, of intelligence, and Christian feeling. Now, how was the question of the Irish Established Church to be settled? In the first place, the question must be approached in a spirit of justice, moderation, and brotherly love to all our fellow-subjects, with a determination to do what justice and the interests of the Empire required, and to avoid as far as possible inflicting the slightest injury on any individual. Speaking as a Catholic, if it were necessary for the settlement of the question to deprive those in possession of office and emoluments, he would say let it be postponed until they could be otherwise provided for. It was erroneous to say that there was anything vindictive in the character of the opposition to the Established Church. The Protestant clergy were esteemed as men of piety, learning, and charity; and in the south of Ireland if any persons were foolish and wicked enough to molest them the whole Catholic population would rally for their defence. Amongst the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Wesleyans, the members of the Society of Friends, the Protestant clergyman would pass on unnoticed, were he not conspicuous as an object of State patronage and reward for doing infinitely less than his professional brethren, who were the real pastors of the people. It was this glaring injustice of which they were perpetually reminded, and its disastrous consequences that they protested against, and not against the Protestant clergyman—who, as a general rule, was the most unobjectionable of men, though his religious opinions were agreeable only to a small number of the people. In Ireland, the only way in which the question of the Irish Church could be settled was by placing all Her Majesty's subjects, irrespective of any creed or the number of its adherents, on a footing of perfect equality. It was clear that could only be accomplished by gradually doing away with all State endowments having for their object the support of the clergy. There were some people who would rather do anything than see the Protestant clergy relax their hold upon the temporalities — who would agree to any compromise, even in opening the purse of the State to those who disseminated the errors of Popery. He could not but regard any proposal to pay the Catholic clergy with distrust and adversion. It would complicate the disease for which a remedy was required. It was a proposal contrary to the spirit of the age, and especially contrary to the spirit of the people of England. And further, it was a proposal which could not be justified by the plea of necessity. The people of Ireland did not want to have their clergy paid by the State. They would not accept a State endowment. He had no authority to speak on their behalf, but the opinion which he expressed was the result of impressions derived from the closest intimacy with many of them. He was quite sure they would refuse a State endowment, not from any spirit of disloyalty, not from an apprehension that their capacity for mischief would be weakened, but from a conscientious conviction that their power of doing good would be impaired, and that the interests of religion would be injured. Whatever course the Catholic clergy took would be dictated by zeal for religion and devotion to Ireland. They were not afraid to face popular displeasure when they thought the call of duty rendered it necessary for them to do so, and he was certain they would never do anything likely to weaken their influence over the people, which was the best ground for the preservation of religion, domestic peace, and public tranquillity. What the clergy of Ireland wanted was not State aid, but religious equality for all; without that there could be no enduring peace, and no brotherly union amongst Irishmen. Let it be once established, and the Catholics would have no reason to complain that they were the less favoured children of the State, and Protestants would be divested of those undue privileges which were the obstacles to their making common cause with their countrymen. Let the ecclesiastical revenues of Ireland, which were national property, be devoted to whatever purposes the wisdom of Parliament might devise. That was the prayer of the Irish people, and they were supported in making it, not merely by their co-religionists, but by the lovers of religious equality throughout the world. They prayed for it as an act of justice and a recognition of one of those distinguishing marks of Irish nationality which it was worse than folly to ignore. They sometimes heard from the defenders of the Established Church language which sounded to his ears like the language of menace. They seemed to wish to convey to the Parliament of England that the Protestant Establishment must be maintained in its present position. They spoke about the Throne, and the Constitution, and loyalty. Was it of a constitutional loyalty—a loyalty which was to be co-existent with the existence of ascendancy? The Catholics of Ireland used no threats, direct or indirect: they rested their case upon its merits. They appealed with confidence to their English brethren. All they demanded was simply religious equality, equal rights and privileges for all, and in return for justice they offered the loyalty of a nation.

Mr. WHITESIDE: I have listened, Sir, to this debate with great interest, and I have been especially pleased with the speech which we have just heard. It was manly and it was distinct. The hon. Gentleman by whom it was delivered fairly and honestly claimed the property of the Church in Ireland for what he calls national purposes, irrespective of any law which exists to the contrary; irrespective of anything in our history or in our legislation. He is of opinion that no law ought for a moment to interpose between the just demands of a nation and their satisfaction. I quite understand him. Nobody can mistake his proposal, and I place it at the outset of my remarks in pleasing contrast with the speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chichester Fortescue) on behalf of Her Majesty's Government. The right hon. Gentleman has laid down the doctrine this evening that it is not the duty of the Government to defend the institutions of the country, but to show how, on the eve of an important discussion, a vote may be obtained from Gentlemen who have a vote to give and who, if they follow the Ministerial advice given them by the right hon. Gentleman, and "agitate, agitate, agitate," may ultimately succeed in attaining the object of their wishes. This is undoubtedly a new policy to be initiated by the Ministers of a great country. The right hon. Gentleman, in effect, says, "My sympathies are with the Motion; my feelings are in accord with those of its Mover; I should delight to see your wishes accomplished:—but I am one of Her Majesty's Ministers, and therefore I must evade—I must avoid the subject for the present; and although personally my feelings and opinions are with you, as a Minister of the Crown I must shirk the question and leave its settlement for another day and for a better opportunity." Sir, until to-night I have always understood that a Gentleman differing from the policy of the Government of which he was a Member ought, if unable to carry out what he honestly and conscientiously holds to be right, at once to quit an incorrigible Ministry, go into opposition, and there to advocate his opinions with effect and with success. But according to the doctrine enunciated by the right hon. Gentleman to-night, the duty of a Minister is to yield nothing, to contradict nothing, to deny nothing, to promise nothing distinct, but to say something of this kind—"If you will only be quiet and will trust to me, on some future occasion a Bill—that never, indeed, may see the light—may be drawn up and laid upon the table," to do something which the most careful attention to the subject has not enabled me to comprehend or even to conceive. That I understand to be a part of the Ministerial programme for the Session. We are now dealing with both the Church and the State. To-night we despatch the Church, and on Thursday we are to consider what we can do for the State. These questions, indeed, have always been connected. It is natural enough that when a great organic change is intended in the Constitution it should be carried out thoroughly in both Church and State. I quite understand the object of the hon. Member for Tralee (The O'Donoghue). He wishes to carry out the proposal made some ten years since by Mr. Miall, formerly a Member for Rochdale. That gentleman proposed that the Church of Ireland should be put up to auction and sold off, and that the proceeds should be applied to what he called works of public utility, such as madhouses and lighthouses. I had never seen any descendant of the Puritans, but that hon. Gentleman, I was informed, inherited the views of the Puritans, who, in former days, were such sincere friends of the Roman Catholics. He called upon the Roman Catholics of Ireland to join in overturning everything in that country which savoured of ecclesiastical endowment, and he appeared to me to doubt whether we ought to be allowed to retain even the fabrics of our churches. Now, it is not my business to utter what he was pleased to term threats; but still, I must say that if the Rochdale Puritans come to our part of the world to carry out their notions, they must expect to meet the reception they deserve. Now, under what circumstances is this Motion brought forward? The hon. Gentleman the Mover of this Resolution (Sir John Gray) said that this was an Imperial question. The hon. Member for Longford (Mr. O'Reilly) saw the mistake into which the Mover had fallen in treating it as an Imperial question, for that at once disposed of nine-tenths of his argument. If it was an Imperial question, the hon. Member for Longford (Mr. O'Reilly) saw there was nothing to argue in it, because, as an Imperial question, the Mover had no case; therefore, said the hon. Member for Longford, that is a mistake—we are to argue the question as if in an Irish Parliament—as a local grievance, a local Church, and then we are to do all those things which an Irish Senate might be disposed to do with regard to the Church, whatever they might do with regard to the State afterwards. These are awkward opposing opinions; but the result of the discussion is that the Mover has no plan to submit to the House—nothing but a vague abstract Resolution. But while the hon. Member for Longford would desire to treat this matter as a local question, the hon. Member for Tralee, more comprehensive in his views, claims the property for that portion of the nation which consists of Roman Catholics. [The O'Donoghue: No, no; for the whole nation.] Then, if the hon. Member spoke of the whole nation there was a part of it for which he had no authority to speak. But what is the nation? I have heard "the nation" spoken of in Ireland in this way. Ignore two-thirds of those who follow any intellectual pursuit in Ireland, ignore five-sixths of the landed gentry, the greater portion of the aristocracy, forty-nine out of every fifty of the manufacturers; and ignore, also, all the skilled artizans, and then you have "the nation." I admit that the majority of the peasants and small farmers are Roman Catholics, but I deny that the country, as a nation, is a Roman Catholic country. I have always understood that the intellect of a country—its property industry, and intelligence—formed some part of the nation; yet one hon. Gentleman who spoke to-night ignored all those in Ireland who could lay claim to respectability or had been successful in life. He says the Protestants are rich and prosperous. I regret that the same prosperity does not extend to all parties in the country; but I believe the absence of that prosperity in certain quarters is the effect of this constant agitation and the forcing of those fancied grievances on the shoulders of other parties, instead of relying on their own exertions. May I ask the House to reflect on what has made the Protestants rich and prosperous? Because they are industrious, because they are inventive, because they produce something, and because they do something; and this much maligned Church has not, under the greatest agitation, been fortunate enough to produce a single conspirator or traitor in the late disturbances. But what is the cause of this Motion being submitted to us at the present time? The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilkenny, I say, represents the hierarchical party of the Church of Rome in Ireland. On the occasion of a meeting of the recently formed National Association of Ireland, the eminent Prelate, who is, I believe, the Papal Legate, made the very Motion which the hon. Gentleman has introduced to the House. His first notice of Motion was revolutionary, and I imagine he must have listened to the advice of some discreet Member, who recommended him to withdraw it, and substitute in its place a vague and indefinite Motion which would enable a Minister of the Crown to make a vague and indefinite response. But it is in vain for the hon. Member to cloak himself in words; we judge of him by what he has proposed to us, and we offer to him our unqualified resistance; we make no compromise, and offer no terms; we close up our ranks and present an unbroken front to the hon. Gentleman in his revolutionary career, which, by the way, is a very bold one for a man to begin who is only six weeks a Member of Parliament. It was absurd for him to deal with petty details when he had shown us it was not internal reform, but the complete destruction of the Church which he aimed at. So I will have nothing to say to his details, save to remark that if he will add up the number of benefices and the number of Churchmen he will find 459 worshippers of the Church of England for each of those benefices. He will find that larger than the proportion in very many parishes in England and Wales; and therefore the hon. Gentleman's arguments tell as much against the Church here as it does in Ireland. But, what was his first Motion? He asked us to declare—

> "That the Church Establishment in Ireland is a grievous wrong to the people of that country; and its continued maintenance prevents them from having confidence in the justice or in the wisdom of the Imperial Parliament."

I say that notice possesses the advantage of distinctness, and therefore I prefer it. Such a proposal goes to the root of the whole matter; and my complaint is that the hon. Gentleman withdrew it, not for the purpose of placing the subject fairly before the House, but endeavouring to conceal the object he has in view by substituting an indefinite proposition, which asserts—

> "That the position of the Established Church in Ireland is a just cause of dissatisfaction, and urgently demands the consideration of Parliament."

Now, what was the Resolution agreed to in the meeting of the Association of which, I believe, the hon. Member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray) is the organ in this House. The Resolution proposed by Archbishop Cullen ran thus—

> "We demand the disendowment of the Established Church in Ireland as a condition without which social peace and stability, general respect for the laws, and unity of sentiment and of action for national objects can never prevail in Ireland."

What is the meaning of that Resolution? I conscientiously believe it to be this:—If we can get rid of the Established Church, we will so disgust and incense the Protestants that they will turn round and join with us in pursuance of national objects. I leave it to the sagacity of every hon. Gentleman to say what he thinks the national objects of those eminent persons may be. Would they be favourable to England and your power? Are you satisfied that if the Church was struck down in the present state of Ireland there would be an end of national wrongs and national demands? Do you not believe that what is aimed at in the Resolution is national independence? Now, Sir, the hon. Member for Birmingham gave the weight of his character, his talents, and political sagacity to this new Association, which is described as an association for constitutional agitation, whatever that may mean. It was natural to call upon him to join the movement in Ireland, because it might be equally successful in England at a future time. Accordingly, the hon. Gentleman being, I suppose, unwilling in stormy weather to cross the sea, addressed a reply to the Lord Mayor—I do not know whether it is the functionary who came before us to-day—in which he pointed out that the policy of the Association should be as follows:—

> "My dear Lord Mayor,—I am glad to see that an effort is to be made to force on some political advance in your country. The objects you aim at are good, and I hope you may succeed. On the question of landlord and tenant I think you should go further, and seek to do more" (no doubt they will follow that advice). "What you want in Ireland is to break down the laws of primogeniture and entail."

Good! Down with the law of entail; down with primogeniture; down with the aristocracy, which, by the way, is the great—[Mr. BRIGHT: I did not write that.] The hon. Gentleman wishes me to read the whole letter first. I will proceed then. Having advised them to break down the laws of entail, he goes on to say—

> "So that in course of time by a gradual and just process the Irish people may become the possessors of the soil of Ireland."

Now, the policy of the Fenian movement in Ireland is not directed against the Church. Its promoters have too much good sense to think that a revolution could be accomplished by agitation with respect to Church grievances. I am surprised at those hon. Gentlemen who come from Ireland smiling at this statement, especially when they know that the Fenians have determined to despoil all the leading Whigs in the first instance. One of the best men in the country—the Duke of Leinster—is marked on the ground that he has 70,000 acres of land, and that is an intelligible reason for getting rid of him. But the hon. Member for Birmingham does not advise violence; he objects even to the word "defend." He means to make the Irish people possessors of the soil by eloquent declamation, by Parliamentary manœuvres, or by his friends in the Ministry. The Fenians, who are more direct, say they are tired of speechmaking, and think it better to accomplish their plans by the revolver and the pike; but the common object is to break down the laws of primogeniture and to make the people the possessors of the soil. He proceeds—

> "A legal security for tenants' improvements will be of great value, but your true remedy for your great grievance is to base the laws which affect the land upon sound principles of political economy."

Mr. Whiteside

Now for the Church—

> "With regard to the State Church, that is an institution so evil and so odious under the circumstances of your country, that it makes one almost hopeless"—(Oh! quite so)—"almost hopeless of Irish freedom now that Irishmen have borne it so long."

That is the programme. Now for the promise—

> "The whole Liberal party in Great Britain will doubtless join with you in demanding the removal of a wrong which has no equal in the character of a national insult in any other civilized and Christian country in the world. If the popular party in Ireland would adopt as its policy 'free land and free Church,' and would unite with the popular party in England and Scotland for the advance of Liberal measures, and especially"—(now, of course, we know what is coming)—"and especially for the promotion of a honest amendment of the representation of the people, I am confident that great and beneficial changes might be made within a few years."

He is setting out his difficulties and embarrassments, situated as he then was, before he captivated the Chancellor of the Exchequer—"We have on our side numbers and opinion, but we want a more distinct policy and a better organization, and these, I hope, to some extent your meeting may supply." Wanted, a programme! wanted a policy! "Upset the Irish Church, overthrow the law of primogeniture, and then let us advance together for a Democratic Parliamentary Reform;" that I understand to be a very simple and good exposition of the spirit in which the programme was drawn up that has been acted upon as we have seen to-night. The hon. Gentleman who introduced this Motion (Sir John Gray) spoke of the state of Ireland. He described himself as an attentive observer of political affairs, said that he had studied politics as his profession, and that he was well acquainted with the condition of Ireland. The views of the hon. Gentleman, therefore, as disclosed in a remarkable document which has come into my possession, the answer of the hon. Member to a criminal information filed against himself, for publishing the Pastoral of Archbishop Cullen reflecting on the Fenians then untried, cannot fail to interest and instruct the House. The description which he gives I believe to be strictly accurate; it is both painful and alarming. He deposes that in Ireland there exists a conspiracy—[*Cries of* "Date!"]—the document is dated within the last few weeks, and begins by describing his own position, the fact that he is the proprietor of a very respectable vehicle of public information, and the hon.

Member proceeds to explain that the Fenian conspiracy has for its object the accomplishment of certain purposes by civil war, by the destruction of property, and by the spoliation of the fortunes of parties opposing its designs. He says there is no doubt the Members of the Fenian Brotherhood have these designs in view, and judging from their writings, which he says he has read, and judging also by what he has seen of their proceedings, he believes them to be anti-social, anti-Christian, opposed to the Monarchy and Government of the country, and to be persons whose views tend directly to civil war, to massacre, and bloodshed. Such is the account given by the hon. Member of the Fenian conspiracy, and I believe the account to be true. But, then, I wish to ask him this question, in the answer to which, as Irishmen, we are both interested—Where at this moment in Ireland is there a party able to resist the revolutionary party that he describes in his deposition in such fearful terms? The hierarchical party, which he represents, by the very publication which the hon. Gentleman gave to the world, acknowledged their inability to control the masses. The Archbishop said and wrote truly that the multitude contained in that conspiracy had broken away from the authority of the Church, and that the heads of that Church were able to control them no longer. If that be the case with the hierarchy—in our country, as in every other country, a highly respectable party—where am I to find the party of resistance? It is ludicrous to think that by fiddling with the transfer of Church property you can check the progress of stern Republicans, who want to be the possessors of the soil, who object to the whole framework of society, Queen, Lords, and Commons, and seek to overthrow the fabric of the body politic. You cannot govern by the police. The aristocracy, generally, are the same as the aristocracy of any other country: you never find them exciting these attacks upon the most Conservative institutions in the State. I repeat it. Where are the names of Roman Catholic Peers to further this recent wretched agitation, got up to withdraw the attention of Parliament and of the English people from the true state and condition of Ireland? The Whigs, again, are a small but highly respectable party in Ireland, and every member of that party is as useful in his station as a country gentleman as the highest Conservative in Ireland. But I think most persons will agree with me that the Whigs do not influence the masses. If, then, the hierarchy, the aristocracy, and the Whig party are unable to oppose this revolutionary element, I see no other able to control and keep it in check except the Conservative party. What does this Conservative party include? It includes all the better part of Ireland. It includes the whole Protestant part of the nation, the more respectable part of the Roman Catholic nation, all the men of property and rank without any distinction whatever. And of all the Conservative institutions of Ireland the most Conservative is the Church. Why? A great political philosopher, who certainly had no unkind feeling to the Roman Catholics—of whom his mother was one and his wife another — Edmund Burke, ascribed the maintenance of the Church in Ireland in a degree to its connection with the land and the proprietors of land. Every powerful nobleman in Ireland, and almost every gentleman of great estate, belong to the Church of England; the announcement, therefore, boldly and honestly made by the Member for Tralee, that the Church is to be struck down will be resented, and ought to be resented, as a direct attack on the property of the country. Furthermore, looking at the quarter from which the Motion emanates, and at the fact that this Resolution comes directly from the hand of the Papal Legate, I say it will be considered, and ought to be considered, as a direct attack on the Protestantism of the country.

Sir JOHN GRAY: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has a right to make statements which, if he had taken the trouble to make any inquiry, he would find to be totally adverse to the facts. The Papal Legate, as he is pleased to call him—["Order, order!"]

Mr. WHITESIDE: The hon. Gentleman misconceives. I read in his own journal that the Resolution, the terms of which I have given to the House, was proposed by Archbishop Cullen himself. I am not inaccurate in that statement, because I always look into the highly respectable journal with which the hon. Member is connected, the reports of which are most precise and copious upon any questions of this nature. I will merely assert that the Motion so proposed was unanimously adopted, and I am sure the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. Dillon), whose very dashing speech in the association (which did not mince matters as to the Church, or, indeed, as to any other existing institution) I had lately the pleasure of reading—will not deny that one of the objects of the Association from which this Resolution emanates is to demand the disendowment of the Established Church in Ireland. I appeal to every hon. Member in this House — and if a Christian community should decide against me I would appeal to the whole heathen world for a verdict in my favour grounded upon the facts I have to state. I have heard the words "public honour" spoken. It is true that the Roman Catholics were for a long time excluded from the Legislative Assemblies of this country — and what were the difficulties in the way of admitting Roman Catholics to the House of Commons and the House of Lords? Those difficulties might be summed up shortly thus—First, it was stated that if they were admitted to Parliament they would make an attack on the property of the Established Church; secondly, it was stated that they would endeavour to establish an ascendancy for the Roman Catholic Church; thirdly, it was stated that they would pursue an aggressive Papal policy as against England. How were these allegations met? Names have been mentioned to-night by hon. Gentlemen who, I think, are not very deeply read in history; but I will mention the names of men whose statements on the part of the Roman Catholics those hon. Gentlemen would do well to study. Lord Plunkett, who was selected by the Roman Catholics to speak their sentiments, stated —not once or twice, but many times— that, if Catholic Emancipation was carried, he would give an undertaking on the part of the whole Catholic body—whom, let it be remembered, he then represented—that the property of the Established Church would never be assailed. Arguing the great question intrusted to him he said—

> "I further feel that the Protestant Establishment in Ireland is the very cement of the Union. I find it interwoven with all the essential relations and institutions of the two kingdoms, and I have no hesitation in admitting that if it were destroyed the very foundations of public security would be shaken, the connection between England and Ireland dissolved, and the annihilation of private property must follow the ruin of the property of the Church."

Who authorized him to make that statement? The Roman Catholic body. He made it again and again; and with the assistance of other statesmen of matchless eloquence and commanding genius, he effected the object he had in view. Mr. Huskisson was not a rash man, but a very sagacious one. That statesman also argued the question; and when the point was made, as it always is made, of danger to the Established Church, he said—

> "True, the Established Church in Ireland does not carry with it the majority of the people of that country, but it is interwoven with the State, and it is a safeguard of the Union."

And to this extraordinary length does he go. He says—

> "The Catholics are demanding admission to a Protestant State. I will admit them; but if they combine to overthrow the institutions of the country, I am prepared to re-enact the Penal Code."

That was a strong expression; but it would appear that at that time there was an anticipation of the argument which we have heard to-night—that it may be possible to touch the property of the Established Church, not for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church, but for general purposes. And what did Lord Liverpool, who was then Prime Minister, say of that argument? He said—

> "The evil which he apprehended from such a Bill passing would not be immediate, but it would be inevitable, and would come upon the country in a manner little expected. It was not the immediate object of the Catholics to possess themselves of the property of the Established Church. They were too wary to proceed openly and directly in any such design. No, their object was in the first instance merely to diminish the property of the Church. What was the language held out by one of their great authorities, Dr. Doyle, upon this very point, 'that he did wish to decrease the magnitude of the possessions of the Church,' but he wished it not as a priest, but as an Irishman? Was any man so blind, was any man so deaf, was any man so lost to all the benefit of experience, as not to know what such language really means? Was any man so thoroughly ignorant of the course of human actions as not to know that when once the property of the Church was violated under any such pretence it would soon be seized upon, and that such was the real object of Catholic cupidity? The most invidious way in which the Catholics could possibly set about their work was to say—'Take the property of the Established Church and give it the public for the general benefit of the country.' For when once the property of the Protestant hierarchy was invaded and impaired by such an artful attack, it required but little wisdom to foretel what would befal the remainder of its rights and possessions."

The argument that the property of the Established Church may be taken, not for the Church of Rome, but for some other purpose, has been answered by anticipation. It may be interesting to the House to hear what was said by the predecessor of Archbishop Cullen on this point. There was a difficulty in satisfying Parliament as to the opinions entertained by the Roman Catholic body on the settlement of property, and the Roman Catholics of Ireland decided that they would send over the heads of their Church to give evidence. Accordingly, Archbishop Murray was examined before a Committee of the House of Lords. I will read a short extract from his evidence, and then I will ask the House whether the Resolution proposed by Archbishop Cullen is fortified by the evidence of his predecessor. The following are a few of the questions put to Archbishop Murray, and his answers to those questions :—

> "Have you any reason to think that in the minds of any part of the Roman Catholic clergy there exists any hope or any wish to interfere with the temporal possessions of the Established Church ?—Not the least ; there is no wish on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy to disturb the present Establishment or to partake of any part of the wealth it enjoys.—Question : Nor any objection to give the most full and entire assurance on that subject that may be required of them ?—Not the least."

That is the evidence of a Roman Catholic Archbishop. He swore truly, and acted on his oath while he lived. He stated that in seeking admission to a free State—and it is not the less free because it is Protestant, but the more so on that account—the Roman Catholics would undertake not to interfere with the property of the Established Church. That amiable Prelate swore, not only on his own part, but on that of his Church also. After some reference to the opinions held by French divines, he was asked this further question—

> "With these tenets, how is it possible for a Roman Catholic clergy to engage for the maintenance of a Protestant Establishment ? The witness answers—'They engage for the maintenance of the temporal Establishment such as it is made by law, and as citizens they deem it a duty to support the law.'"

That was in effect saying that, though the Roman Catholics did not admire the Church of England they agreed to respect her temporalities in Ireland. ["No!"] Well, what is to be said of the course taken by the University of Maynooth. At the time of the inquiry into education by Sir Frankland Lewis important evidence was given by the Professor of Theology and Canon Law. I would direct the attention of the hon. Member for Kilkenny to that evidence, for I hope that when he has read it he will withdraw his Motion and make an apology. Being asked what were his opinions in respect of the property which formerly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, but which for more than two centuries had been transferred to the Protestant Church, which transfer the Roman Catholics had submitted to in swearing to maintain the institutions of the country, the Professor answered "that he considered the present possessors of the Church property possessed a lawful right to it ; for, in the first place, though the Catholics considered the original transfer to have been unjust, they must hold that, as it had been sanctioned by the Government and became law, it was necessary for Catholics to recognize that which the law had sanctioned ; secondly, as *bonâ fide* possessors for such a time as brought in the law of prescription —which, according to the Church of Rome required 100 years—he considered that the present possessors possessed the property *bonâ fide ;* thirdly, on the principle that those who might be supposed to have any claim to the property had repeatedly declared that they ceded any right they had, or might be thought to have, to the same, such declaration having been repeatedly made by the heads of the Catholic Church, speaking for their Church, he held that, according to any law in existence, the title to the property of the Church in the Church was complete and inviolate." With all this evidence before Parliament—with the testimony of Bishops, Archbishops, and Professors of the Roman Catholic Church that the property of the Established Church should be respected, and with that testimony believed—would the House listen to the successors of those witnesses when they asked for the disendowment of the Church and the spoliation of its property. There was one person examined whose opinion will have considerable weight with the hon. Member for Tralee—namely, Daniel O'Connell. He was examined on a matter which I venture to say he understood better than any man living at that time—namely, as to the validity of the title to Church property derived through the Act of Settlement. He told their Lordships that if they believed that any man would disturb the Act of Settlement they never ought to admit him to political power. Nothing, he said, but insecurity of titles and civil confusion and anarchy would result from disturbing that Act which secures the property of the Church and of the State. And then he told a story to the Committee. He said that he could inform their Lordships that his brother had purchased a portion of the abbey lands ; "and do you think," he asked "that the Catholics would ever disturb the Act of Settlement when I tell you that my brother owns these lands at the present moment?" Now the abbey lands were, I believe, the only distinct portion of landed property which belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. That property, I admit, was spoliated. King Henry VIII. gave the abbey lands to the Roman Catholic Peers and the gentry of Ireland, and told them to hold their tongues about the Pope, and to maintain the supremacy of the Crown; but he hinted that if they did not behave themselves they should be hanged. He governed upon scientific principles, and I agree with Mr. Froude that during the last seven years of his reign Ireland was tranquil. But the property which he disposed of was the kind of property, the low post Bedford level, which the House of Russell have enjoyed, and which they will continue to enjoy, though they write essays against the property of the Church. Now, upon such evidence Parliament was persuaded to agree to Catholic Emancipation, and by no one more than by Bishop Doyle. I think he was a national and a patriotic man, and there is a report in Carlow that he died a Protestant. Well, Bishop Doyle did not attack the Church Establishment, which, as every man who knew how to read was aware, professed the ancient creed of the Catholic Church in Ireland. ["No, no!"] I really regret to find that hon. Gentlemen have never read their creed. It is a very awkward thing to confess. Well, Dr. Doyle wrote a remarkable essay, which will be found among his writings, in which he proposed terms of reconciliation with the Church Establishment. That essay was written by a man who knew how much truth there was in the Church Establishment. You ask constantly and boldly, "Why does the State connect itself with the Church of the minority in Ireland?" Did you ever hear of the law of self-defence? Do you believe in it? The State connected itself with the Church in Ireland that was loyal and domestic, and that never failed in its allegiance to the Crown or in its attachment to the English people; and not to the Church that was governed by a foreign Power. The reason of this was stated by Bishop Doyle. He let out the fact which has since been commented upon by Mr. Fitzpatrick in his life of that prelate. The heads of the Roman Catholic Church after the battle of the Boyne never acknowledged the Crown of England. They never acknowledged Queen Anne, King George I., King George II., King George III., nor King George IV. until the old Cardinal York died at Rome. That fact was well known to the English Ministers, and Mr. Shiel said that the money and influence of England never were able to induce the Roman Catholic Prelates to waver in their allegiance to their legitimate Sovereigns. So that, in fact, while the King sitting at Westminster appeared outwardly King of England, their King was at Rome. Dr. Doyle let out the truth when he was asked the question. I believe that if a national Bishop such as Dr. Doyle were Archbishop now instead of Dr. Cullen, the Motion before the House would never have been made. I understand that Dr. Cullen had not a single vote of the parish priests in Dublin. To return, however, to Bishop Doyle. He was asked—

> "Was the right of appointing to the Roman Catholic Bishops ever practically exercised by James II.?"

His answer was—

> "Yes, I should think it was; and also by Mary, previous to the accession of the Stuarts."

To the next question—

> "Do you think it was exercised by James II. before his arrival in Ireland?"

The reply was—

> "Yes, during the entire of his reign."

He was next asked—

> "After his abdication do you think he practically exercised that right?"

The Bishop replied—

> "I am sure that after his abdication or expulsion from these islands he did recommend, while in France, individuals to the Pope, which individuals were appointed to bishoprics in Ireland; and not only he but his son after him."

Now, indeed, English politicians are styled narrow-minded and intolerant, because they are of opinion that if there is to be an Established Church in connection with the State it ought to be in Ireland that branch of the Christian Church which is attached to the State, and not with a Church the heads of which refused to acknowledge the title of the Crown of England. Bishop Doyle afterwards said he was sure that the Pope would not interfere with the appointment of bishops, and that the person who was elected by the clergy would always be chosen. Now, that has not happened since, as the national system of choosing a bishop has been set aside. The hon. Gentleman asked—

> "Why are not the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church provided for?"

Irrespectively of their refusal to accept anything, there was another difficulty which Earl Grey omitted to notice in the course of his speech in another House. The noble Lord aimed at making provision for the Roman Catholic clergy, but then came the question—"What is to be done with the regulars?" A Roman Catholic Bishop was asked—

> "If we provide for the parochial clergy the regulars may come into some parishes and become more popular than the parish priests; so that you would have the same evil over again."

He answered, "That such might be the case, and said that there was no limit to the power of the Pope to send any number of regulars he thought fit into the country." In fact, the Pope could send a whole army of regulars if he pleased, and consequently he might create a difficulty which never could exist in the Established Church. That was another reason why the State should not connect itself in Ireland with the Church of Rome. With regard to the Catholic Emancipation Act, I may remark that it contains a clause which distinctly enacts that the Episcopal Church of England and Ireland shall be the Established Church hereafter in Ireland as the Presbyterian Church of Scotland shall be the Established Church in Scotland. Therefore, if we look to the arguments, or the testimony, or the Act of Emancipation itself, we may trace the principle that the Roman Catholics were to be estopped from disputing hereafter the title of the Protestant Church. I admit that afterwards—in the year 1835—two remarkable speeches were made against it by Earl Russell. Sir James Graham abandoned his party and the Ministry—which is the course which a Minister ought to pursue when he differs from the policy of his colleagues—and he declared that it was with pain and grief that he separated himself, perhaps for ever, from his friends and political associates, rather than yield to the Motion then made to disturb the settlement of property in Ireland by meddling with the property of the Church. That speech was a very able one, and I would ask hon. Gentlemen to read the constitutional arguments of Sir James Graham in opposition to Lord John Russell's attack upon the Irish Church. Then there was another Gentleman at that time in Parliament—a Gentleman as eloquent as Lord John Russell, perhaps more eloquent, equally learned—perhaps more learned—and equally enthusiastic on behalf of the Church. That was Mr. Gladstone. The speech which he delivered in 1835 was a masterpiece of logic. It was full of research, of argument, of feeling, and of truth. Now, what was the gist and effect of that speech? I rejoice that Mr. Gladstone took the course he did, and opposed Lord John Russell's project, which at that time the right hon. Gentleman deemed a visionary one. He proceeded from the first principle, there ought to be a Church in Ireland connected with the State, and that after the Union there was but one Church in the country—namely, the United Church of England and Ireland. Indeed, he pushes it to the extent of saying that the effect of meddling with the property of the Church would be fatal to all property. A more complete and triumphant argument against the Motion of Lord John Russell it would be impossible to find. I rely upon the ability of the right hon. Gentleman, and I am certain that he spoke every word of that speech in the firm belief that he was uttering opinions in accordance with constitutional principles. We find that the attempt to appropriate the property of the Church in Ireland failed, and broke up Ministry after Ministry, who were defeated in their intentions and designs. The right hon. Gentleman who succeeded on that occasion has done more for the Church than speak that speech. When he quitted the University of Oxford, enriched by knowledge drawn from the pure sources of true religion, the right hon. Gentleman consecrated his talents to the composition of a work upon the relations which subsisted between Church and State, and in that work he argued this very question with extraordinary ability, and I cannot help thinking with a little touch of enthusiasm, so far is his tone above that of frigid cynicism practised in debating this great question in another place. The Irish branch of the Church, according to his view, seems to be the weak part of the system; but upon us, he exclaims, "rests the glory of defending the principle of truth;" and we now defend the Church in Ireland as we do the settlement in Scotland, because each of them rested upon legal compact and upon fundamental statutes, establishing an incorporate union upon terms with each country. Finally, he ascends to the question, What is the truth? and he says that the State has always connected itself with the religion of the truth, with the Episcopal Church, which was unchanged at the Reformation, which was the same corporate body, which was the same institution, having its property as before, which went with the State. I am rather surprised to hear in an assembly of Protestant Gentlemen that, because the bishops in Ireland refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope and rejected the Council of Trent, and with their Sovereign went with England and with truth, therefore the property given them for the maintenance of truth is to be spoliated now. I now come to the manner in which hon. Gentlemen have dealt with the Act of Union.

I will ask hon. Gentlemen to consider what was said elsewhere, and what has been said to-night, as showing the way in which the fact of the Union has been used in argument. I believe that Earl Grey said that the Parliament in Ireland was corrupt—he meant one that ought to be reformed; and therefore he argued that the Act of Union was of no consequence. Let us investigate that statement—if we may presume to investigate an argument used in another place. England wanted to obtain from the Parliament of Ireland the surrender of its separate existence, and England knew, as Mr. Huskisson put it, that that object could never be accomplished without the condition that the Protestant religion should be maintained. England made the bargain, entered into that arrangement in the most express and formal manner; and the argument of the noble Earl is that England is not bound, because the parties with whom she entered into the bargain were very corrupt. I think the immorality of that argument may be soon ascertained. What would be thought of a merchant who made a contract with another, and then said, "I will not perform it because you are an immoral man." I tell the noble Earl he has not read the history of that Parliament correctly. If he had read it from 1782 to the date of the Union, or until the French Revolution broke out and swept all before it, he would have found, as Grattan asserted in his brilliant speech, that during those eighteen years a greater number of remedial measures were carried than had been carried for centuries before. When I hear hon. Gentlemen say that a party, signalized as a faction in Ireland, were unkind to the Irish, towards their fellow-countrymen, might I take the liberty of asking, Would you have had any liberties at all but for them? Who extorted from that grinding, manufacturing, mercantile party in this country—who wrung from the reluctant, rich, money-loving mercantile classes of England at that time—the rights in regard to trade, manufactures, and commerce, we now possess? Whoever has read the famous speech of Burke to the electors of Bristol knows that it was not his vote on America that lost him his seat for Bristol so much as his vote for Ireland. England was obliged to yield to the demands of 80,000 men who assembled with arms in their hands at Dungannon, and passed a Resolution which obtained for their countrymen all the rights they now possess. Therefore, when you attack and censure the Protestants, please remember that those Irish penal laws relating to trade and to manufactures that even Strafford could not get rid of were repealed in an effective manner by silent eloquence, and were disposed of at a lucky moment when it was impossible for the selfish classes in this country to resist. I know that I am addressing myself to gentlemen of learning, who can understand a legal argument, and I would ask this House to consider the argument of Lord Ellenborough, who says that by the 5th Article of Union it is declared that the continuance and preservation of the United Church as established in Ireland shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union; that "fundamental" has reference to the subject-matter, and to such an integral part of the compact of Union formed between the two kingdoms as is absolutely necessary to support and sustain the whole fabric and superstructure of the Union, and the removal of which would overthrow the political Union, and that the words "Established Church," therefore, import that there shall be only one Established Church. Against the argument of the Mover of the Resolution I set the judicial opinion of the Lord Chief Justice of England. The argument was never better put than by Lord Palmerston on Mr. Miall's Motion. He showed that the Act of Union provides that you can only do in regard to the property of the Church of Ireland what you can do with the property of the Church in England. In regard to Church property, how does the matter stand now? It is true so many bishoprics were abolished; but why? In order to relieve the Roman Catholics of the obligation of paying anything to the Church,

Church cess and ministers money were also abolished, and tithes were commuted, at a sacrifice, into a rent-charge. Of the £300,000 of that charge £40,000 is paid by the property of Roman Catholics, and of that £40,000 the greater portion is paid in virtue of property bought in the Incumbered Estates Court, subject to that charge. I believe the money actually paid in lieu of tithes to the Church is infinitesimally small. The lands of the Church are not in the same condition they were formerly. Under the Temporalities Act four-fifths of them have been sold, and you could not touch them without a civil war. What has become of the purchase money? It is in the Bank. You may argue that you may rob the Bank, but you must shape your Resolution accordingly. The interest of the money is applied to pay what Roman Catholics were formerly called upon to pay. The lands are disposed of with the exception of about a fifth, the perpetuity in which may be secured by the tenants. I can tell you why the Fenians do not propose to take the property of the Church. It is because the Church has dealt fairly and equitably with her tenants. There remain to the Church the houses the parsons live in with their glebes. Then, in the interval, what has been done for the Catholics? We hear speeches addressed to this House as if nothing had been done for them. Why, first of all the Irish Parliament never granted more to Maynooth than £8,000 — this Parliament has granted £30,000. When Sir Robert Peel, as Prime Minister, introduced the Bill increasing the grant, Mr. Sheil made a speech commending the policy, and stating that what the Roman Catholics wished in addition was the purchase of glebes for their clergy; but he never said a word indicating an intention to appropriate the property of our Church; he said the priests would not take stipends, but they would be contented if they got what were called glebes. Lord Leveson Gower said that the sum of £250,000 a year would be required to endow the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland, and he carried his Motion for that purpose in the House of Commons. You have granted £300,000 a year for education; of that, the Catholics get £240,000; we get nothing. I do not know that we are likely to get anything, and that is a real grievance. We are too modest and do not get up a confusion in the country. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholics get £30,000 a year for Maynooth, besides the chaplaincies in the prisons, lunatic asylums, and workhouses and in the army, to say nothing of other advantages; and the response to all this is that terrific conspiracy described by the Mover of the Resolution as assisted by a vast party in America, and contemplating a descent upon Canada or Ireland, as may be most convenient; and secondly, a Motion for the disendowment of the Irish Church. Well now, with regard to the property of that Church, have Roman Catholic gentlemen ever reflected that they are now about to be made use of by the political children of the old Puritans? Once before they were made use of in that way. When the Puritans wanted to get up a case against Strafford and to behead him, they appealed to certain persons in the Irish Parliament to assist them. Eminent Irish lawyers at that time, Mr. Plunkett and Mr. Darcy, aided the Puritans, and they cut off the head of Strafford. Well, what happened to the same Roman Catholics shortly after in Ireland? You were favoured with a visit by Oliver Cromwell—and a very unpleasant visit it was. His policy was a distinct policy. He openly announced that he would extirpate the religion and exterminate the race of the Irish people; he destroyed or banished the Roman Catholic nobility, he kicked the gentry out of the House of Commons, he exterminated a great part of the population, and when any of the survivors were referred to he said mildly, "Let them go to Hell or Connaught!" Well, that was the policy of your old friends, the Puritans. Were I a Roman Catholic and saw the portentous phantom of an ancient Puritan arise, I would invoke the shade of a pious Cavalier to exorcise the monster. Subsequently, the fortunes of the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry of Ireland were in the hands of the Duke of Ormond. What was the policy pursued by him? It was a policy of restoration to their fortunes, restoration to their estates, restoration to the Houses of Parliament, of the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry, in the hope and in the belief that they would amalgamate and unite with their countrymen so as to make but one nation. Are you aware that when you are asked to disturb the Established Church in the possession of her property you are also asked to overthrow the Act of Settlement—the very statute which O'Connell said if you were to subvert you would upset at the same time the foundations of the whole property of the country? Such is the fact, for when that Act was passed the property of the Roman Catholics was secured to them ["No, no!"] I say, yes, for the Catholic nobles, and among them such fine old names as Gormanstown, Fingal, and Trimleston, are in the words of the Act of Parliament directed to be restored to their estates without further inquiry. [An hon. MEMBER: To only a very small portion of them.] The hon. Gentleman says it was only a very small portion—perhaps it was as much as they had possessed; but whether small or large, all that existed was restored; and observe, in the very same statute it is enacted that the property of the Church which was torn from it in evil times should be restored to it; and the same great statute also enacts that glebes shall be provided for the clergy, and that the Protestant Church shall be endowed not only with glebes, but secured in all her rights. How can that Act of Parliament be upset? Will you upset that which relates to the Church but not that which concerns private property? Now, on that point the argument of Sir James Graham is quite unanswerable, and it was this—that he was unable to see a distinction between the one kind of property and the other. There is no use in hon. Members saying that they see it; let them prove it if they do. Now, I look upon the conduct of the Clanricarde of that day—a true Catholic—as patriotic in the highest degree. He summoned the Roman Catholic nobility to his house, induced them to take an oath of modified supremacy, and so they were reconciled to the Crown. But what was the conduct of the foreign Church? The Church, through the Legate in Brussels, excommunicated those Roman Catholic laymen for taking the oath, and excommunicated its own priests, too (for several of them had taken it), and from that time, unhappily, an Ultramontane party which looks to a foreign Power exists in the country, while, on the other hand, many of those named as Catholics in the Act of Settlement have since conformed to the Church of England. For these reasons I rely not only on the Act of Emancipation, but on the Act of Union, and not only on the Act of Union, but on the Act of Settlement; and finally, I rely upon that which goes to the root of the whole matter, the Settlement and plantation of Ulster. Now, it has been said to-night by hon. Gentlemen—the hon. Member for Tralee, among others, has said it—that the bulk of the landed property of the Church of England in Ireland belonged to the Roman Catholic Church in former times. I assure him and the Roman Catholic Gentlemen present that they never in their lives committed a greater mistake than in making that assertion. It is no such thing. When O'Neil lived—and you know what a character he was—a memorial was drawn up by the Maguires of Fermanagh to Queen Elizabeth, who was very sparing of her money, asking her to do something to put down O'Neil (which would be attended with expense), for they said that he had swooped down upon the shores of Lough Neagh, and had put to death about 300 women and children in one day. In Froude's excellent history I find this graphic account of O'Neil—

> "My Lord Sydney wrote to Leicester, 'No Attila nor Totila, nor Vandal or Goth that ever lived was more to be doubted for overrunning any part of Christendom than this man for overrunning and spoiling of Ireland. If it be an angel of Heaven that will say that ever O'Neil will be a good subject till he be thoroughly chastised, believe him not, but think him a spirit of error. Her Majesty must make up her mind to the expense, and chastise this cannibal.'"

Now, here we have a specimen of the fine old Irish chief. O'Neil was a long-headed man, and he wrote an intercepted despatch (it is given by Mr. Froude in his history) to Charles IX., inviting him to land 5,000 men, and promising if he would he would undertake to cut the throats of every man, woman, and child of English descent in Ireland. I hope in referring to O'Neil I shall not offend my hon. Friend who represents the county of Antrim, and bears the name which he unites with the no less distinguished name of Chichester. Well, when O'Neil was overthrown, the policy which has been so often called in question was initiated in Ireland. But I ask you to raise your minds to the contemplation of that policy, and to ask yourselves was there ever a nobler or grander pursued by men who had the highest capacity of statesmen—a policy the fruits of which we behold to-day. They planted England in Ulster—it was vacant—they planted the whole of the institutions of England there; they said, "If we can succeed in placing a sufficient number of men of our race and habits and establish them so that they can maintain themselves, Ireland will be no longer a place from which it may be so easy to attack England"—Ireland being what that wise King James I. defined as—"the back-door from which the enemies of England might enter in and stab her to the heart." For that reason they planted that settlement there; and what did they do with respect to the lands and glebes of the ancient Irish Church? I hope I shall never hear again that all the most valuable of them belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. I hold in my hands extracts from State papers and patents which were issued by the Crown, and they contain the reasons upon which the Plantation was made. In one of them, dated the 14th of October, 1608, are the following words:—

> "But if this province of Ulster could be once settled as it ought to be, which would be a Royal act, and a great glory to His Majesty's times, then were all occasions for great revolts quite taken away: everywhere from thence the land would be peopled and improved, the King's revenues in time strained up and increased, and those of his Majesty's other dominions more converted and spent upon themselves."

Now, when those men set about granting a charter it was not in the cold, dull, legal phraseology of the present day they conveyed their meaning—they had no idea of a Christian State without a Christian Church; and I find that the glebes which you are now called upon to take away were granted by the Commissioners for the Plantation of Ulster for the benefit of the Established Church—for no one pretends that they had charge of the Roman Catholic Church. The instructions to the Commissioners in 1609 were as follows:—

> "The Commissioners are to limit and bound out the precincts of their several parishes according to their discretion, notwithstanding the limitation of the precinct; wherein they may observe the ancient limits of the old parishes so as the same breed not a greater inconvenience to the plantation; and to assign to the incumbent of each parish a glebe, after the rate of three score acres for every 1,000 acres within the parishes in the most convenient places or nearest to the churches; and for the more certainty to give such glebe a certain name, whereby it may be known, and to take order that there be a proviso in the letters patent for passing the glebes, to restrain the alienations thereof, saving during incumbencies."

And I find in one charter various Saxon names to whom these grants were made, such as Symonds, Watson, Richardson, Synge, &c. In that charter I find the following words:—

> "All which lands were lately assigned by the Commissioners for the Plantation of Ulster for the augmentation of glebes and the maintenance of persons having cure of souls; to hold for ever in free, pure, and perpetual alms for all services; with a covenant for the building of glebe-houses."

And then it provides that if the lands were not planted and the glebe-houses built the Commissioners were to resume possession until the covenants were complied with. Well, these covenants were complied with. The lands were built upon and planted; and now, when they have been enjoyed for nearly 300 years, where is the law which would justify you in taking these lands into your possession? By what right do the Irish Society and the corporation of the City of London hold these lands but by patents made by the same authority? And am I to be told that absentee corporators have a better title to their property than a learned and pious clergy, who spend every shilling of their income in the country? There were then no Protestants in the country. Now there are many—a sufficient number of loyal men to preserve the Throne and enrich the land, and make it a country in which those engaged in trade and business were never more prosperous. Is that a failure? If those who effected this great work are permitted to look down upon the results of their glorious labours they may well be proud of a work which has reclaimed the wilderness and converted it into a fertile and blooming garden. It did not occur to Cecil and Walsingham and Bacon that you could have a State without a Church. They established an Episcopal Church. If these men planted in Ulster had been as reckless and improvident as those who had extended the reign of poverty throughout other parts of the country, they would perhaps have obtained greater respect from a certain party; but because these settlers and their descendants have been provident, thrifty, and industrious, and have kept up the standard of civilization in the country, therefore you say that they have not fulfilled their mission. I say that the conduct and policy of those who established this Plantation were right if judged by the results. I do not believe that the population of Ireland at the present moment is more than 5,000,000. Of these, 1,500,000 are Protestants. Every one of the Wesleyan Methodists, for example—and they number 50,000—is a supporter of the Church. Are their opinions to be taken for nothing? I think I am entitled to represent the feelings of that body, inasmuch as they told me they supported me as Member for Enniskillen, because I was a supporter of the Church. Upwards of 100,000 Protestants have gone from Ireland to Canada; and fortunate it is for the Government of this country at the present time that they have done so.

They have adapted themselves to the soil, and are now to be ranked amongst those who are prepared to resist any invasion of that colony. I am satisfied there is a very large party in Ireland who, if any necessity arose, would act as well as the Protestants from Ulster would behave in Canada. I do not believe the necessity will arise, for Mr. Stephens has finally departed, and it is not likely he will return. I should like to know what you complain of in regard to the Church. It is said, "You have not converted all the Roman Catholics." I deny that that was the exclusive business of the Church in Ireland. One great part of its mission was the instruction of those who belonged to it in the maxims of religion, loyalty, and truth. Has it failed in that respect, or are they not, on the contrary, to be reckoned among the most loyal and devoted subjects of the Crown? It is true that the Church after it was endowed was attacked and struck down; you forget that Ulster was desolated again and again, and that in the time of James II. there were not 3,000 people in what is now the most populous diocese after the conflict with the tyrant was over. It was not until peace was restored under William III. that it was possible for the Protestants again to pervade the whole Province with their industry. That they have done; and there never was a time when they were more contented, prosperous, and happy than they are at the present moment. You have not one atom of a case for adopting the Resolution of the hon. Member for Kilkenny, and if I wanted an additional argument I should find it in what I must call the evasive speech of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I tell him that, as a Protestant, I would infinitely rather he had adopted the policy of the hon. Member for Tralee, and had declared that not one shred of the property of the Church should be preserved, than to take a course calculated to keep this question in perpetual agitation, and to reserve the Irish Church to be operated upon at a more convenient season, when the agitation may be more successful, and when that good work, to which he wishes God speed, may be accomplished. What is that good work? The spoliation of the Church, a continuance of agitation, the taking of property that does not belong to you. The policy of the Minister is this—He says to the supporters of this Resolution, I cannot accomplish your object for you now, but I hold out a hope to you which you may be certain will be realized at a future day. His speech, however, reminds me of a remark made by a witty Irishman. It was said to him of a speech made by an eloquent declaimer, "That was a beautiful speech." He replied, "Oh, it is but a mouthful of moonshine after all." I do not speak in any spirit of bigotry, but I trust the House will not forget that this is a Protestant State. I am not ashamed to say that it is; and I am fortified by the argument of Mr. Huskisson, by the Coronation Oath, by the Act of Settlement, by the Revolution, and by the presence of the Bishops in the House of Lords. By all that we see and know of the history of the country this is—and I glory in the thought—a Protestant State. What does that mean? That while we respect the antiquity and the authority of the Church, we also assert the right of private judgment and vindicate the independence of the human mind. I trust that a Church which retains the principle of a Christian Church, which teaches the Scriptures and the unadulterated truths of the Church of England, will never be overthrown by a British House of Commons. It cannot be destroyed except by the vote of a recreant Senate and an apostate nation. I do not think the vote will ever be given, and I am sure that there will never be wanting warm, sincere, and enthusiastic advocates for the preservation of the institution and of the truths that have made England free, and kept her happy.

Sir HENRY HOARE would remind hon. Gentlemen who opposed this Resolution that all agitation founded on the principles of justice must eventually succeed, and that the minority of to-day became the majority of to-morrow; and that it was far wiser and more statesmanlike to concede voluntarily that which was due to justice than to yield it at last from fear of consequences. It had been argued that the revenues of the Irish Church were inalienable. But the right of the Legislature to interfere with the disposition of ecclesiastical property had been affirmed over and over again, and that by large majorities. The Irish Church Temporalities Act of 1833 took away about £60,000 from the revenues of that Church, and by the Tithe Commutation Act of 1838 another portion of them was transferred to the pockets of the landlords. So much, then, for the argument that the revenues of the Irish Established Church were inalienable. Another argument was that the tithe rent-charge was paid by the Protestant landowners of Ireland; but the landowners let their land to the occupiers at a much higher rent in consequence of that impost ["No, no!"] and a large majority of the occupiers of farms in Ireland who were Roman Catholics were thereby burdened. Still less could the Irish Church be defended on arithmetical grounds, such as the preponderance of Protestants over Catholics. He had recently read a most extraordinary speech made by the Bishop of Ossory at a meeting at Kilkenny, in which that right rev. Prelate had defended the position of the Irish Established Church upon grounds which every friend of religious liberty must repudiate; arguing that the State was bound by its duty to God and the people committed to its charge to provide alike in Ireland and in England for all who chose to avail themselves of them the means of public worship according to a pure ritual and to sound Scriptural doctrines, and his Lordship also said that it was plainly the duty of the State alike in England and Ireland to establish a Church which held and which taught the truth alone. One could not read the speech of the right rev. Prelate without asking whether we were living in the year 1866 or some two or three centuries ago. The spirit of bigotry pervading that speech was much the same as the spirit which dictated the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz. Until the great injustice done to their Irish Roman Catholic fellow-subjects was redressed peace in Ireland was impossible, and the contentment of her people a vain hope. Whether the desires of the Irish people on some other matters were or were not visionary and chimerical was entirely beside the present question. The Established Church in Ireland, unlike that of this country, had not grown up as one of its national institutions—it was imposed upon the nation by force, and by force alone was it maintained. It had been urged that the Protestant Church in Ireland was a barrier against the designs of the revolutionary party in Ireland; but how could that be so when it ordered its subjects to worship in one fashion, and to maintain a Church which was alien to their convictions, repugnant to their consciences, and offensive to their prejudices? He trusted that the Motion before the House would be pressed to a division; and in that case, believing it to be founded upon justice, he would give it his hearty support.

Mr. ESMONDE moved the adjournment of the debate.

Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday.*

FINSBURY ESTATE BILL—LEAVE.

FIRST READING.

Mr. AYRTON, in moving for leave to bring in a Bill to appropriate a portion of the income from the Finsbury Estate of the suppressed Stall of Finsbury for the relief of the spiritual destitution in the metropolis, said, that many years ago the Ecclesiastical Commission was set up to watch over the application of the surplus funds of the Church and to provide for the religious necessities of the people. Since then great progress had no doubt been made in carrying out the objects for which the Commission was established; and, while a great amount of property had been vested in the Commission, some consideration had been extended to the claims of the places in which that property was situated. But the case of the metropolis presented peculiar features, which had not hitherto been taken into view in dealing with that matter. In respect to the country at large, local claims were sufficiently recognized when the interests of the particular parish in which ecclesiastical property was situated were provided for by the Commissioners; whereas, as regarded the metropolis ecclesiastical property was situated where there might be the greatest affluence, while on the other hand great spiritual destitution existed in other parts of the town where there happened to be no ecclesiastical property. The consequence was that the most destitute districts of London derived very little benefit from the great amount of ecclesiastical endowments existing in the metropolis, and which were from time to time transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commission. A most remarkable example of that was presented by the endowments of the suppressed stall of Finsbury. Many years ago the property of the stall was leased to the corporation of London. The estate then consisted of a tract of land of comparatively small value; but now houses of a high class had been built upon it, and it produced a revenue of about £50,000 per annum. At present the corporation of London received five-sixths of that revenue, and the other sixth was paid over to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. But the next year the lease would expire, and the £50,000 would pass to the Commissioners. If that were to take place without the intervention of the House, the revenue, instead of being made subvervient to the recognized necessities of the metropolis, would be appropriated to Church endowments in all parts of the country. Before parting with revenue which had been derived exclusively from the increased population of the metropolis, the spiritual necessities of the metropolis ought to be properly provided for. He desired by the Bill he sought to introduce to secure the application of one-half of the particular revenues to which he referred to metropolitan purposes. He desired to guard against all abuses, and he therefore proposed that the fund to be formed should be appropriated to the payment of "missionary curates," who would devote themselves to spiritual ministrations among the poorer classes of the community. Grants would be made upon suggestions or schemes submitted from time to time by the Bishop of the diocese, provided the concurrence of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners was also given to whatever proposals were made. The remuneration required for curates of the metropolis would be higher than in the country, and he fixed it at £200 per year. He further proposed that the Bishop should have power to remove the curates, and that they should only receive their salaries on producing annually a certificate from the Bishop as a guarantee that they were faithfully discharging their appointed duties. He trusted that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners would not oppose the Bill through any official ideas which were sometimes prevalent among them; but that they would consider the present as a special case requiring peculiar treatment. He desired to bring the influence of the Church to bear upon the great masses of the metropolitan population who were at present neglected, and he saw no better means of effecting this object than by the appointment of curates such as he had suggested.

MR. WALPOLE said, that the object of the Bill was a very good one, being to provide for the spiritual wants of portions of the metropolis otherwise unprovided for. It would, however, be necessary for the Government to look into the principle, not only of the Bill, but of the Ecclesiastical Commission Act, the object of which was to form a common fund for the general benefit of the whole country. If special claims on that common fund were to be made some inconvenience might result. There ought to be a full discussion of the measure, and he hoped that the hon. and learned Member would put it down for a day on which such discussion could be had. He might remind the hon. Gentleman that a clause had been introduced into the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Act giving the Commissioners power to provide additional curates in places where the population was dense; and it struck him as more advisable that the object should be effected by a general measure applicable to the whole country, rather than to a particular portion of the metropolis.

SIR GEORGE GREY said, the Government would not oppose the introduction of the Bill, the object of which was one of great importance. They would, however, reserve to themselves the consideration of its provision at a future stage. He might mention that a similar case had occurred with regard to the appropriation of two stalls at Windsor to the Military Knights of Windsor and the endowment of the parish church. But great care was requisite in legislating upon a subject of this nature.

In answer to a suggestion that the Bill, being a Bill concerning religion, ought to originate in a Committee of the Whole House,

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that the Bill only affected the temporalities of the Church, and that, therefore, it was not necessary for him to leave the Chair.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to appropriate a portion of the income of the Estate lately belonging to the Prebend of Finsbury, in the Cathedral of Saint Paul, London, for the relief of spiritual destitution in the Metropolis, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. AYRTON and Mr. LOCKE.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 97.]

BOUNDARIES OF BOROUGHS, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. OLIPHANT said, he wished to make some remarks in reference to the Notice he had placed upon the paper—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to issue a Royal Commission for the purpose of collecting such statistical information as may supply a basis for determining whether any and what alterations should be made in the present boundaries of Boroughs and in the existing distribution of Seats in the Commons' House of Parliament.

He had no intention at all when he gave notice of this Motion of doing anything which would embarrass the Government. He thought he had made that plain when he had on the first occasion announced his intention of withdrawing his Motion. His object had been from the first to countermine those who had been endeavouring to undermine the Government. He wished to make this clear, as his motives seem to have been misunderstood. There had been a certain ambiguity in the position of the Government with reference to the re-distribution of seats, and he felt sure that a large number of sincere Reformers would be perfectly satisfied to vote for the Bill introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer if they were convinced that the Government intended to bring forward a measure for the re-distribution of seats along with it. Since he had given notice of his Motion the attitude of the Government had changed, he was happy to say, very much for the better. They were now pledged to stand or fall by their Reform measure, and it was quite clear he could serve no possible object by persevering in a Motion which had in view the collecting of the statistical information, without which, of course, the Government would not have been in a position to introduce their promised Bill for the re-distribution of seats. To place himself in order, he would conclude by moving the adjournment of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn," —(*Mr. Oliphant,*)—Question put, and *negatived.*

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, the observations which had just fallen from his hon. Friend called but for a word or two from him in reply. He was very glad his hon. Friend had not made the Motion of which he had given notice, though how far the course which he had adopted in order to place himself in order was regular or not he would not undertake to say. As to one point, however, he wished to state that there had been no change in the position of the Government; although there might have been a change produced relatively in the mind of his hon. Friend. The Government never had any other intention than to stand or fall by the measure which they proposed, and the only point as to which they felt it to be their duty to make any reservation was the question of time.

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolutions [April 9] *reported.*

MR. BENTINCK asked for explanations as to the increase in the Vote for the Houses of Parliament, the proposed ornamental railing in Parliament Square, and the intended application of St. Stephen's Crypt.

MR. POWELL called attention to the incongruity between the statues and the niches in the Royal Gallery, and inquired what portion of English history it was intended to illustrate.

MR. COWPER explained that the ordinary expenditure on the Houses of Parliament was the same as hitherto, the £21,000 extra being applied to New Palace Yard and the Clock Tower which had been left unfinished. It would, he expected, require an additional Vote another year to complete the work. St. Stephen's Crypt, which had been devoted to various purposes at different periods, was to be restored to its original use as the chapel of the Palace. The new railing and other works in Parliament Square must now be undertaken on account of the railway which was about to cut through the inclosure. With regard to the discrepancies between some of the statues in Westminster Palace, and the niches made to receive them, the niches were designed by Sir Charles Barry, and were intended for Gothic statues of narrow dimensions, and the alteration in the character of the statues had compelled the alteration in the niches; but the work would be under the direction of Mr. Barry, and would be made to harmonize with the other decorations. Four of the statues were completed, and seven were nearly finished. Although it probably would have been better that the niches in question should have been altered some twenty years ago, the time had now arrived when it was absolutely essential that they should be altered. He was rather surprised to hear the hon. and learned Member for Whitehaven speak in the way he had done in disparagement of the noble frescoes in the Royal Gallery, which were the admiration of all persons versed in art. If the hon. Gentleman did not admire them, it was owing to his want of knowledge of what was required in a fresco. The hon. and learned Gentleman had also complained that one of the pictures was of rather a sanguinary character, but he should like to know how it was possible to represent a battle without introducing figures of wounded men. The subject was chosen twenty years ago by a Commission consisting of men of the highest eminence in the country for literary and artistic talent, and therefore the present Government had nothing to do with choosing the subject. The intention was that the pictures in the building should represent the history of the country in a selected series of courts, and the picture in question was one of the series. With regard to Mr. Herbert's picture, the reason it was being painted in oils, instead of in fresco, was because the room in which it was placed could not be spared while Mr. Herbert was engaged in painting it. It would, however, be painted so as to correspond with the fresco paintings. The additional sum in the Vote for furniture for this year was required in consequence of extra rooms in the House of Lords being wanted for Committee-rooms, and they had, therefore, to be furnished; £450 was also required for the new presses in the House of Lords, and a further sum of £250 for additional furniture for the refreshment-rooms in both Houses.

Mr. KINNAIRD hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not renew the railings in Palace Gardens, as they would compel every one to make a circuit in going from the House to the proposed new railway station.

Resolutions *agreed to.*

CROWN LANDS ACTS.—REPORT.

Resolutions [April 9] *reported.*

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I wish, in order to prevent any misunderstanding upon the subject, to explain an observation made last night in reference to Claremont House. Claremont will not by the effect of the proposed Resolutions be added to the list of the Royal Palaces, as that would entail a large expenditure and the necessity for an annual Vote to meet that expenditure; whereas no such Vote is contemplated. The effect of the clauses will simply be to place Claremont at the disposal of her Majesty, to make whatever use of it She may think fit, either during her lifetime or during such shorter period as She may think proper.

Resolutions *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 98.]

SUPERANNUATION (OFFICERS, METROPOLITAN VESTRIES, AND DISTRICT BOARDS) BILL—[Bill 52.]

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. HARVEY LEWIS moved the second reading of this Bill, the object of which was to allow vestries to make provision for officers who, in the discharge of official duties, have become unfit for Service.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Harvey Lewis.*)

Mr. CHILDERS thought the Bill ought to have been considered more with reference to the scale of superannuations in public offices than it appeared to have been, but he would not oppose the second reading.

Mr. THOMAS CHAMBERS explained that the measure had been framed upon the precedent set two years ago with reference to officers of the Poor Law Board.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Friday.*

MARRIAGES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Serjeant Armstrong, Bill to amend the Law relating to Marriages by Roman Catholic Clergymen in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Serjeant Armstrong and Mr. Bryan.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 99.]

House adjourned at half
after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, April 11, 1866.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—William Edward Dowdeswell, esquire, *for* Worcester County (Western Division).

Select Committee—On Controverted Elections, The Right hon. E. P. Bouverie and Edward Ellice, esquire, *discharged;* and John Tomlinson Hibbert, esquire, and the hon. Charles W. G. Howard (Cumberland), *added;* Trade in Animals *nominated.*

Supply—*considered in Committee*—Civil Service Estimates (£660,000, New Courts of Justice).

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Postmaster General [25]; Public Libraries Act Amendment* [44]; Valuation of Lands and Heritages (Scotland) [73], *negatived;* Railways Clauses* [60]; Railways (Guards and Passengers Communication)* [81].

Referred to Select Committee—Vaccination [33].

Committee—Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland)* [72]; Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases (*re-comm.*)* [96].

Report—Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland)* [92]; Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases (*re-comm.*)* [96].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being met, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, which prevented his attendance this day:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

POSTMASTER GENERAL BILL—[Bill 25.]

(*Mr. Darby Griffith, Mr. Hadfield.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Darby Griffith.*)

Mr. CHILDERS said, that the Bill would enable the Postmaster General to sit in that House. The state of things as to the representation of the Government in Parliament was this—Under the Statute of Anne, as amended by that of George II., and by the later Act known as Burke's Act, a limited number of office holders could be Members of the House of Commons. All the great Administrative Departments were or might be represented in the House, but the Revenue Departments were not in the same sense represented. The heads of those Departments such as the Boards of Customs and Inland Revenue, were permanent officials, and it would be of course impossible that any such officials not liable to go out with the Ministry of the day should be eligible to that House. It would be also impolitic to make the heads of these Departments political officers, as their duties ought not to be carried on under the pressure of political considerations. But the Post Office, although technically a Revenue Department, and provided for in the Revenue Estimates, was virtually one of the great Administrative Departments. Hence its head had been for a long time considered as a political officer, going out with the Government; but as he was excluded from that House by the construction of the statutes which he (Mr. Childers) had recited, he was usually a Peer, sitting in the other House. In one case, under Mr. Canning, the Postmaster General was a Commoner, but this was found inconvenient, as the Department was represented in neither House, and the case has not occurred since. He did not think it essential, or indeed expedient, that as a rule the Postmaster General should be in that House. The revenue business of the Department was controlled by the Secretary to the Treasury, and the Postmaster General in this respect acted under the orders of the Treasury, who were represented in that House, and were thus ready to answer any questions relating to the Post Office. But he saw no reason why a distinct and absolute disability should be retained precluding Her Majesty from, if she thought fit, appointing a Member of that House to a political office, usually held by a Cabinet Minister. He therefore should not object to the second reading of the Bill; but it would have to be amended in Committee, the recital in the preamble being incorrect. He presumed the words in the preamble meant to say that every Member of the Government liable to lose office on a change of Ministry might sit in the House of Commons. But this was not so. Not to mention more doubtful instances, all the Secretaries of State, and all the political Under Secretaries could not be at the same time in that House. The hon. Gentleman would remember the difficulty caused, only two years before, by the accidental infringement of this provision in the case of his noble Friend the Under Secretary for War. Subject, however, to this and other alterations in Committee, the Government assented to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he had no exception at all to take to what the hon. Member had stated. The interpretation which the hon. Gentleman had placed on the relations of the civil departments of the country with this House was, of course, a matter of argument which he (Mr. Griffith) did not think it necessary to go into at present, but he quite admitted that the preamble to the Bill would bear amendment. With regard to the disabilities of the Secretaries of State, it should be remembered that, although not more than four could sit in that House at once, there was no disability of any particular Secretary so long as the rule was complied with. There was no absolute statutory impediment to any Member of the Cabinet sitting in that House, except in the case of the Postmaster General. He did not wish to make it obligatory that that officer should have a seat in that House, but simply to remove any legal hindrance to his doing so.

He could conceive that a rising Member of the Cabinet with a seat in that House, but holding a sinecure office, might well undertake the duties of the Postmaster Generalship in the event of the chances of political life affording him the opportunity. He begged to acknowledge the perfect courtesy and grace with which the Secretary to the Treasury had received his proposition. The Bill would not take effect while the noble Lord who was at present Postmaster General remained in office, so that during his tenure of the office he would be safe from the operation of the Bill.

Mr. HUNT said, he was sorry that the measure before the House was not of a different nature. He could have wished some proceedings had been taken to abolish the office of Postmaster General altogether, because he believed it was as near a sinecure as possible. Some two or three years ago he had charge of a measure in that House, in consequence of which he had to communicate with the Post Office, and he found that the Secretary of the Post Office was the real manager of that Department. Mr. Peel was the organ of communication with the House, and he always referred, when reference was necessary, to the Secretary of the Post Office, and not to the Postmaster General. He did not know what the Postmaster General did except dispense patronage, but surely some other Member of the Government would relieve him of that burden. He thought that if the Post Office were made a part of the Treasury the Secretary of the Post Office might discharge the duties, and they might dispense with the Postmaster General. He believed the only object in keeping up the office was to pay a compliment to some person of high rank, and give him a salary for doing nothing. It was a waste of the public money. He hoped the Government would take the matter into consideration, and see if they could not do without the Postmaster General altogether.

Captain GRIDLEY said, he would like to know what effective duties the Postmaster General really performed, or indeed what he had to perform? It was of no advantage to have an officer with a seat in the House who could give no information to the House, and whose duties were altogether a sinecure.

Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE said, he desired to express the great satisfaction he felt in knowing that the Government were going to support the Bill. He was sorry to say there was a total want of responsibility in regard to some other offices in one great department of the Post Office; and the officials very often dealt with complaints which were sent to them in a most uncourteous manner. The Post Office officials had refused altogether to entertain the complaints made with regard to the very serious delays connected with the postal service of Fife; and within the last few days they had signed a contract with the Caledonian Railway Company for a term of five years, and they declined to have any communication with the only railway company which possessed a through communication through Fife. He believed all this arose from some personal petty squabble between a certain official in the Post Office and an official connected with the North British Railway Company; but it was a very hard thing that the public should have to suffer because of such squabbles and disagreements. Counties — not that of Fife — having all advantages on the Caledonian Railway at their command, had their letters delivered in a reasonable time. The inhabitants of Fife would be glad if the Caledonian Railway had lines of communication through Fife. But as it had not, it was hard that they should be visited with the caprice of Post Office officials, because only the North British Railway, with whom they had a quarrel, happened to have lines through Fife. They declined to have through communication with Fife on account of a paltry sum of £2,000. It was a great hardship to merchants and others that their letters from India, Australia, and America should be delivered in the way he had pointed out. It might be said that they might get their letters by certain trains. That was quite true, but it was not at the expense of the Post Office; but the manufacturers had to employ private messengers of their own. He trusted that a responsible officer connected with the Post Office might be appointed in that House, and that then we might be enabled to put an end to such a discreditable state of things as now exists.

Mr. HADFIELD said, he had always met with the greatest courtesy and kindness on the part of the Post Office officials, and he did not think the Postmaster General would allow such grievances to exist as those pointed out by the hon. Member. He did not know anything more creditable than the improvements which had of late years been effected in the management of the Post Office, and it appeared absolutely marvellous that between 800,000,000 and 1,000,000,000 of missives of all kinds should be annually dispatched through that Department to all parts of the world. It was not a matter of wonder, then, that complaints should occasionally arise in various quarters, and they deserved the attention of the postal authorities; indeed, in his opinion they would be obliged by any information which would enable them to rectify any error or defect in the system.

Mr. Alderman LUSK said, that he was ready to give the Post Office authorities credit for their good management; but it was sometimes found that it was very difficult to obtain information from that Department, and that difficulty seemed to arise from the absence of any active person at its head. He thought there should be some responsible head to whom complaints might be addressed. It was all very well to speak of the Postmaster General, but he was a myth; nobody knew where to find him.

Sir JERVOISE JERVOISE said, he understood the Under Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Childers) to state that it would be rather objectionable to have the representative of the Post Office in that House, inasmuch as the Post Office was a revenue department. He felt bound to express his dissent from that view of the matter. When the penny postal system was introduced it was stated that the Government ought to carry the letters for a penny each, because this could be accomplished by a private company; and it was then clearly understood that the Government were not to make any profit out of the enterprize. He held that the Post Office could not be taken as a legitimate revenue department.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he thought it was desirable that there should be no misunderstanding upon one point. His hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Childers) did not intend to convey to the House that, because the Post Office was a revenue department, therefore it was improper that the representative of it should sit in the House of Commons. He understood that the Bill which had been brought in by the hon. Gentleman opposite was not for the purpose of laying down, by implication or otherwise, any rule that the Postmaster General should sit in either that House or the House of Lords. He understood the argument of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Darby Griffith) to be, that the present limitation of the office was an unnecessary limitation, and that it prevented the operation of that discretion which in certain cases might be beneficially exercised. He would certainly be the last man to assert that, because the department was a revenue department, the representative of it should not sit in that House. On the contrary, if it were to be considered as a revenue department, that would rather indicate the propriety of its representative sitting in the House of Commons. It was always to be recollected that the Post Office, besides being a revenue department had another character. There were certain arrangements in it which were of a nature to which there was no analogy whatever in other revenue departments. In the first place, large transactions took place with regard to packet contracts. Then international questions arose in connection with the administration of the Post Office, and the conclusion of treaties with foreign countries. Indeed, there were functions to be discharged which went far beyond anything connected with what was generally understood as a revenue department. He had understood his hon. Friend (Sir Jervoise Jervoise) to say that the Post Office was not a revenue department, ad consequently the State ought not to derive any revenue from it. He was not sure that his hon. Friend held that doctrine; but on every occasion on which it was advanced he felt it was his duty to protest against it. The money the State obtained was for the performance of a service for the public at a cheaper rate and in a better manner than any individual could do it; and the surplus stood in the place of what would have to be raised by taxes. But that was not all; it was to be recollected that money raised by taxes was generally money which it would be desirable not to raise if it could be dispensed with. There were few taxes that were not attended with a great deal of evil and mischief. Consequently, if, always keeping up the efficiency of the service, the Government, while it was conferring an advantage on the public, could make a profit by the performance of what nobody else could do, it was a profit which was well made, and, referring to an ancient story, it was a profit which "smelt sweet in the nostrils" compared with the produce of the general taxes.

Bill read a second time and *committed* for *Friday*.

VALUATION OF LANDS AND HERITAGES (SCOTLAND) BILL—[Bill 73.]

(*Mr. Dunlop, Colonel Pennant, Sir James Fergusson, Mr. Baxter.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. DUNLOP moved the second reading of this Bill. He said, that in Scotland there were two modes of imposing the rates, some being levied on the gross and others on the net rental. A question had been raised as to whether all the rates should be calculated upon the net or the gross rental, and the Committee which was appointed to consider the subject decided that the net rental should be taken for the purpose of estimating all rates upon property. Then a difficulty arose as to the mode of making the deductions in order to arrive at the net rental, as different parishes adopted different systems. He therefore proposed by the present Bill that the duty of ascertaining the amount of the deductions to be made should be discharged by a public assessor, who should be guided by one rule in every parish. The various modes in which deductions were at present made by the different parochial Boards were not a little extraordinary. In the case of railways and canals the deductions varied in the several parishes from 5 to 35 per cent. It was altogether indefensible that such a system should be pursued, and that property of the same kind and value in various parishes should be assessed upon so widely different a principle. He thought everybody would admit the desirability of one system being employed in the levying of the rates, and that it was impossible to maintain the present plan of estimating the poor rates on the net and the county rates on the gross rental. Since the passing of the Valuation Act new rates had been calculated upon the gross rental, but in many case this involved great inconvenience, and in some absolute injustice. The only word he would say in favour of the net as against the gross rental was, that it was the plan adopted in England and Ireland, and that already two-thirds of the local rates in Scotland were levied in accordance with it. In regard to railway property, the cost of maintaining and keeping up the roadways amounted to one sum upon all the length of line. But the rents varied so considerably that in some cases they were only 18 per cent on the value; while in others they reached as high as 68 per cent. Thus, one railway would be yielding to the proprietors 82 per cent gross value, while another would be 32 per cent. There were great complaints of inequalities of this sort, but the only question involved in the present Bill was a question of principle. At present an appeal against the assessment was allowed in certain cases, and he proposed in this Bill to extend it to all cases, whether the Government surveyor had been appointed by the local authorities or not. He admitted that the change he proposed would involve some inconvenience to private companies, such as gas and water companies, who were confined to a maximum charge upon the persons they supplied; but details of that nature would be best dealt with in Committee. As to any objection which might be raised that the Bill would throw increased trouble and additional work upon the collectors, he would only say that two-thirds of the whole of the local rates were at present levied in the way he proposed, and that deduction must be made in order to levy the poor rates. He had brought forward the present measure with an earnest desire to make some improvement in the method of levying rates in Scotland, and he hoped it would receive the concurrence of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Dunlop.*)

The LORD ADVOCATE said, he regretted that he felt it his duty to oppose the further progress of the Bill. He gave notice that he would do so when the Bill was introduced; and, after full consideration of the subject, he was satisfied that, instead of improving the present state of the law, it would re-enact many grievances that had been got rid of, would be exceedingly unpopular, and would put obstacles in the way of progress. It had always struck him that the practical character of the English mind was less exemplified in the local taxation of the country than in any other public institution. It might have been expected that in a country so heavily taxed as England, where complaints of heavy taxation were so numerous, that a reasonable mode of making the collection and rendering the incidence of such taxation as light as possible by a sensible and economical arrangement would be adopted. It would, further, naturally be expected that a course similar to that a tradesman would adopt in his business would be pursued in the matter of taxation, and that there would be one assessment and one collection. Instead of this, on both sides of the Tweed the system of assessing and collecting local taxes appeared to him to be in a most rude, he might almost say, a barbarous condition. The example of England had been referred to, but, having looked into the Electoral Franchise Returns—where hon. Members would find a large amount of information respecting local taxation—he discovered much requiring amendment. In Scotland, however, previous to 1854, matters were even worse than in England. In the latter country now there was a county rate, and under the principle of union chargeability there had of late been an attempt to bring the local taxation of the country into a general system. In Scotland, prior to 1854, wherever there was a separate power of assessment and a separate body to assess, there a separate principle of assessment and a separate valuation prevailed, and a separate valuator was appointed, so that the expense of collection amounted to a formidable additional tax. The main object of the Valuation Act of 1854 was the accomplishment of reform in this matter, by mitigating the expense of the collection, and in some degree counterbalancing the weight and incidence of the heavy taxation. The Act of 1854 provided for taking up the gross valuation year by year, and the assessment was based upon it. The Committee that sat in that year upon this subject disposed of the question raised by his hon. Friend—he meant the question of how far it was possible or desirable, while the gross rental was the subject of valuation, to lay down a system or schedule of deductions to be made on different kinds of property, and the conclusion which the Committee came to was what he believed the House would now arrive at—namely, that it was neither possible nor desirable to frame such a system. The Valuation Act of 1854 left the principle of deduction where it found it, with this exception—that it made the gross rental the basis for all local assessments. That was one step gained, providing one certain foundation on which assessments should be taken. It was not necessary that each parish should have its own valuator, and a county valuator was appointed to have the general supervision of all the parishes in the county. The next step was equally important. An Act was passed rendering it optional for counties or boroughs to employ the Government assessor to make out the valuations. He knew that advantage to a great extent had been taken of this provision. Some of the largest counties and boroughs had employed the Government assesssor; and this course involved not the slightest expense to those counties and boroughs. He found in the evidence before the Committee that no complaint from any quarter was ever heard as to the way in which these officials discharged their duty. Following out the subsequent statutes he had indicated, the next thing was in imposing assessments to take the gross rental as the rule. This had been done as regards the prison and police rates; and he found also in the evidence before the Committee, as far as he could learn, that there had not been one complaint from any quarter whatever in regard to making the assessment upon the gross rental. He apprehended that the present Bill was brought forward because the railway interest was discontented as to the way in which the parishes made the deductions in reference to the poor rate. The poor rate still continued to be levied on what he could not help regarding as the vicious principle of each parish making deductions on the property assessed. It had been found that where no deductions were made there were no complaints; but wherever deductions had been made, there had been constant complaints. The complaints had been inquired into, and the House had now a Report upon them. But the Report, instead of being in accordance with the evidence, proposed even to undo all that had been done, and to draw an impassable line between Imperial and local taxation. The Imperial taxation was taken on the gross rental; and people who complained of the injustice of that seemed to forget that the income tax was assessed on that principle and no other. Until 1806 or 1809, the principle of making deductions from the gross rental was adopted; but it was found to work inconveniently, and from 1809 up to the present time, the income tax, whenever it had been levied, had been assessed upon the gross. A great deal had been said in the examination of the witnesses about justice; but it seemed to him that taxation was a subject on which abstract justice was impossible. When local taxes are laid on the value of property, the real object was not so much to ascertain the precise amount received by the proprietor as the ratepayer's ability to pay, and his interest in the locality subject to the tax. The principle of taking the value of the property which a man held in a particular parish or county had nothing whatever to recommend it, except its convenience. Take the instance of a millowner, who employed 150 people in his mill. That mill, perhaps, brought him in £5,000 a year; but he was assessed on the value of the buildings on a rental of £200 a year. His next door neighbour had, perhaps, a property worth £200 a year, and was assessed at that amount; and thus both men would have to pay a similar amount, although one might derive £5,000 a year from his property, and the other only £200. It would in the end, however, really become as symmetrical as any principle or system of assessment which could be devised. In Scotland, they had at one time another mode of assessment far nearer abstract justice, but which they had abolished. It acted on the same principle as an income tax; for the millowner who obtained £5,000 a year from his mill would have to pay upon that sum, because that was the income which he derived from his property; while the man next door who owned property which was only worth £200 a year, would only have to pay upon that amount. That system was a gread deal nearer abstract justice than was the other; but then the expense which it occasioned, and the vexation and delay created by the inquiries which had to be made, ultimately led to the abolition of the system. So much for the principle of the Bill. The Committee had two matters brought specially before them —first, as to the general principle of allowing deductions; and secondly, supposing deductions were to be allowed, on what footing they were to be made. He had a Report of the proceedings before the Committee before him. There was a great deal of evidence on the first of these heads, altogether of a most distinct and conclusive character, to show that no change was necessary. There were twenty-nine witnesses examined; of these, fourteen consisted mainly of witnesses representing special interests, such as railways, canals, and mills, and included two witnesses to English practice, and one to the law on the subject. The other fifteen were witnesses of skill and experience in the actual work of assessment, being the assessors or public officers employed in that department in the most populous burghs and counties in Scotland. He might say these last witnesses were unanimous against the principle of the present Bill. The clerk of supply of Lanarkshire, the assessors both for the city and county of Edinburgh, the collector of the parish of Govan, the assessor and the clerk of supply in Aberdeenshire, the public officers of Elgin, of Ayrshire, and Kirkcudbrightshire, and lastly, the assessor for the great community of Glasgow, Mr. Donaldson, who had more experience in this matter than probably any other official in Scotland, were clear and decided in condemning it; and yet the Committee, in the face of evidence which really presented no element of doubt or conflict, report in direct opposition to it. In these circumstances he felt it necessary to oppose the Bill, because he thought it was founded upon a mistake, and that it ought not to be carried out. If he were asked what it was he wished to have done, he should say he wished to see all assessments placed upon the gross rental; and he would even move further, and say that all the collections ought to be placed in the hands of one man. Some reference had been made with respect to deductions in England, and he might say, with regard to the borough of Liverpool, that he found it in the evidence of one gentleman who was examined that there were three separate systems or principles of deduction made there. There was a deduction of 20 per cent made in certain townships in Liverpool, including Everton and West Derby, upon the gross estimated rental of houses at and under £10 a year, while there was a deduction of 5 per cent made in other townships, including Toxteth Park, and in the parish of Liverpool a deduction of 1 per cent. So that in the borough of Liverpool they found from the evidence that the deductions might vary, not according to the class or description of property, but according to the parish or township in which it was situated, from 1 up to 20 per cent. These were the views upon which he opposed the Bill; and if he were to go a step further, he should say that if they carried it, they would be making an absolute injustice by Act of Parliament. There were so many considerations which varied the real nature of property, such as position, age, use for which it was adapted, &c., that they could not legislate generally upon it. For the reasons he had given, he was sorry to say he could not assent to the second reading of his hon. and learned Friend's Bill.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, that the great principle of the Bill was to assimilate the law of Scotland to that of England in reference to the subject in question. He did not consider the measure at all so unreasonable as the Lord Advocate seemed to suppose. The people of Scotland were much indebted to his right hon. Friend opposite for that most valuable measure, which had been enacted some few years ago, for the establishment of the valuation roll, by which the annual value of all property in the country was recorded in the clearest manner. That measure would ever be honourably associated with his name. But so far from this Bill tending to interfere with the operation of the measure of 1854; he (Sir James Fergusson) ventured to say that it would remedy the few little defects of that Act. The grievance complained of by various interests was that the gross assessment was made, not upon the clear annual value of the property, but upon the value determined by certain deductions. His right hon. Friend had characterized the whole system of local taxation, whether in Scotland or in England, as something approaching to barbarism; but it should be remembered that, though there might be some things incidental to local taxation which might be anomalous, still there was much that was anomalous that was found convenient in working; and it was not sufficient to condemn a system to say that it was not formed upon the utmost conditions of symmetry and theory. Was it better to sweep away the whole of an existing system, or to alter it where alteration was necessary? He thought it was better to make the necessary alterations. He could not believe that the House would legislate in an exceptional manner with regard to Scotland in this matter. In 1865 the subject was examined by a Select Committee, and if the evidence then taken was insufficient, it was the duty of the Government, who were represented on that Committee, to have perfected it, and not now to complain, when the Report was being considered, that the evidence was partial. Various skilled witnesses who were called before that Committee stated that they could see no difficulty in making these deductions, except in the labour which it would involve, and that difficulty would decrease each year as the system came into operation. He was surprised to hear his right hon. Friend state that the income tax was levied on the gross valuation, and quote it as a precedent for local assessments on the same principle, because it was well known that the income tax was levied on the net profits of railways, and not their gross earnings. A great injustice existed with regard to those descriptions of property. As to its being said that there was no dissatisfaction felt with the existing system, he admitted that the inconvenience only applied to particular classes of property; but the Bill would assimilate the assessment to the system which prevailed in England; and if it was thought right to continue the assessment on the gross valuation in Scotland, he wished to point out that there was nothing in the Bill or before the House which would prevent its being altered to that system. Nothing would be easier than so to alter that Bill in Committee as to empower the local authorities in each county to determine the rate of deductions which should be made from each description of property, when rated at its gross value for the purposes of assessment. It would only be necessary to leave out the second and third clauses in this Bill, and to make an alteration in the fifth and sixth, and the object would be effected—keeping the gross valuation as the basis on which the calculation should be made. The Committee in their Report had laid out certain percentages as grounds of deduction which appeared to him to be fair and equitable. He thought, therefore, that the Bill was well entitled to be read a second time; and it could only be refused on grounds which were not very popular in this House—the ground of perpetuating distinct and separate systems in different portions of the Empire.

Mr. WALDEGRAVE-LESLIE said, he was a Member of the Committee which sat last year. He could not but regret that the subject had again been pressed upon the attention of Parliament after what had taken place last Session. It appeared to him that the only mode of arriving at a valuation of property which should be at all satisfactory, was one that would rest upon the gross value. The Land Valuation Bill, which had been introduced by the Lord Advocate in 1854, had been attended with great advantages. He (Mr. Leslie) had watched with the greatest interest the working of that Act, both in his own county and in others, and he ventured to say that nowhere was its operation complained of. He would oppose the present Bill because he believed that it rested on an injudicious basis, and that it would work mischief.

Mr. ADAM said, that with the object of supplying an accidental omission on the part of the Lord Advocate, he moved, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read a second time on this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Adam.*)

Mr. BAXTER said, that he was convinced, by the admirable statement of the Lord Advocate in 1864, of the propriety of making some such change in the law as that now proposed, and he thought it rather hard that the learned Lord should now, in a speech far inferior to that in point of argument, ask the House to reconsider that statement. The reply of the hon. Baronet (Sir James Fergusson) to the learned Lord's present speech was most satisfactory and conclusive.

Sir JOHN OGILVY said, he was in favour of the principle of the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM said, the hon. Member for Greenock alluded to only one source of opposition to his Bill—that of private companies—the fact was that the opposition arose from various sources, and, as far as he could understand, its advocacy came from one source only—that of the railway companies. If it was necessary, from the peculiar nature of railway property, that it should be subject to exemption from the general rule, by all means let their case be considered, and let a separate Bill be brought in for their interests; but why should the whole valuation system of Scotland be disturbed to suit their interests, when no other parties wished for a change? Far from there being one source of opposition only, he had himself been requested to oppose it on the part of the justices of the peace of the largest and most important county in Scotland, on the part of the corporation of Glasgow, the greatest and most important corporation of Scotland, and on the part of the Convention of Royal Burghs.

Mr. DUNLOP said, that he could not admit that the House was asked to enter upon a new course. On the contrary, they were following up the provisions of the Act, which took the valuation out of the hands of local bodies, and placed it in the hands of a general assessor appointed by Government. As the object desired was to ascertain the real value of property, he was not aware that that object could be attained in a better way than by allowing the deductions enumerated in the Bill.

Mr. MACKIE said, that the Bill was altogether uncalled for. It would, if passed, cause great dissatisfaction to people in the south of Scotland.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 33; Noes 80: Majority 47.

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *put off* for six months.

INNS OF COURT BILL—[Bill 83.]

(*Sir George Bowyer, Mr. Denman.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER said, he had intended to move the second reading that day, understanding that no objection would be made to it. The provisions had been fully discussed by the benchers of the four inns of court, and the Amendments suggested by them he had adopted. Other Amendments had been introduced at the suggestion of common law barristers and others, and the Bill as it now stood had been introduced with the consent of the Attorney General. As, however, he understood that some Members objected to the measure, he proposed, in the absence of the Attorney General, to postpone the present stage till that day week.

Mr. AYRTON said, he considered the Bill one of the most extraordinary inroads on the constitutional government of the country as regarded the administration of justice which had ever been attempted. Here was a body of men coming to that House seeking powers of indefinite inquiry and of examining, on oath, the whole community under pains and penalties on the subject of that inquiry. He hoped his hon. and learned Friend would, on reflection, between this and next Wednesday, see cause for not proceeding further with the Bill.

Mr. DENMAN said, the Bill substantially in its present shape had been carried through Parliament, as far as that House was concerned, last year. The Bill had met the assent of a Committee composed of the benchers of all the Inns of Court. There was no innovation of principle involved, the only object of the Bill being to establish a better tribunal for the investigation of complaints against barristers. Having had the honour of serving on the bench of Lincoln's Inn in an inquiry which lasted for many days on the conduct of a barrister, he had come to the conclusion that there was great room for amendment. This Bill appeared to provide what was required in that respect by giving certain powers which were absolutely necessary to enable any Court to decide satisfactorily on such inquiries. This being a new Parliament, it was certainly open to it to oppose the principle of the Bill; but the measure really involved no new principle.

Mr. LOCKE said, he differed from his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Denman). The Bill had never been fully discussed. The name of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) had been on the back of the Bill as formerly introduced. It was not on the present Bill. His hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Roebuck) had seceded from it. On the first reading he (Mr. Locke) spoke against it, and would have divided the House on its introduction, but there were then so few Members present that he should have had very little support. By constituting the benchers of the Inns of Court a court of law to inquire into questions, perhaps of domestic arrangement, they might create an extremely offensive power. He thought the Bill extremely objectionable and altogether unnecessary.

Sir FRANCIS GOLDSMID said, that so far as he could see, the Bill merely enabled the benchers to exercise in an effectual manner the powers which they at present possessed. He thought no ground had been shown why this Bill should not be considered in Committee.

Second Reading *deferred* till *Wednesday* next.

VACCINATION BILL—[Bill 33.]

(*Mr. Bruce, Mr. Baring.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Mr. H. A. BRUCE said, that before moving that the Deputy Speaker do leave the Chair, perhaps it would be convenient that he should make some statement to the House as to the scope of the Bill under consideration, not having had that opportunity on the second reading. He should not have allowed the Bill to reach this stage without that statement had he thought it involved any important new principle; but, although there appeared to be an apprehension that some new principle was involved in it, that was altogether a delusion. The Bill in the first place was a consolidation of the Acts which related to vaccination. It consolidated provisions which were now dispersed over six different Acts of Parliament. It also introduced some Amendments, which he would explain to the Committee; but, before doing so, as the subject of vaccination had not for some time been discussed in the House, he would give a short and rapid sketch of what had been the course of legislation regarding it, and the effect on the public health at each stage of progress. The first attempt to deal with the enormous evils of small pox was made by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in 1718. Inoculation was first tried on seven condemned criminals; and the result being satisfactory, in 1722, two of the Royal Family were, by the order of King George I., inoculated. Its success being placed beyond all doubt, inoculation for some time became very popular; but it was discovered that every inoculated person while labouring under the disease was himself the centre of infection, and Sir Gilbert Blane calculated that the effect of inoculation had been to raise the percentage of deaths in small pox from 74 to 92 per cent per thousand of the total mortality. But at the close of last century, Dr. Jenner made his immortal discovery, by which, perhaps, more misery had been prevented by the alleviation of pain and the preservation of life than by any other discovery that had ever been made. In 1802, a Committee was moved for in that House to inquire into the value of Jenner's discovery. They made a Report, in which they expressed a very strong opinion of its merits. In 1806, Lord Lansdowne, being then Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved an Address to His Majesty, praying that the College of Physicians might be requested to make further inquiries. They took twelve months to do so. They consulted all the chief medical bodies of Scotland, England, and Ireland, and presented a most able Report, to the effect that the discovery was a most valuable one, that it might be safely applied, that its effects were wholly advantageous, and in no respect injurious. In 1808, the first action of Parliament was taken. The National Vaccine Establishment was founded, and the sum of £2,000 a year had from that day to this been voted to it. Nothing further was done by Parliament, the matter being left to voluntary agency, till 1840, when the 3 & 4 *Vict.* was passed, which made vaccination optional, and authorized the payment of the public vaccinator by the Board of Guardians. That continued, with what effects he would proceed to describe, up to 1853, when the present legislation came in force. The compulsory Act of 1853 was introduced, not by Her Majesty's Government, but by Lord Lyttelton. It was carried through the House of Lords without a division; and was introduced here by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich (Sir John Pakington). Again, it was carried without a division, and had been the law of the land ever since. From time to time, since the passing of the Act, there had been occasional protests against it, not proceeding from any public body, but from individuals who objected on principle to vaccination. Then came the inquiries which were instituted by Sir Benjamin Hall. He directed a Report to be prepared by Mr. Simon, whose work was the standard work on this subject—a work conveying the fullest instruction in a most interesting form. Mr. Simon had in 1856 referred four questions to all the medical societies in Europe, to all the principal foreign Governments, and to 542 physicians of different countries, selected on account of their known eminence and experience. With the permission of the House, he would read these Questions and Answers. The first Question was this—

> "Have you any doubt that successful vaccination confers on persons subject to its influence a very large exemption from attacks of small pox, and almost absolute security against death by that disease?"

Their Answers to that Question 540 were distinct in having no doubt. One distrusted vaccination, but would gladly inoculate his own children with small pox. The other (Dr. Hamernik, of Prague) regarded both inoculation and vaccination at best but harmless trifling. The second Question was—

> "Have you any reason to believe or suspect that vaccinated persons, in being rendered less susceptible of small pox, become more susceptible of any other infective disease or of phthisis, or that their health is in any other way disadvantageously affected?"

In reply to this, not one maintained that any injury arose from vaccination properly administered. Mr. Stone gave the following statistics of Christ's Hospital for more than a hundred years:—Average of boys during first fifty years, 550; during last fifty years, 800. In the first period, during which none were vaccinated, there were thirty-one deaths from small pox. In the last period, from 1801 to 1850, in which all were vaccinated, one only had died of small pox. The annual death rate from other diseases in hospital had greatly diminished. The third Question was—

> "Have you any reason to believe or suspect that lymph from a true Jennerian vesicle has ever been a vehicle of syphilitic, scrofulous, or other constitutional infection to the vaccinated person, or that unintentional inoculation with some other disease, instead of the proposed vaccination, has occurred in the hands of a duly educated medical practitioner?"

To this all but a very few answered in the negative. The fourth Question was—

> "Do you (assuming due provisions to exist for a skilful performance of the operation) recommend that, except for special reasons in individual cases, vaccination should be universally performed at early periods of life?"

All but two were favourable. He thought the House would see this inquiry was as exhaustive and complete as ingenuity could devise. But what had been the effect on the public health? Sir Gilbert Blane had stated that, so far as could be ascertained, the average annual death rate in small pox in England and Wales during thirty years previous to the introduction of vaccination was 3,000 per million of the population. The average of three years (1838 to 1840), when vaccination had become to a great extent diffused, but before any public provision was made for its gratuitous performance, was 770. The average of nine of the years (1841 to 1853) when public vaccination was gratuitously provided, but vaccination was not obligatory, was 304 per million. The average of the ten years (1854 to 1863) during which vaccination had been to a certain extent obligatory, was 171; and if the last year for which Returns had been made were included, the rate, instead of 171, would be 190 per million. One reason for these inquiries was the alarming increase which had taken place during the last few years in the deaths by small pox in England and Wales. In 1861 the number of deaths had fallen to 1,320, but rose in 1863 to 5,964, and in 1864 to 7,684. The House must recollect that these deaths by no means represented the evil inflicted on society by this dreadful scourge. A distinguished French physician, M. de la Condamine, in 1756, calculated that about one-fourth of the human race were suffering more or less from the effects of small pox, which showed themselves in blindness and deafness, entire or partial, scrofula, and other terrible forms of disease. With respect to the mortality among the vaccinated and unvaccinated, the evidence was very complete. Perhaps the most capable witness on this point was Mr. Marson, for very many years in charge of the Small pox Hospital. Mr. Marson stated his conclusion, the result of 15,000 cases, in these words—

> "That the fatality of small pox, when it attacks the unvaccinated, is 350 per 1,000; that its fatality to such vaccinated persons as it infects is, taking them indiscriminately, 70 per 1,000; but, distinguishing vaccinated persons into two classes, those (1) who have been vaccinated in the best known manner, and those (2) who have been badly vaccinated, the fatality of small pox, if it infects the former, will be 5 per 1,000; if it infects the latter, 150 per 1,000; that the risk of the one will be thirty times the risk of the other."

Or, to state it differently, if attacked by small pox, one in three unvaccinated would die; one in seven imperfectly vaccinated; while only one in 200 would die if well vaccinated. But Mr. Marson's observations do far more than establish in a general way, in concurrence with others, the modifying power of vaccination. They have a merit peculiarly their own. They show conclusively that the degree of modifying power is in the exact ratio of the excellence and completeness of the vaccination as shown by the cicatrices; in other words, that it was directly as the amount of vaccine-marking and as the character of the marks. The following would show this at a glance better than any detailed statement:—

> "Number of deaths per cent in each class respectively—1. Unvaccinated, 37. 2. Stated to have been vaccinated, but having no cicatrix, 23·57. 3. Vaccinated—having one vaccine cicatrix, 7·73; having two vaccine cicatrices, 4·70; having three vaccine cicatrices, 1·95; having four or more vaccine cicatrices, 0·55; having well-marked cicatrices, 2·52; having badly-marked cicatrices, 8·82. 4. Having previously had small pox, 19."

He thought those facts—and the examinations throughout Europe, very carefully conducted, had been attended by similar results —would establish, not only the immense security which vaccination afforded against small pox, but that, if rendered complete, the security would be still greater; and, therefore, it was the duty of the House to provide for the full advantages of a thoroughly effective system of vaccination. He would now state what were the defects of the present law which it was proposed to remedy. During the last few years inquiries embracing the whole of England and Wales had been made by competent medical men, some of whom were well known in the profession, and had published works on the subject—Drs. Seaton, Stevens, Buchanan, and Sanderson — and their reports had been published with the annual Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council. The statements which satisfied the Government that some further legislation was necessary were that 13 per cent of the children at public infant schools were still unvaccinated, and that of 3,350 deaths from small pox which occur annually in England, 56 per cent were those of children under five years, and 70 per cent those of children under ten. In the course of the inquiries, the arms of nearly 500,000 vaccinated children were examined; of these, one in eight had been perfectly vaccinated; not more than one in three could be considered as well protected; and in more than one case out of four the vaccination had been of a very inferior kind indeed. The main causes of imperfect and inefficient vaccination were ascertained to have been the frequency with which practitioners, instead of attempting fully to infect the system, had been satisfied with insertions of lymph sufficient to produce only one, two, or three ordinary vesicles, instead of four, the number which constitute perfect vaccination; the want of due attention to the selection of the lymph used in vaccinating; want of care in the performance of the operation, and the great and unnecessary extent to which the use of preserved and conveyed lymph was substituted for arm to arm vaccination. Two of the gentlemen named—Dr. Seaton and Dr. Buchanan — were authorized to inquire into the terrible outbreak of small pox which occurred in London in 1863, fatal to upwards of 2,000 persons. Observations made on upwards of 50,000 children in various national and parochial schools, workhouses, &c., showed that some of the children had never been vaccinated, that the large majority had been vaccinated in various manners and degrees, that of every 1,000 children without any mark of vaccination 360 had scars of small pox, while of every 1,000 who had evidence of vaccination only 1·78 had any such traces. Owing to these reports, very careful inquiries were made into the manner in which the Act had been carried out throughout the country, and the result had been the discovery of several defects in the working of the law. The principal defects arose from the improper arrangement of districts for vaccination, and from the way in which public vaccinators neglected to fulfil their contracts. Under the Act of 1853, the duties of the Boards of Guardians as to vaccination were as follow:—To divide the unions where necessary into vaccination districts; to contract with a legally qualified medical practitioner or practitioners for the vaccination of each district; to appoint such stations and fix such times for their attendance in the different districts as may enable the contractors efficiently to perform their duties and afford the greatest facilities to the public for obtaining vaccination, and in the words of the 16 & 17 *Vict.* c. 100, s. 1—

> "To take the most effectual means for giving from time to time to all persons resident within such district due notice of the days and hours at which the medical officer or practitioner contracted with for such purpose will attend at such place to vaccinate."

The strict duties of the contractors in regard to vaccination were to attend at the station at the times specified by contracts, there and then to vaccinate those who come and to inspect the results on the eighth day; to register the vaccination and the result of the inspection, to give a certificate, if successful, to the parent or person in charge of the child, and to send a duplicate to the registrar of the sub-district in which the operation was performed. Under certain regulations, these duties might be performed by deputies. The Reports of the inspectors had shown that almost universally the subdivision of public vaccination was pushed to such an extent that the objects of the Act were defeated. They had shown that, as a rule, the attendances contracted for were such as would make habitual good arm to arm vaccination rare or impossible; that often they were several times as numerous as the births in the same district, so that, even if every born child came to the public vaccination station, there would have been many fruitless attendances for each one vaccination performed. They had shown the division of districts to be such that the number of infants requiring to be vaccinated within one contractor's province was scarcely ever more than enough—very often far less than enough—to maintain first-rate continuous vaccination at even a single station, with a single weekly attendance. Notwithstanding that, the contract subdivided that amount of vaccination among several stations, and often bound the contractor to give at each station an amount of attendance which he must at once discover to be fruitless. That, under these circumstances, the contractor soon came to disregard a contract which he could not carry into effect, and the vaccination of his district was then carried on under no other law than his individual notions of fitness or personal convenience. Details to this effect abound in each inspector's Report, and the general result might be very briefly stated. Among 694 vaccination districts, with regard to which this matter was inquired into, only sixty-four were found where the contractor professed to follow regularly the plan of public vaccination prescribed by his contract. In at least 458 of the districts the places of public vaccination prescribed by contract were confessedly quite disregarded. In 252 of the districts the local registrar of births, in serving upon parents the statutory notice to have children vaccinated, either did not notify any fixed appointments for public vaccination or notified different appointments from those which the guardians had contracted for. These statements he (Mr. Bruce) quoted from the fourth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council. They showed that even if the system had been properly devised, its requirements had been grossly neglected. He was bound to say that the guardians were not exclusively in fault, but that something was due to the erroneous advice given by the central authorities, themselves ignorant of the manner in which the system could be effectually carried out. In 1840, when public vaccinators were appointed for gratuitous vaccination, the advice given was that the districts should be small, it being conceived that the vaccinator would therefore be more easily accessible to the people. But it was found by experience that it was absolutely necessary that there should be a proper correspondence between the number of children who were presented for the first time and the number who had been previously vaccinated; that good vaccination was only possible upon a great scale; and that where it was from arm to arm, unless the lymph were taken from a child within a certain period, it became weak and inefficacious, and the child vaccinated therewith did not derive all the benefit otherwise obtainable. The principal object of the Bill was to give the Poor Law Board power to re-arrange the districts as often as they should think proper, and also to revise the contracts, so as to remedy the defects stated. Another object was to secure more complete registration. That was only a means to an end, but it was a great one, and important results might follow the adoption of a complete system. It was proposed to increase the pay of registrars from 3*d.* to 4*d.* : 1*d.* to be paid on entry, and 3*d.*, as now, on the completion of the vaccination. At present the certificate of vaccination was sent to the registrar, not of the district in which the birth took place, but of that in which the vaccination was performed, so that there were no means to show that a child whose birth had been registered had also been vaccinated. The Bill provided that the certificate of vaccination should be sent to the registrar of the birth. Hitherto the medical practitioner, not being a public vaccinator, had been bound to send to the registrar a certificate of vaccination without payment; the Bill proposed to cast the duty of transmitting it upon the parent or guardian. It did not propose to alter much the position of public vaccinators; their rate of payment would remain as before; but they would be obliged to act for fixed districts, instead of having a sort of roving commission over a whole union. They would also have to perform and they would be paid for duty performed at workhouses, which they were not at present. A good deal of dissatisfaction had been expressed with the rate of payment; but, after due consideration, it was not thought necessary to increase the burden imposed upon the ratepayers. Increased facilities were to be given to guardians to enforce the law. At present, before a person could be convicted of disobeying the Act it was necessary to prove service of notice upon the parent or guardian; that necessity — the proof being frequently of considerable difficulty—it was proposed to abolish. When a penalty had been once imposed, however trifling, the guardians hitherto could not prosecute for continued neglect; it was proposed to give them power to take further proceedings. In principle the Bill would make every man responsible for the non-vaccination of his child; and as every child born since 1853 and not vaccinated remained unvaccinated in defiance of the law, there would be no hardship in enforcing the law against all parents who had disregarded it in the case of all children not above thirteen years of age. The proposed amendments of the law would, he believed, conduce to greater efficiency in vaccination, both as to quantity and quality, without unnecessary interference or undue pressure upon the rates. A number of petitions which had been presented did not go so much against the Bill as against the principle of vaccination. One objection was, that it had been made the means of introducing into the system other diseases than small pox. On this point Dr. Seaton said—

> "Those who have had most to do with the performance of vaccination, on the one hand, and those who have been most concerned in the treatment of infantile disease, on the other, concur in the belief of the non-communicability of disease by vaccination. Mr. Marson, in the performance of 50,000 vaccinations and more, 'has never seen other diseases communicated with the vaccine disease, nor does he believe in the popular reports that they are so communicated.' Such, also, was the experience of the late Mr. Leese, whose opportunities of observation were scarcely, if any, less. Dr. W. Jenner stated some years ago that at University College Hospital and at the Hospital for Sick Children he had had, in six years, more than 13,000 sick adults and children under observation, and that in no case had he reason to believe, or even to suspect, that any constitutional taint had been conveyed from one person to another by vaccination. Dr. West's experience of 26,000 infants and children under his care in seventeen years is to the like effect; in stating that he has seen nothing in that time to make him believe that vaccination excites cutaneous eruptions in any but very exceptional cases, he refers such exceptional cases to a disposition in the children themselves, brought out by the vaccination as it might have been by teething. And Professor Paget, speaking from his large experience among children in the out-patients' room at St. Bartholomew's, and enumerating some of the causes which develop cutaneous diseases in young children, says, 'Now, vaccination may do, though I believe it very rarely does, what these several accidents may do—namely, by disturbing for a time the general health, it may give opportunity for the external manifestation and complete evolution of some constitutional affection, which, but for it, might have remained rather longer latent. This is,' he adds, 'the worst thing that can with any show of reason be charged against vaccination; even this can very seldom be charged with truth.'"

A statement had been widely circulated that syphilis had been introduced into the system by vaccination. Millions of children had been vaccinated in the last sixty years, but not a single case had occurred in which it had been proved that syphilis had been communicated. A case was alleged to have occurred in France in which a child had been vaccinated from another which inherited syphilis; but the surgeon in that case, in taking lymph from a child covered with syphilitic blotches, acted in monstrous disregard of common prudence, and medical knowledge. No such case, so far as the most careful medical research could discover, had happened in this country. He did not think it necessary to argue the general question of vaccination. He had read many letters objecting to the compulsory system, but the House and the country were in favour of compulsory vaccination, and the only question was as to the best machinery for enforcing the law.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Mr. HENLEY said, he believed that in many parts of the country there was a strong wish and disposition to see the question of vaccination put upon a footing more satisfactory than that it at present occupied. They had listened with interest to the speech just made, but he was afraid it contained many statements which would not pacify people's minds. One remarkable statement was that there had been an examination of 500,000 children belonging to the humbler classes. They were the class who were principally affected by what was called compulsory vaccination. Of the number so examined, only one in eight were found to have been perfectly vaccinated. This fact involved the further fact that seven out of eight were imperfectly vaccinated, or not vaccinated at all. The Bill provided that all children under thirteen not perfectly vaccinated were to be laid hold of and vaccinated again. ["No!"] He might have read the Bill wrongly, but he read it so. If only one in eight had been perfectly vaccinated, great doubt would come upon many people's minds as to what the others might have been vaccinated with—what the virus or lymph might have been that had been put into them. The right hon. Gentleman said that if you catch a child at a particular time the lymph is not good. This Bill contained no provision to obviate what was greatly complained of in the country—namely, the want of security not only that a medical man had necessary skill and experience, but that he obtained the proper lymph, or whatever it was that was necessary for the operation. Under the Bill you might catch a boy twelve years old and compel him to drink, but there was no statutory provision to prevent his being compelled to drink poison. This was the great defect in the Bill.

Mr. H. A. BRUCE said, that under the Act of 1858 (the Public Health Act) every public vaccinator had to submit to an examination at one of the fifteen examining stations, and, in order to supplement the supply of lymph, the National Vaccine Establishment issued 200,000 charges of good lymph every year.

Mr. HENLEY said, he was aware of these facts; but he must still ask, what became of the matter taken at a certain time from a child's arm? The failure in seven cases out of eight must arise from the arrangements as to districts preventing interchange between one vaccinated and one wanting to be. It was no answer to speak of the quantity of lymph which had been supplied. He might be wrong, but he knew the public impression was that there had been great difficulty in getting good vaccine, and he did not find in the Bill any security for the quality of the vaccine. If vaccination were to be compulsory, the question was, would the Bill improve the manner of doing it? One of the great blots upon the Bill was, that it failed to provide the security he had indicated. He believed that no service was well done unless it were well paid for. That was his firm belief, although the view might be a low one, and he believed that one of the main reasons why vaccination had been less successful than it otherwise might have been was that the public vaccinators had not been sufficiently paid. Time was of value to everybody, and medical men and lawyers thought more of it than others. When a man went three or four miles to a place where a lot of children were gathered together and was only paid a small sum per head, we knew very well that it was in human nature he would be apt to discharge his duties in a perfunctory manner. He believed that if they would pay men to do the work better they would have it better done. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bruce) said they would not, but he believed that if they did not pay better they would not have the work one jot better done. Parents could gather a great deal for themselves on this subject, and their belief as to the way in which the work was done was one reason why many children were not vaccinated. It might be, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, that a certain question was put, and that it was answered in a particular way, but that was because the question was a particular one—namely, whether anything mischievous happened when vaccination was properly performed? Of course there could be but one reply, in the negative, to that. But the mischief happened when the operation was improperly performed. Of course, it would be done unconsciously; the medical man had to do things in a hurry, and was paid very little. They all knew that when they wanted anything of this kind done the medical man told them a fine cock-and-bull story about waiting until he found a healthy child; and then it was all right and it was done. That implied that all persons ran some risk, and, although it might be said there had been no case for sixty years in which disease had been communicated, they would not make him believe that medical men would take all these pains in cases where they were well paid, if there were not some grounds for doing so. They might not, perhaps, believe that any particular form of disease would be manifested, but complaints were made in his own county and neighbourhood that after vaccination children had been affected with some rash, or something or other. They could not all have had that in their constitution. When all the children were in the same boat, the fact carried a conviction which all the medical men in the world could not remove. As the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Bruce) properly said, it was an abomination for any medical man to take the vaccine matter from a child otherwise diseased. Undoubtedly it was, but it was possible that a medical man might not know that the child from whom he took the matter was diseased; and that was the more likely to be the case when no particular notice respecting the examination of the child had been given to him. If a medical man asked the parents questions as to whether their children were suffering under disease, he would very likely incur the risk of receiving a slap in the face from the mother for his trouble in the matter. The clause requiring parents whose children had not been vaccinated by the public vaccinators to send in certificates of that fact was, he thought, rather complex and hard. He hoped that when they dealt with the clauses of the Bill that would be considered, and that provisions would be introduced for securing proper lymph and adequate payment for the work to be done. Another point he would mention was that the Bill in its present state would bring things to a dead lock if a Board of Guardians and the Poor Law Board happened to be awkward together.

SIR ROBERT PEEL said, he saw many defects in the Bill, which would require careful consideration in Committee in order to render it advantageous to the country. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Henley) that the remuneration proposed to be given to the persons who were to carry out the provisions of the Bill was not adequate for the duties to be performed. There were, however, far more important objections to the Bill, which was most loosely drawn up, and which in its then shape would never be a satisfactory measure. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bruce) in introducing the Bill made a very interesting and able speech, in which he went through the history of the laws relating to vaccination which had been passed since 1802 down to the present time, and which were to be repealed by the present Bill. The right hon. Gentleman called the Bill a Consolidation Bill, whereas its very first clause proposed to repeal the major part of the six Vaccination Laws which had been passed during the reign of Her Majesty. He had told them that the present system was not satisfactory, and that four medical officers had been visiting different parts of the country during the last four years for the purpose of obtaining information upon this subject. The right hon. Gentleman had read a condensation of the Reports of those medical officers, which had been sent to the Privy Council and had been published, and which showed the existence of a most alarming state of things. It appeared from the Poor Law Reports of 1862 that of the 702,181 children born in that year only 437,693 were successfully vaccinated.

MR. H. A. BRUCE said, that was the number of children registered as vaccinated.

SIR ROBERT PEEL said, that the words of the Report were that only 437,693 children were successfully vaccinated. The right hon. Gentleman said that the great object of the Bill was to obtain good vaccine matter for vaccination, but the Bill did not mention when the matter was to be taken. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Henley) had with justice laid great stress upon that point, as the medical officer of the Privy Council had stated that the vaccine matter, if not taken from the child on a particular day, became pernicious, and instead of doing good rather tended to create disease. [Mr. H. A. BRUCE: No!] The right hon. Gentleman said "No!" but the medical officers in their Report to the Privy Council stated that to be the fact;

and, moreover, it was well known that country practitioners were compelled to take the matter from the arm on a particular day, or otherwise it became useless, if not pernicious. Another object of the Bill was stated to be the enforcement of the performance of the duties of the contractors and the medical practitioners, which were at present often neglected, and, in fact, its intention was to give the country a complete system of vaccination, which the Act of 1853 had failed to do. No doubt, if these objects could be attained, the Bill would be most beneficial to the country, but he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman, who would be responsible for the proper working of the Bill? No doubt in one of its last clauses it contained what he might almost call the offensive regulation that the registrars, who were to be so badly paid—they would only receive *3d.* or *4d.* for each child vaccinated—were to fulfil the duties of informers as to the children in their districts who were not vaccinated. This was very hard upon men who received such inadequate remuneration for their services. Again, in another clause at the end of the Bill, magistrates were required to send for their neighbours' children, and to examine their arms, in order to ascertain from the marks whether they had been properly vaccinated. This was a pleasant office to be imposed upon country gentlemen. He doubted whether any but the stipendiary magistrates would perform it. He could only express his surprise that the right hon. Gentleman, with his knowledge of these subjects, should have permitted such a clause to be introduced into the Bill. Beyond those clauses the Bill contained nothing to show who was to be responsible for its proper working. Of the thirty-three clauses of the Bill, at least ten or twelve could never pass through Committee, or if at a late hour some evening they should pass, the whole Bill would be rendered inoperative if not prejudicial. He would, for instance, compare Clause 9 with Clause 26. Clause 9 enacted—

> "No payment in respect of vaccination shall be made out of the common fund of any union, or out of the poor rate of any parish, or out of any other public or parochial fund, where the Poor Law Board shall not have approved of a contract for the performance thereof, or after they shall have determined any such contract; and every payment made contrary hereto shall be disallowed by the auditor in the accounts of every Board of Guardians, or of the overseers, or of any officer who shall have made the same."

Sir Robert Peel

On the other hand, Clause 26 was to the following effect:—

> "The guardians of any union or parish may pay out of their funds all reasonable expenses incurred by them in causing notices to be printed and circulated as to the provisions of this Act, and in and about inquiries and reports as to the state of small pox or vaccination in their union or parish, and in taking measures to prevent the spread of small pox and to promote vaccination upon any actual or expected outbreak of that disease therein, and may compensate any officer appointed by them to prosecute persons charged with offences against this Act, or otherwise to enforce its provisions."

Thus Clause 26 gave a power to the Boards of Guardians the exercise of which Clause 9 expressly forbade, except in cases where contracts had been made. Again, by Clause 14—

> "The registrar of births shall, on or within seven days after the registration with him of the birth of any child not already vaccinated, give a notice, according to the form in the Schedule hereto annexed marked A, or to the like effect, to the parent, or in the event of the death, illness, absence, or inability of the parent to the person having the custody of such child, if known to him, requiring such child to be duly vaccinated according to the provisions of this Act, and specifying the days, hours, and places where the public vaccinator of the vaccination district wherein such child resides, or the vaccinator of any station duly authorized by the Lords of Her Majesty's Council, will attend for the purpose of performing the operation, and such notice shall be accompanied with forms according to those in the said Schedule marked B, C, and D."

He held a letter in his hand pointing out the difficulty of carrying those clauses into effect. Surely it would be much better if the forms B, C, and D, were to be given to the medical officer and not to the parent or person having the custody of the child, by whom they would be sure to be mislaid. Clause 23 referred to the question raised by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Henley)—namely, as to the amount of remuneration which persons were to receive for working the machinery of the Bill. He trusted that the House would, in its wisdom, on a matter of such grave importance—where it was impossible to overestimate the misery which would result from improper vaccination—direct that the persons carrying out the provisions of the Bill should be sufficiently remunerated for their labours. He understood that before Easter a deputation waited upon the right hon. Gentleman who had introduced the Bill to bring the subject of the remuneration of registrars and medical practitioners particularly under his notice, and that the right hon. Gentleman had led those gentlemen to believe that he was prepared to deal with the matter in a liberal spirit. Looking at the Bill, however, he should suppose that the right hon. Gentleman had altered his mind upon the point. He also saw that the Bill directed that the parent of every child should take it to the public vaccinator, to be vaccinated within three months of its birth. In 1863, when he was the Chief Secretary for Ireland, he had introduced a Bill for the purpose of enforcing compulsory vaccination in Ireland. In that Bill he extended the time for compulsory vaccination to six months, which, in his opinion, was quite early enough for the purpose, and it had worked well. But this Bill enacted that the children should be taken to be vaccinated at the age of three months, so that a child born in the month of October would have to be carried in the depth of winter to the medical officer, who, in many parishes, lived several miles distant. The Bill further made it imperative that the child should be brought before the vaccinator on the seventh day after the vaccination. In Ireland it was eight days, and medical men were generally of opinion that the eighth or ninth days were the best. He did not make these objections to the Bill with the view of obstructing the passing of such a measure, but with the intention of putting it to the House, whether there was not in this Bill matter which required very careful consideration, and whether it would not be better to postpone the Committee upon the Bill until the right hon. Gentleman had had time to re-consider its provisions. What was required was a Bill which would give the country a complete system of vaccination, which he was afraid the present Bill would not do.

Mr. HARVEY LEWIS said, he regretted that the Bill had been so carelessly drawn up that it was impossible to shape it properly, either during the discussion that was then going on, or in Committee. One grave defect in the Bill was that it did not provide for the purity of the lymph to be used, as, if it were clearly understood that none but healthy lymph would be used, the chief objection of the lower classes to vaccination would be removed. The subject of vaccination was one of such vast importance that it demanded the fullest deliberation and inquiry before any steps were taken in the matter, and under these circumstances he did not hesitate to say that the subject should be postponed until a Bill could be drawn up, founded upon the recommendations of a Select Committee. He felt this so strongly that he could not in justice to himself, and to the millions affected by this legislation, do less than move that the Bill be now referred to a Select Committee.

Sir JERVOISE JERVOISE said, that he seconded the Motion. He wished to advert to the dangers likely to arise from the use of unhealthy lymph. If the lymph were not removed within a certain time, it fermented and became putrid, and then, in the words of an eminent medical gentleman, it became as dangerous as the cut of a dissecting knife. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would permit this matter to go to a Select Committee. It was a question of science, and could only be advantageously considered in Select Committee.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the Bill be committed to a Select Committee," —(*Mr. Harvey Lewis,*)—instead thereof.

Lord HENLEY said, he believed that the course recommended by the hon. Member for Marylebone to refer the question to a Select Committee was the best that could be adopted, as there were many points in the Bill which required full and careful consideration. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consent to the proposition. The town which he represented had suffered much from this disease, and a number of suggestions had been made to him. There was a general opinion that the law at present was a dead letter.

Mr. HIBBERT said, he saw no objection to the question going before a Select Committee, provided no evidence was to be taken on the subject, which would throw the matter over this Session. Everything in connection with vaccination was well known, and if evidence were taken before the Select Committee, the only effect would be to give every person an opportunity of coming forward to ventilate his crotchets upon the question. The machinery of the existing system was far too complicated, a great deal of trouble being thrown upon the local authorities, in addition to the cost of £16,000 per annum. It would be an improvement of the system were the Privy Council to take the whole responsibility and management. Although the remuneration of medical practitioners might be ample in large towns, yet in country districts, where but few children were vaccinated at one time, he did not think the amount proposed to be allowed them was sufficient. He disapproved the clause relating to re-vaccination, as he believed that under it any grown-up person might be compelled to be re-vaccinated against his will.

MR. BARROW said, he did not agree with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that no evidence should be taken before the Select Committee, as "crotchets," as he called them, of medical men on this subject deserved careful consideration. He confessed that from all he heard from medical men, both English and foreign, he doubted the efficacy of the present system of vaccination, and therefore trusted that full inquiries would be made before a system of compulsory vaccination was forced upon the country.

MR. AYRTON said, that he had been intrusted with a great many petitions against this Bill. He could not help being struck by the admission of the right hon. Gentleman in introducing this Bill, that the present system had entirely failed in effecting its object. The Bill before them, besides being inaccurately drawn up, bore too much of the stamp of the official departments in which it had been prepared. Those departments had given great powers to themselves, but had not taken sufficient care to guard the public from the dangers likely to arise from the working of the Bill. He hoped that care would be taken, if compulsory vaccination were enforced by penalties, that public vaccinators should also be liable to penalties in case the vaccination were not done properly. As there were a great many people who believed that vaccination did just as much harm as good, he trusted that the inquiry of the Committee upstairs would not in any way be fettered. If they agreed to send the Bill to a Committee upstairs, that Committee could soon see whether they would be able to dispose of the Bill without further information. The best way was to leave it to the Committee to decide whether they should take evidence or not, and if it were necessary, a Motion could be made to allow them to take evidence.

COLONEL NORTH said, he believed that the scale of remuneration to the medical officers was in many cases too low. He hoped the Bill would provide that no expense or trouble be spared to procure the proper vaccine, and thus to remove much of the prejudice which existed against vaccination among the lower classes.

SIR ROBERT PEEL said, he trusted that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bruce) would consent to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, especially as throughout the whole of the discussion it had not received the support of a single Member. He would also suggest to the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be better, at the present moment, to withdraw the Bill, which was generally acknowledged to be defective in many of its clauses, and to introduce a fresh measure at no distant date, founded upon the recommendations of the Select Committee to which it was proposed to refer the Bill.

MR. BRISCOE said, he could not agree in the suggestion that the Bill should be withdrawn altogether, but he heartily joined in the request made to the Vice President of the Council that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. His constituents thought there should be more inquiry before there was more legislation.

MR. H. A. BRUCE said, but for his unwillingness to interfere in the discussion, he should have risen long ago to state that he was willing to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. Although he did not wish that the power of taking evidence should be limited—being desirous of making the machinery as perfect as possible—it must be distinctly understood that they did not in any way go into Committee upon the principle of the Bill. As far as legislation could effect that result, the securing of the proper quality of vaccine had already been provided for, the fullest direction having been given to the medical officers on the subject. Any failure that had attended the efforts in this direction had been caused only by the want of power on the part of the central authorities. It was to secure better arrangements being made that this Bill was brought in. With regard to the suggestion which had fallen from the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth that the Bill should be dropped, he would have been quite prepared to show in Committee that the clauses which the right hon. Baronet regarded as defective were in reality not open to that charge. [SIR ROBERT PEEL: Which clauses?] All of them. The clause refering to the seventh day, following the day on which vaccination was performed, in reality left the matter in the same position as it was now, and no medical man in the country would have dreamt of proposing any alteration in this respect. There appeared to be an opinion rife in some quarters that it was intended to take powers by this Bill to re-vaccinate adults, but that was not the case. The Bill gave power to issue regulations limiting the practice of re-vaccination but not enforcing it. The House seemed to have forgotten, with reference to the payment of public vaccinators, that the scale fixed by the Bill—of 1*s.* 6*d.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* in different cases—was the minimum payment to be made, and that the boards of guardians were empowered by the measure to fix a just and equitable scale. He fully admitted that in rural districts, where the minimum only was paid, the remuneration would frequently be inadequate. But the guardians had power in those and in all cases to increase the rate of payment, and in populous districts even the minimum secured by the Bill was generally considered sufficient. However, he would be extremely happy to have the assistance of a Select Committee on the Bill.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived.*

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *committed* to a Select Committee.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES:

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Supply *considered* in Committee—Civil Service Estimates.

(In the Committee.)

£660,000, New Courts of Justice.

Mr. CHILDERS said, he begged to move a Vote of £660,000 for the purchase of a site and for other expenses in connection with the new Courts of Justice. During the last Session an Act was passed providing for the erection of the new Courts of Justice. The expense was met by taking £1,000,000 from one of the great Chancery accumulated funds, by an appropriation of £200,000 as the value of the present Courts at Westminster, and by the imposition of a Rent of Courts Fee on suitors. It was provided that the expense in the first instance should be paid out of the Votes, and that the Exchequer should be recompensed out of the different funds. Accordingly, last year a Vote of £700,000 was taken for the purchase of the site. Owing to a difficulty in obtaining the site most of that money was not expended, and the Government now applied to the House to re-vote the amount not drawn.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, he trusted that care would be taken to secure the best architectural talent of the country, in accordance with the proposal made by the hon. Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Bentinck).

Mr. COWPER said, that since that proposal had been made the Courts of Justice Commission, who had originally considered the question of architectural competition, had held no meeting, and consequently he was unable to give his hon. Friend any information upon the subject. In a few days, however, a meeting would be held, and the proposal would receive due consideration.

Vote *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow ;* Committee to sit again upon *Friday.*

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

Mr. Walpole *reported* from the General Committee of Elections; That they had appointed John Tomlinson Hibbert, esquire, and the hon. Charles W. G. Howard (Cumberland), to be Members of the Chairmen's Panel, and to serve as Chairmen of Election Committees during the present Session, in the room of The Right hon. E. P. Bouverie, and Edward Ellice, esquire, who had been discharged from continuing on the Chairmen's Panel.

Report to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock.

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HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, April 12, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Several Lords took the Oath.

Public Bills — *First Reading* — Public Offices (Site)* (67); Labouring Classes Dwellings* (68); Ecclesiastical Leases (Isle of Man)* (69).

Second Reading—Attorneys and Solicitors (Ireland) (1866) [H.L.] (60); East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* (62); County Courts (55).

ATTORNEYS AND SOLICITORS (IRELAND) (1866) BILL—(No. 60.)—(*Lord Chelmsford.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord CHELMSFORD moved the second reading of this Bill, the object of which
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was to assimilate the law relating to the profession of attorneys and solicitors in Ireland to that of England.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Chelmsford.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he had looked at the Bill during the recess, though not in a very careful manner. He would not offer any opposition to the second reading, but he might, perhaps, desire to suggest some Amendments in Committee when the Bill was in Committee.

THE MARQUESS OF CLANRICARDE said, the Bill was a most important step towards raising the status of attorneys and solicitors in Ireland, and his only wish was that it had gone a little further. Two years ago he proposed to allow the attorneys and solicitors of Ireland to practise in England, and the English attorneys and solicitors in the Irish courts; but the Irish attorneys and solicitors thought the change would be injurious to them. In that they were extremely wrong, for it would be quite the reverse. He hoped that some measure on the subject would result from the Commission appointed by Government four years ago, and which had not yet made its second Report, and that that Bill would embody the improvement which he had recommended. The difference between the practice of attorneys in Ireland and England was very great, for in Ireland a Judge would not listen to an attorney in chambers, and both the profession and the public were sufferers, as the expense of a Motion in open court was three times as great as in chambers.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

COUNTY COURTS BILL—(No. 55.)

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said, it had come up from the other House of Parliament, and was intended to amend the law relating to County Courts. It referred to two functionaries of these courts—the treasurer and the high bailiff. At present the finances of the County Courts were managed in this way—the fees were all paid to the registrars, who accounted for them to the treasurers, and the treasurers to the Treasury. There having been, unfortunately, occasional defalcations, the matter had been looked into by the Treasury, and they had come to the conclusion that the whole machinery of treasurers was unnecessary. That machinery had been introduced into the system of County Courts because they were considered in some respect of the nature of the old courts of conscience, and courts of regret, in which the pecuniary affairs were all managed by treasurers. Experience, however, had shown that the registrar might just as well account directly to the Treasury as indirectly through the treasurer, and the first clauses of the Bill accordingly proposed to substitute such direct communication for the present intermediate system. The latter clauses of the Bill related to the high bailiffs, who stood in much the same relation to the County Courts as the High Sheriffs to the ordinary Courts, their only duty being to execute the processes, and that was always done by means of a subordinate officer. In some cases a high bailiff was appointed for a whole county; in others there was a high bailiff for each court, and in others the high bailiff was appointed for two or three counties. But the fact was the work was all done by subordinates. The high bailiff got a salary of £700, and in some instances £800 and £900 a year, and he employed a deputy, who did the whole duty. He found no fault with the high bailiffs for that, but though some of the County Court Judges were opposed to the change, the maintenance of the office was attended with great expense and was unnecessary. The appointment was a very comfortable one, but still its abolition would be a saving to the country of £34,000 per annum. For that reason the Bill had received the unanimous approbation of the other House, and he trusted it would also be unanimously agreed to by their Lordships.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD CHELMSFORD said, his attention had only been drawn to this Bill an hour or two previously, when he received letters from two County Court Judges on the subject, and he wished to state to their Lordships the objections to the Bill contained in those letters. He understood that four years ago a proposal was made to abolish the office of high bailiff. Upon that occasion the opinions of the County Court Judges were taken on the subject, and, though some of them were in favour of the proposal, the majority were opposed to it. With respect to the proposal contained in the measure now before their Lordships, no objection was made to the abolition of the office of treasurer, and thus getting rid of the official who stood between the registrar and the Treasury. The case of the office of high bailiff, however, presented some little difficulty, for he was informed that the registrar and the high bailiff acted as mutual checks upon each other, and that if the office were abolished entirely new rules and regulations must be made for the County Courts, in order to prevent underhand work. With regard to the allegation that the office of high bailiff was a sinecure, he had been told that the office of registrar was a sinecure also. He knew nothing of the subject himself, but he had felt it his duty to bring before their Lordships the statements which had been made to him, in order that the matter might be properly and carefully considered.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, the registrars could not in any sense be said to hold sinecures. Some of them, it was true, had very little business to do; but still they were required to attend every sitting of the Court.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

House adjourned at half past Five
o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter
before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, April 12, 1866.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—Lord John Hay *for* Ripon.

Select Committee — On Mortality of Troops (China), Sir Harry Verney and General Dunne *added.*

Supply—*considered in Committee* — *Resolutions* [April 11] *reported.*

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Representation of the People [68], debate *resumed*, and further *adjourned;* Art * [100] [*Lords*].

Considered as amended—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases * [86]; Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland) * [72.]

TURNPIKE TRUSTS.—QUESTION.

Mr. WHALLEY said, in reference to the Report of the Committee on Turnpike Trusts (1864), recommending that pending the abolition of the present system a certain class of Trusts theretofore kept alive by the Annual Continuance Act should thereafter be excluded therefrom, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether such Act can be introduced before Whitsuntide; and, if not, why not?

Mr. BARING said, in reply, that it would be quite possible to bring in the Bill to which the hon. Gentleman referred before Whitsuntide; but he apprehended that it would be more convenient if its introduction were to be delayed till after that date, in order that full information might be procured in reference to the trusts in question.

INFRACTION OF THE GAME LAWS—WILLIAM ROWE.—QUESTION.

Colonel SYKES said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it has come to his knowledge that, at the St. Columb Petty Sessions, on the 27th of February last, John Rowe, of St. Dennis, an old man, was prosecuted by the Inland Revenue for being found with a gun and dog whilst crossing the Garrigan Estate in November, 1865, and fined £5 and sent to gaol for non-payment, the same John Rowe having been fined in November last for the same offence, as a trespasser, 40*s*. and 18*s*. 6*d*. expenses; and, whether inquiry will be made with a view to the mitigation of the sentence?

Mr. CHILDERS: Sir, a certain William (not John) Rowe was prosecuted for having been found with a gun and dog in pursuit of game without a licence, and convicted in the mitigated penalty of £5. Immediately after the conviction he petitioned the Board of Inland Revenue, offering £3 2*s*. 6*d*. in satisfaction of the penalty, which offer the Board at once accepted, and the amount was duly paid. He was never at any time under arrest on account of this charge, no person being ever personally arrested except under a body warrant, which requires express directions from the Board of Inland Revenue before it can be put in force. In this instance such a warrant was not issued, the case being otherwise disposed of by the acceptance of Rowe's offer. As regards the conviction for trespass, that is a matter which in no way concerns the Board of Inland Revenue. The functions of that Board are simply to see that the public revenue is not defrauded; they take no cognizance of offences against the rights of property, which was the ground of the other prosecution.

ARMY—SURGEONS IN THE GUARDS.

QUESTION.

SIR ROBERT ANSTRUTHER said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will engage that no promotion to the rank of Surgeon in the Brigade of Foot Guards shall take place by seniority of service in the Brigade until the subject has been discussed in this House?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, in reply, that he declined to enter into any such engagement, on the ground that the new system of promotion for the assistant-surgeons of the Brigade of Guards had been settled by a Warrant signed by Her Majesty, and approved by the General Commanding-in-Chief and the Secretary of State for War, in the year 1860, but never promulgated.

THE REBELS IN CHINA.—QUESTION.

COLONEL SYKES said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Reports or Despatches have been received from Consul Meadows at Newchang respecting the approach of rebels in December last; also from Consul Medhurst at Hankow mentioning the proximity of a large rebel force, and detailing the measures adopted for the protection of British property; and whether the Consuls have suggested to the British Government any and what measures for the future safety of the foreign settlements in China?

MR. LAYARD, in reply, said, it appeared that Consul Meadows had been much alarmed at the beginning of last winter at what he deemed to be the prospect of an attack on Newchang by a large force of rebels. He, in consequence, requested the loan of some guns from the Admiral on the station, by whom they were lent. The Government had, however, received no information that an attack on Newchang had since taken place. With respect to the attack on Hankow, he had to state that he had no reason to believe that that city had been threatened by a large rebel force. It seemed that a considerable number of villagers had taken refuge in the city, declaring that the country around was invaded by the rebels. The Consul went out to see what was the matter, but instead of seeing 80,000 the number stated, he found eight men on horseback, armed with spears and carrying bags across their saddles, and they ran away directly a shot was fired at them, leaving behind them the bags, which were found to contain eight women. There were, he believed, a few rebels still prowling about, but he was sorry to have to inform his hon. and gallant Friend that the last information from China represented his particular friends the Taepings as having been almost exterminated. He had simply to add, in answer to the last Question, that he was not aware that any special suggestions had been made by our Consuls with regard to the necessity of taking further steps for the defence of our settlements in China. Any suggestions of that kind would come in the ordinary course through Her Majesty's Minister at Pekin.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—ARMSTRONG GUNS.—QUESTION.

MR. WHITE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether he would object to furnish a Return of the experiments made with the first 600-pounder Armstrong Gun, including a tabular statement of the number of rounds fired; weight of the various charges and projectiles used; the initial velocities and ranges thereby obtained; the penetrations effected in armour-plated targets, with the Report of the Ordnance Select Committee on the serviceability and endurance of the said gun; and, also, the same particulars with regard to the second 600-pounder, delivered by the Elswick Ordnance Company, which has been recently tried and burst at Shoeburyness?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, Returns had been moved for by the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), which would give all the information which the hon. Gentleman required. Those Returns were now ready for presentation, and would immediately be laid on the table.

INDIA—PASSAGE WARRANT OF JANUARY, 1865.—QUESTION.

CAPTAIN GRIDLEY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Why the Subalterns of Her Majesty's

Regiments on service in India were deprived by the Passage Warrant of the 2nd of January, 1865, of the six months' Indian pay and allowances when on leave of absence on sick certificate, to which they were previously entitled under the Furlough Regulations of 17th November, 1854; and whether he will re-consider the subject, with the view to such pay and allowances being granted in future?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON replied, that the Warrant to which the Question of the hon. Member referred gave the reasons why the alteration had been made. It stated that it was done "in consideration of the privileges conferred upon the officers of the army at large by the provisions of this Warrant," privileges which entailed considerable additional expense. The officers serving in China were not entitled to the allowance in question, which furnished another reason why the officers of the army serving in India should be placed on the same footing.

THE CATTLE DISEASES PREVENTION ACT, 1866.—QUESTION.

Mr. M'LAGAN said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is aware that in certain districts of the country the local authorities appointed under "The Cattle Diseases Prevention Act, 1866," have failed to carry out that section of the Act by which it is enjoined that "every local authority shall cause all animals affected with the Cattle Plague within its district to be slaughtered;" and, if he is aware of it, whether he is prepared to adopt measures to compel the carrying out of the Act in its entirety?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that he had received no specific information to the effect that the local authorities had failed to carry out the provisions of the Act with respect to the slaughtering of cattle, except in the case of one district in Staffordshire, the complaint made in reference to which he had transmitted to the lord-lieutenant of the county, through whom he had received an explanation given by the magistrates against whom the complaint was made which appeared satisfactory. That very day, he might add, a memorial had reached him from the Chamber of Agriculture in Edinburgh, in which it was stated that there were certain counties in Scotland in which it was reported the powers given by the law were only partially executed. To that memorial he had directed an answer to be written intimating that if any specific case of default in that respect could be pointed out to him inquiries should be made, as had been done in the instance in Staffordshire which he had just mentioned.

INDIA OFFICE—FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.—QUESTION.

Mr. HUNT said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is the intention of the Secretary of State to create a sub-department of the Financial Department of the India Office, to be called "The Funds Branch," to be presided over by an Assistant Secretary; and, if so, whether it is true that it is in contemplation to appoint to that office a second class clerk from another Government Department, and to pass over the whole of the senior clerks in the India Office, whose term of service varies from thirty-six years to eleven.

Mr. STANSFELD replied, that it was in the contemplation of his noble Friend the Secretary of State for India to create either a sub-department under the Financial Secretary, or a distinct branch to undertake the management of certain funds, for the transfer of which a Bill had passed that House, and would, he hoped, be read in the other House of Parliament a second time that evening. The new Department could not, however, be created without an Order in Council, nor could the Order in Council be issued until the Bill to which he referred had passed into law. The Secretary of State, when the Order in Council had been obtained, and not until then, would be ready to take into consideration the relative fitness of the various gentlemen whose names might be proposed to him to fill the position of head of the Department.

FISHERMEN ON THE COAST OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.—QUESTION.

Colonel ANNESLEY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether any steps have been taken by Her Majesty's Government for the protection of the interests of our fishermen on the coast of British North America, on the termination of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States?

Mr. CARDWELL, in reply, said, notice had been given to the Governor General of Canada and to the Governors of all the other Provinces in British North America, that in consequence of the termination of the Reciprocity Treaty with America the relations between this country had been altered, and instructions had been prepared by Her Majesty's Government suitable to those altered relations.

CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS.

QUESTION.

MAJOR DICKSON said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will be prepared during the present Session to bring in a Bill to amend the Laws relating to corrupt practices at Elections, as a part of the entire scheme for amending the Representation of the People?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, in answer to the question of the hon. and gallant Member, I have to say that I do not think Her Majesty's Government will be in a position to consider with advantage the course they may think it right to pursue with regard to corrupt practices at elections until after they shall have learnt the results of all the inquiries which have to take place before the Election Committees of the present year. Consequently I do not anticipate that, in the ordinary duration of the Session, it will be in their power to prosecute this subject. At the same time I do not give an absolute negative, because the question is one that entirely depends upon time and circumstances.

CAMBRIDGE BOROUGH ELECTION.

The Members appointed to try and determine the matter of the Petition complaining of an undue Election and Return for the Borough of Cambridge being again called to the Table at Five of the clock, and John Duke Coleridge, esquire, being still absent, Mr. Bovill, Member for the Borough of Guildford, stated in his place that he had a Letter in his hand from Mr. Coleridge, from which it appeared that he was now on his way to London by Railway, from Devonshire, the train being due at the Waterloo Station at twenty minutes after Six this afternoon; and Mr. Bovill having verified such statement upon oath, Mr. Speaker directed the four other Members to resume their seats until the Committee should be sworn, or the swearing adjourned.

The Members appointed to try and determine the matter of the Petition complaining of an undue Election and Return for the Borough of Cambridge, being again called to the Table at Seven of the clock, and John Duke Coleridge, esquire, being still absent:—

Ordered, That the swearing of the said Committee be adjourned till To-morrow, at Four of the clock.—(*Sir George Grey.*)

Mr. Cardwell

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[BILL 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I rise, Sir, to move the second reading of the Representation of the People Bill; and, in doing so, I propose to supply a defect which some have observed in the statement with which I originally introduced the Bill to the notice of the House. It was thought on my part almost disrespectful to the House—and suggestions of that kind have proceeded from persons of weight and authority—to have laid a measure of so much importance on the table without dealing more largely than I did presume to deal in substantive reasons for its introduction. I will explain briefly to the House the feelings with which that measure was introduced, and which will, I think, explain and justify the course which I pursued. Her Majesty's Government—for I do not speak on this point of myself alone—Her Majesty's Government were sensible of the tender nature of the ground on which they were about to tread. They had, first and foremost of all, to apprehend that they might prejudice the progress of this great question by giving to it unnecessarily, or at all events prematurely, the character of a party conflict. They had also to apprehend that they might incur a still more serious mischief—that they might give to the course of the argument on the subject the character of a conflict between class and class. They were determined, Sir, that, so far as depended upon them, the discussion should not be marked from its commencement by either the one character or the other. I was therefore earnestly studious—with what success I know not—to thread my way through the whole of that long and, I fear, wearisome address without including in it any statement of principle, any argument, any suggestion, any reference to the past, which could in any manner raise even so much as a flutter of hostile emotion on the part of Gentlemen who sit opposite. I was not at that period aware of any reason, nay, I am not even yet aware of any good reason why Gentlemen who sit opposite, and who may be disposed to take a temperate and conciliatory view of public affairs, should not freely concur in the enlargement—as we think the very moderate enlargement—of the franchise which we propose. We had framed the measure in what appeared to us a spirit of moderation and restraint. We desired that it should be placed before the House in the same spirit. It was in the effort to give effect to that desire that I omitted many of the topics, which would have exhibited more clearly the breadth of the grounds on which we rest our measure, but which might have neutralized that advantage by bringing too easily into the foreground occasions for conflict of opinion.

I must confess that when I heard the demand for reasons urged in terms so peremptory, it was not altogether without a touch of surprise at some of the quarters from which it proceeded. Had I been addressing an assembly never before conversant with the subject I could have felt no such surprise. But it was somewhat singular that Gentlemen who had themselves heard of Reform, who had themselves supported Reform, who had themselves been responsible for the introduction of Reform, who had themselves in some instances—and this is by far the strongest case of all—endeavoured to force Reform, nay, to force piecemeal and partial measures of Reform on a reluctant Government, should come forward and demand reasons why the advisers of the Crown, forsooth, had troubled the mind of Parliament and the country by the introduction of the question of Reform. Now, Sir, although I did not enter into reasoning at large, I did refer to authority—I did refer to at least two heads of argument which I thought sufficient for the purpose which we had in view. One was the nature of those remarkable promises which had been given, and which had been repeated more times than one can easily recollect, with respect to the settlement of this question; and in connection with those promises I endeavoured to explain the peculiar origin of the question—not from the free and spontaneous choice of the Government, but out of the very mind, the very bosom of Parliament itself. A further head on which I touched was the state of things that now prevails with regard to popular enfranchisement in the strict sense—the enfranchisement of the working class—as compared with what prevailed in 1832, and with the undoubted increase during the interval of fitness for the exercise of political duty.

Now, with reference to the origin of the question I was challenged in terms of extraordinary boldness. I must, therefore, revert to the point again; and I do so for the sake of stating that the only fault in the explanation I gave was that I understated that case of Parliamentary responsibility which I sought to establish. In 1851, when this question was first in a serious form introduced to Parliament by my hon. Friend the Member for West Surrey (Mr. Locke King), I stated that, in spite of the opposition of the Government, a majority of two to one voted for the introduction of the Bill. But, Sir, what, I believe, I omitted to state, and, which, at any rate, greatly strengthens the case, was this—that the House gave that vote, and expressed that determination in favour of the introduction of the Bill even after my noble Friend, who was then, as now, at the head of the Government had stated that the Government would give their attention to the subject and would in the ensuing Session submit a measure to its consideration. And yet, in the very face and teeth of that pledge given by my noble Friend, the House of Commons took upon itself the responsibility of forcing a vote in favour of the introduction of the Bill. Thus, then, the revival of the Reform question under the authority of the advisers of the Crown was in a peculiar sense the wish of Parliament itself. But I am told that the Bill was subsequently thrown out. No doubt; and under what circumstances was it thrown out? The introduction of the Bill was followed by the resignation of Ministers, who would not submit to the judgment of the House, and who at the same time did not think proper to advise a dissolution. The attempt of the distinguished leaders of the party opposite to form a Government, based as it was at that period on an intention to propose a fixed duty on corn, entirely failed. In that state of circumstances the Government came back by ordinary process and of necessity into the hands of my noble Friend; and coming back by necessity into his hands, of course it followed that the House of Commons which accepted him as Minister should in lieu of the measure for which it had pronounced accept also his pledge with reference to Parliamentary Reform, and decline to proceed with the Bill of my hon. Friend. But what did happen, and what was indeed remarkable, was that, under these circumstances, there were some ardent spirits who could not even thus desist from their attempt, who divided for the second reading of the Bill, and tried to force it on the Government;

and among the Gentlemen who were thus anxious to force piecemeal Parliamentary Reform on the Administration was my right hon. Friend the Member for Stroud. At a subsequent period, in 1858, the very same measure was forced on the Government of Lord Derby. On that occasion I voted against the Bill, not because I disapproved of the reduction of the County Franchise to £10, for I had myself in 1854, as a Minister, been a willing party to a measure which enacted it, but because I did not wish to assume the responsibility of forcing it on an Administration which was not prepared at the time to deal with the question. But again, my right hon. Friend, hot and ungovernable in his zeal for piecemeal proceedings in the matter of Reform, endeavoured by his vote to force on the advisers of the Crown the adoption of a measure not only confined to the subject of the franchise, but confined to a special branch of the franchise.

Now, Sir, let us shortly consider who are the persons who have made to the people of this country the promises of which I venture to remind this House—promises which I think the petitions presented to-day sufficiently demonstrate not to have been forgotten, but to lie recorded in the memory of the people as engagements of which they anticipate and of which they now ask the fulfilment. That statement was greeted with something like a jeer from a portion of the House; but let us consider for a moment who were the men that gave those promises. They were first given by Lord Russell, they were next given by Lord Aberdeen, they were afterwards given by Lord Derby and the right hon. Gentleman opposite. Now, what was the engagement taken by the right hon. Gentleman, speaking on the part of the Government of which he was the organ? Was it a first fault on the part of that Government? Was it an occasional and incidental slip from the path of virtue in an unguarded moment which led them to promise a measure of enfranchisement, and finally to include in their promise a reduction of the borough franchise? No, Sir, they had time enough to consider their Resolution. The second reading of their Bill was met, as the second reading of our Bill is, we are told, to be met by a hostile Resolution. It was met by a Resolution, which I was not disposed to support, but of which, at any rate, I will say that it was direct and outspoken in its purpose, and that it gave the country clearly to understand the real motives that were in the minds of its supporters. That Motion was successful. The Parliament was dissolved. The dissolution of the Parliament gave an opportunity to the Government of Lord Derby to consider whether they had been right or whether they had been wrong in the introduction of a Bill which refused to deal with the borough franchise, and upon the assembling of the new Parliament the right hon. Gentleman opposite announced the deliberate view of his colleagues. On the 7th of June, 1859, he spoke as follows:—

> "We are perfectly prepared to deal with that question of the borough franchise and the introduction of the working classes by lowering the franchise in boroughs, and by acting in that direction with sincerity; because, if you intend to admit the working classes to the franchise by lowering the suffrage in boroughs, you must not keep the promise to the ear and break it to the hope. The lowering of the suffrage must be done in a manner which satisfactorily and completely effects your object, and is at the same time consistent with maintaining the institutions of the country."—[3 *Hansard*, cliv. 140.]

[*Opposition cheers.*] I see that you hail with satisfaction the saving clause of "maintaining the institutions of the country." But we do not ask you now to sacrifice the institutions of the country. We do not ask you at this stage of the proceedings on the Bill to fix this or that particular standard for the lowering of the borough franchise. We may have our own views on the subject, and we have them. We have reduced them to what we think are the narrow limits of strict moderation. We ask you, whether you are or are not prepared to act on the principle announced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite when he said that the Government of Lord Derby, having before it the question whether it was to continue in possession of power or to retire from it, was ready to propose the lowering of the borough franchise? Well, Sir, I will not omit to notice what, perhaps, hon. Gentlemen opposite may consider important, that at a subsequent period, unless I am much mistaken, the right hon. Gentleman retracted those words. I rather believe, though I cannot give the exact date, that the right hon. Gentleman expressed an unfeigned repentance with regard to the promise he had given. But, Sir, the promise that he gave he gave while in power; he gave it as a Minister of the Crown. He gave it on the occasion of an appeal to Parliament—an appeal made in order to determine who was worthy to hold power, and who was not worthy to hold it. It was a promise given, I admit, under political pressure, but it was a promise on that very account all the more important and more sacred, and if in the ease and leisure of opposition the right hon. Gentleman has retracted it, that is not the first time such things have taken place—

> "Ease will retract
> Vows made in pain as violent and void."

And, Sir, let me not be misunderstood. I do not doubt that the right hon. Gentleman had a perfect right to make the promise, and he had a perfect right to retract it. It is not for me to question his discretion in the one step, nor do I intend to question it in the other. But let not the right hon. Gentleman suppose, and let not any Member of his party suppose, that the retractation of pledges once given by a Minister of the Crown can make those pledges to be as though they had never been given. They can never be effaced from the record of time; they can never be cancelled in the mind and memory of the nation: they will continue to stand among the material facts, which must bear upon the settlement of this question. A constitutional Government cannot go before the representatives of a free people to-day and say, "I promise you this, that, and the other," and to-morrow say to them, "I have changed my mind and I retract my promise."

Well, Sir, the engagement to which I have referred was subsequently given by the late Lord Palmerston. He not only assented to, but he actually took office upon the basis of a proposal to introduce an extension of the franchise which, if not numerically wider, yet adopted numerically a lower figure than that which we now propose. And I say that if the series of acts and declarations does not constitute an engagement between the governors of the country and those who sit in this House, and between the statesmen of this country and the people, I for one know not in what way, or under what circumstances, it is possible that such an engagement should be formed. Sir, it has been necessary to go into the history of this question—it is necessary to lay firmly and broadly the grounds of our discussion, because although I was more sanguine at a former period, I do not conceal from myself that we may now be upon the threshold of a long and a painful controversy. It is with the deepest grief that I contemplate the course that has been taken by the principal party now in Opposition, which I conscientiously believe had no adverse interest in regard to such a settlement of this question as we propose, though they have unhappily chosen to consider that they have such an interest. But now let us consider—and it is my justification for dwelling upon the history of the question—in what form this history is sometimes given. Now, in debate we sometimes speak with haste. In the daily press articles may sometimes, we must admit, be composed in haste, and even in the weekly press a trace of passing excitement may not be altogether inconceivable. But, Sir, we have likewise a quarterly press, and to that quarterly press we are entitled to look for what I may justly term the philosophy of history. I refer to *The Quarterly Review*, the latest number of which I had the privilege, through the kindness of my excellent and respected friend the publisher, of consulting yesterday, and there I find the philosophy of history as it is viewed by the acutest minds that can be arrayed in the service of that ancient and justly far-famed periodical. I see from this kind of history what sort of food is sometimes served up for the most fastidious appetites of the non-intellectual classes. The *Review* is published, I think, to-day, and what I am about to quote is from a critical notice of the Reform Bill. It is highly complimentary to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham as regards his weight and power, but not quite so much so as respects his moral character. The article in question is a philosophical statement of the real causes of this Reform Bill, and, starting from 1860, it shows why we have not had a Reform Bill since 1860, and why we have a Reform Bill now. These are its words—

> "Just as in 1860 and 1861 the reforming zeal of the Radicals was bought off by the sacrifice of the Paper Duty, so, from 1861 to 1865, it was appeased by the sacrifice of the gallant Confederacy. But with the fall of Richmond Mr. Bright's heart was set at ease concerning the fate of the Government to which his true allegiance is given."

I need not say what Government is intended; it is not the British Government. [*A cheer.*] I hear the voice of a reader for *The Quarterly Review*—

> "And the moment Lord Palmerston was removed by death the Government instinctively felt that the time had again come round for buying off once more their insatiable ally.
>
> "This time there was nothing for it but to reproduce a Reform Bill."

[*Opposition cheers.*] More readers of the *Quarterly Review.* [*Laughter* and *cheers.*] More assenting and applauding readers !—Gentlemen who think it was the duty of this country not to have sacrificed the gallant Confederacy—that is, who think that this country ought to have gone to war on its behalf—Gentlemen who thought, and who may still think, that what they called the sacrifice of the paper duty was a measure adopted simply to appease my hon. Friend, although they themselves, in Government, had recommended that sacrifice ; Gentlemen who search in the hidden recesses of the breasts of their opponents for what they call the causes of events, but who are totally oblivious of the fact of the repeated and solemn engagements of the Throne and the Government of this country, although they were engagements into which they themselves had entered. When we read such statements as this, it is necessary that the true history of this Reform Bill, depending not upon foolish imputations and visionary suppositions, but upon the recorded history of the country, should be brought to mind; and really, Sir, when I read this particular statement I sought for a description of it, and I could find no other so applicable—with the exception of one monosyllable which I wish entirely to pass over—as the reply of Prince Henry to Falstaff after the story of the men in buckram—

> "These lies are like the father that begot them—
> Gross as a mountain, open, palpable."

By "lies" of course I mean "erroneous statements." [*Much laughter.* An hon. MEMBER: Who is the father of them?] Who is the father of them I will not undertake to say, and of his dimensions of course I cannot possibly know anything, but whether he is or is not equivalent in size to his prototype this description is certainly a true one—

> "Gross as a mountain, open, palpable."

Sir, the House will remember that on a former occasion I ventured to refer to the state of the constituency at the present moment as compared with what it was in 1832; and I endeavoured to show by a computation, of which I stated the grounds, that the proportion of the working classes included in the present constituency, although to our great satisfaction we had found it to be larger than we had supposed, yet was smaller than it had been in the year 1832. That statement has not been impugned in this House, and I do not think it can be impugned successfully. I do not think that any Gentleman who has examined the figures will venture to question my statement that at the present moment the quantitative proportion of the working men in the town constituencies is less than it was in 1832. But in order to obtain a full view of the importance of this fact, neither must the House forget that since 1832 every kind of beneficial change has been in operation in favour of the working classes. There never was a period in which religious influences were more active than in the period I now name. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that within that time the civilizing and training powers of education have for all practical purposes been not so much improved as, I might almost say, brought into existence as far as the mass of the people is concerned. As regards the press, an emancipation and an extension have taken place to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. I will not believe that the mass of Gentlemen opposite are really insensible to the enormous benefit that has been effected by that emancipation of the press, when for the humble sum of a penny, or for even less, newspapers are circulated from day to day by the million rather than by the thousand, in numbers almost defying the powers of statistics to follow, and carrying home to all classes of our fellow-countrymen accounts of public affairs, enabling them to feel a new interest in the transaction of those affairs, and containing articles which, I must say, are written in a spirit, with an ability, with a sound moral sense, and with a refinement, that have made the penny press of England the worthy companion—I may indeed say the worthy rival—of those dearer and older papers which have long secured for British journalism a renown perhaps without parallel in the world. By external and material, as well as by higher means, by measures relating to labour, to police, and to sanitary arrangements, Parliament has been labouring, has been striving to raise the level of the working community, and has been so striving with admitted success. And there is not a call which has been made upon the self-improving powers of the working community which has not been fully answered. Take, for instance, the Working Men's Free Libraries and Institutes throughout the country; take, as an example of the class, Liverpool; who are the frequenters of that institution? I believe that the majority of the careful, honest, painstaking students who crowd that library are men belonging to the working classes, a large number of whom cannot attend without making some considerable sacrifice. Then again, Sir, we called upon them to be provident, we instituted for them Post Office savings banks, which may now be said to have been in full operation for four years; and what has been the result? During these four years we have received these names at the rate of thousands by the week, and there are now 650,000 depositors in those savings banks. This, then, is the way in which Parliament has been acting towards the working classes. But what is the meaning of all this? Parliament has been striving to make the working classes progressively fitter and fitter for the franchise; and can anything be more unwise, not to say more senseless, than to persevere from year to year in this plan, and then blindly to refuse to recognize its legitimate upshot—namely, the increased fitness of the working classes for the exercise of political power? The proper exercise of that power depends upon the fitness of those who are to receive it. That fitness you increase from day to day, and yet you decline, when the growing fitness is admitted, to give the power. ["No, no!" *from the back Opposition Benches.*] You decline to give the working classes political power by lowering the borough franchise. ["No, no!" *from the back Opposition Benches.*] I do not complain of the interruption—in fact, I am very glad to hear it. [*Cheers and laughter.*] I wish that cry were much louder, I wish it were universal, I wish it came from the front Opposition Benches, and from my noble Friend behind me; for if our opponents were so prepared to proceed in what seems their natural sense, we should have little matter for controversy on the subject of this Bill. But I fear it is not so. I fear the intention is to resist the consummation of the process, of which the earlier stages have been favoured and approved. This course appears about as rational as the process of a man who incessantly pours water into a jug or bason, and wonders and complains that at last it overflows.

Now, what are the arguments that the busy brain of man has framed in opposition to this measure? It is one favourite plea of our opponents that we ought not to hand over the power to govern to those who do not pay the charges of Government. In the depository of wisdom to which I have referred that argument occupies a very prominent place, as it did in the speech of a noble Lord (Viscount Cranbourne), a very distinguished Member of this House, from which I am afraid the writers in the *Quarterly Review* have been guilty of gross plagiarism on more occasions than one. But is this the thing that we are really going to do? are we, indeed, going to hand over the power to those who do not pay the charges of Government? I will not at this moment go into the first portion of the proposition, although I say distinctly we are not going to hand over the power at all; but is it true that the working classes do not contribute fairly, fully, largely, to the expenses of Government? This question was put to me two days ago, in consequence of my statement that, according to the best estimate I could form, the working classes were possessed of an income forming not less than five-twelfths—that is, not very far short of one-half—of the entire income of the country. I repeat that statement in the presence of those who are able to correct me if I am wrong, and in the presence of the greatest economist of the day. Others have made higher estimates. The hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Bass), who is no mean authority upon subjects connected with the earnings of the working classes, has placed their income at a much higher rate than I have done. This is a matter on which I may be confuted, but scarcely contradicted, because the question is not one of fact but of inquiry, argument, and inference. I repeat that, in my judgment, after the best examination I can make, it is a moderate estimate to put the income of the working classes at five-twelfths of the aggregate income of the country, whereas they are put off under the present law with, at the outside, only one-seventh of the electoral power. Now, on the very showing of our antagonists, and putting aside altogether the question how far the human element itself may weigh, apart from money, is not such a state of things absolutely unjust? [*Loud cheers.*] Perhaps I shall be told that I have based my estimate upon the income and not upon the property of the working classes. Probably that may be the answer to my statement. Yes, I hear a cheer. I admit I have spoken in reference to income, and not in reference to property. Well, anyone so inclined may take it on that ground if he chooses; but he must also take the consequence of having made that choice, and he must be prepared to change the whole system of your taxation. We now lay upon income the great bulk of your taxes, and to these taxes the working classes contribute, perhaps, a larger proportion, looking at the amount of their earnings, than is paid by the proudest noble in the land. I, therefore, say to those Gentlemen who argue that the working classes are not entitled to the franchise because they do not possess property, that they must be prepared to join hands with the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), and with the financial reformers of Liverpool, and instead of raising a fourteenth part of the revenue, or some such proportion, as we now do, from property and the rest from income, we must raise a fourteenth part from income and the rest from property.

Again it is said, at least I believe it has been so said, that where the working classes have a majority they vote together as a class. Now, is there any shade or shadow, any rag of proof that such is the fact? I am going to trespass upon the patience of the House by reading a letter which I received to-day from a working man, and which I shall venture to read for the especial benefit of the Gentlemen opposite. I believe the statements it contains to be perfectly true, and it is my sincere opinion that the writer's arguments are typical of the class to which he belongs. In any case their nature is such that I am confident hon. Gentlemen will not be sorry to hear them.

> "Dear Sir" (I do not know him personally, but he thus kindly addresses me)—"My motive in writing this is to remind you of the Tories who belong to the working classes, as you cannot think perhaps all you wish at the right time. We all know that there are the same variety of principles and opinions in all classes of society. I am a working man, and have an opportunity of knowing that the Tories in principle, especially the artizan class, are very numerous, who are not now in possession of the franchise. The new Reform Bill, I think, will do about as much for the Tories as for the Liberals. It would for all we know. The love of country and constitution is confined to no particular class. A Liberal is as loyal as a Tory. Is there any evidence to show that these men which the Reform Bill or Franchise Bill would enfranchise are not fit to be trusted? They know well that the welfare and prosperity of their country and their masters is at the same time their welfare and prosperity. Please not to make my name public."

Well, Sir, in my opinion, the letter presents a true view of the question. There is that in it latent concentrated good sense which often comes from the mind, from the mouth, and from the pen of an uneducated man with a peculiar free meaning, perhaps because he is in a certain sense, as I may say, without any reproach or disparagement to education, so much nearer to the point at which nature originally placed him than are men with minds more refined and cultivated. Now, Sir, I maintain that there is no proof whatever that the working classes, if enfranchised, would act together as a class. Perhaps you ask for proofs to the contrary. It is exceedingly difficult to give a direct proof of that which has not happened: although in my opinion ample proof, substantial, even if indirect, of the correctness of my statement does exist. For example, I take this point. Municipal franchises are in a predominant degree working men's franchises. Those franchises, if they do not quite come up to universal suffrage, at all events nearly approach household suffrage. What has been the system followed by the working classes in municipal elections? In order to institute a comparison between the municipal and Parliamentry franchises we must select those towns in which the municipal and Parliamentary boundaries are the same. There are 346,000 municipal voters in that portion of the towns of this country, and, computing as well as the information in our hands will permit, I find that there are 163,000 of them on the Parliamentary register. I deduct from that number one-fourth or 41,000 as representing the maximum portion of working men, and the result is that there remain 122,000 as the number of non-working men in the municipal constituency. Thus the working men number 224,000. Is not this a dreadful state of things? Yet there has been no explosion, no antagonism between classes, no question has been raised about property, nor indeed has any, even the slightest attempt, been made to give a political character to municipal institutions. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes, but when the municipal franchise was discussed in 1835 the party who occupied the seats of hon. Gentlemen opposite —[Mr. DISRAELI: Where were you sitting then?] If, however, such questions are relevant to the matter in hand, I was sitting on the Benches of that party; but I was not one of those who supported the argument. Where was the right hon. Gentleman sitting at that time? He was not sitting, indeed, for he did not sit at all, but he was standing somewhere or other in the interests of the "Mountain" far above the Benches behind me. The material point, Sir, is this, that many of the Gentlemen who were then sitting opposite prophesied that great danger and mischief would spring from the municipal franchise, because it would give a political character to municipal elections, and imbue all our corporations with a similar spirit. That being the case, I think I am perfectly justified in standing upon an important and strictly relevant fact, that, as far as I am aware, we are not able to adduce a single instance in which this majority composed from the working class majority has given a democratic—I will not say a disloyal, but a democratic character—a character distinct from that which they bore under the influence of the middle classes to our municipal institutions.

Again, Sir, with respect to the Parliamentary constituency, let Gentlemen glance impervially at the present state of things. I have previously referred to the metropolitan boroughs, which return a large number of what are denominated "advanced" politicians on this side of the House, and which have less than the usual proportion of voters of the working class. I pass now to the other end of the scale. I find that among the present town constituencies there are eight boroughs in which the working classes constitute a majority on the registers. These eight towns are—Beverley, Coventry, Greenwich, St. Ives, Maldon, Stafford, Pembroke, and Newcastle-under-Lyne. What is the revolutionary character of the Members whom they return? I find that these eight towns return five who bear the name of Liberal, and nine who claim to belong to the Opposition. This, then, is the result, as far as our narrow experience goes, of having the working classes in the majority.

But there is a much broader ground, to which, I think, no reference has yet been made, and that is the case of the boroughs which had open constituencies containing large majorities of the working classes before the Reform Act — constituencies much more popular than those of the present day. Upon examining the probable operation of the new Bill, I find that, according to our very large definitions of the working classes—a definition which I have employed rather for argument's sake, I mean in order to avoid contention, than because it was strictly and literally accurate—I find this as the result, that in sixty boroughs, returning 101 Members, the working classes will or may have majorities. In these sixty boroughs the electors form 8·4 per cent of the population. Now, let us compare with this state of things the state of things that existed in the popular boroughs before the Reform Act. Before 1830 there were sixty-five boroughs of a strictly popular character; more popular, indeed, than the sixty boroughs that are likely to have a majority of the labouring classes under the Bill now on the table, for the electors in them instead of being 8·4 per cent of the population, numbered nearly 10 per cent, and furthermore, the sixty-five boroughs returned Members for 130 seats. If it be true that the majority of the working classes in a constituency give the control of the seat, which, however, I entirely deny, you cannot show that, under our Bill, there would be more than 101 such seats; while, under the old Parliamentary system, that system which so scandalizes my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), they numbered 130. We now, therefore, stand, to a certain extent, upon the firm ground of history and experience for the purpose of comparison. Was there among those 130 Members at any period of our history developed a character in any degree dangerous to the institutions of the country? I doubt if any Gentleman will be found ready to affirm that there was. Sir, it appears to me that these are considerations of great interest, considerations entitled to weight when presented, if it be not done in an offensive manner, to the minds of moderate and reflective men on whichever side of the House they may sit while dealing with this question; if there be a desire, and we are told there is a desire, to see it settled, I frankly own that I, for one, can see nothing dangerous to the party opposite in the proposed reduction of the borough franchise from £10 to £7. There can, I am persuaded, be nothing dangerous to them in that reduction if they will only take warning by the experience of the Reform Act. There was nothing in that measure prejudicial to the power or to the just influence of the party opposite, but by their own persevering conduct they chose to give it that character. The Reform Act was injurious to them through the effect produced on the mind of the nation by their determined resistance to its progress. As long as I could do so, therefore, I cherished the hope that the recollection of the Reform Act and the consequence of their resistance as exhibited in the transfer of predominant power to their adversaries for almost the whole of a period of five and thirty years, would lead them to avoid falling a second time in the same generation into so palpable a snare, and that they would not prejudice themselves and their credit in the opinions of the bulk of the population by offering a resistance that cannot fail, if it be prolonged, to engender more or less of aversion and hostility.

I think, Sir, these facts are sufficient to disprove the proposition that where the working classes form the majority of a constituency, its members work together in combination against the other portions of society. Perhaps I may be told that my argument goes too far, and that if that be true, there can be no danger in a much larger enfranchisement than that which is proposed by the present measure. I have already said that, in my opinion, some further enfranchisement would not be attended by danger to the State. That, however, is an opinion I cannot expect Parliament, in its present mind, to adopt; and I must add that, though I believe some further enfranchisement would not be dangerous, I am far from saying that it would be wise to go to great lengths in that direction. Changes that effect sudden and extensive transfer of power are attended by great temptations to human nature, and, however high our opinion may be of the labouring classes or of any other classes of the community, I do not believe that it would be right to place such a temptation within their reach. The genius of our country and the history of our institutions dictate and recommend gradual progress, and in the mode of gradual progress, therefore, these changes should be made.

But, Sir, it is constantly alleged, and the argument is employed with confidence, that, if we would only let the matter take its course, the enfranchisement of the working classes is actually in course of being effected by a natural process, whereas we are endeavouring to stimulate and force onwards this enfranchisement by artificial means. This is a matter upon which I should be extremely slow to dogmatize; because it does not admit of being brought to a test with such precision as to warrant the employment of any tone of superlative confidence. But I must say that the whole of the argument upon such facts as are known to us is the other way, and that I wait with anxiety, but without expectation, for the proof of this enlargement, of this natural and spontaneous enlargement, with which it is said we are rashly intermeddling. The number of working men on the register is, I think, undeniably less at present than it was in 1832; but, of course, there is the fact that since 1832 the working men belonging to the class of freemen have somewhat diminished. I do not think that the diminution in this direction is numerically of much importance, but there has been a great diminution in the scot and lot voters who are working men. This class is not, indeed, yet extinct; and therefore, in our computations respecting the future, we must allow for a continuance of this dwindling process, until the whole number of scot and lot voters in existence at the time of the Reform Bill has disappeared. It is said, however, that there is a rapid growth of the working classes among the £10 householders. But where is the proof of this assertion? I believe it to be undeniable that the rate of progress in the aggregate number of £10 householders has been very much less of late years than in the first few years after the passing of the Reform Bill. From 1832 to 1851, while the population increased at the rate of 43 per cent, the constituency grew more than twice as fast, but from 1851 to 1866 the constituency grew only 50 per cent faster than the aggregate population, thus showing a great slackening as compared with the earlier period. This, however, can in some degree be accounted for. There were persons not belonging to the working classes who were classed under other denominations at the time of the Reform Act, but whose successors, as they died off, have subsequently appeared as £10 householders. But it is a mistake, I believe, to imagine that some very extraordinary growth has taken place among the £10 householders; and a still greater mistake to imagine that such growth, as may have occurred, has taken place in the working portion of the population. Let us look at the economical facts of the case. If we take the case of the towns, we find that the increase of the constituencies since 1832 has been nearly the same for the entire period as that of the population. In the population it has been 79 per cent, and in the franchise 82 per cent; a variation so slight that it may be practically disregarded. It is said that there is a growth in the wealth of the working classes more than proportionate to that of the classes above them; but no attempt has been made to prove this. In my firm opinion, the largest share of the recent increase of wealth has taken place among the middle classes of the country. To put it shortly and intelligibly, the capital of the country has grown in a far greater degree than the income of the working classes. But other circumstances must be taken into view. We must not assume that the improvement in the dwellings of the artizans in towns has kept pace with the increase of their income, nor even that they are in as great a degree as formerly the occupiers of houses so as to obtain the franchise. Again, we must remember that in the large towns, where the area is limited, the growth in the value of land and rents has been much more rapid than the growth of wealth. If we inquire what is the value of land in the City of London, and compare it with what it was twenty years ago, we shall find that its growth is entirely out of proportion to the growth in the wealth of the City, great as that has been. This constant pressure of growing rents and limitation of area may drive the working man into lodgings, or may send him to such a dwelling beyond the limits of a represented town instead of within them. I shall not be going too far if I assert—in fact, I may say that it is notorious—that there are large masses of the labouring people, especially in London, who, as compared with their position twenty years ago, are better clothed and better fed, but who live in worse houses than they did, although enjoying a larger income. And this arises from the fact that there is not the same limitation in the supply of food and clothing as exists in the supply of houses, because of the contraction of area. I state my own opinions with the reserve that the nature of the question requires; but I must say that I have heard no good argument to the contrary. And I stand finally upon this general statement of the case. For a man to occupy a house of £10 clear annual value, setting aside only the class of men who receive lodgers into their houses, he must, all things considered, have an income from £90 to £100 a year. That clear annual value is minus rates and taxes, and it is minus the cost and the depreciation of furniture also. It is vain then to stand in the face of your working population and say, "We have a law which will enfranchise all the careful, diligent, and respectable men among you; but no working man is intelligent, or industrious, or respectable unless he can earn 35*s*. a week." That is too severe a test; and my general statement of the facts is enough, therefore, to show that it is vain to speak of a £10 franchise, taking the country all over, as one which is capable of admitting, by the natural or spontaneous process which has been set up in argument against us, in all the industrious and diligent among the lower classes.

Sir, I must now beg leave to deny that any general transfer of power, either in counties or boroughs, is contemplated by this Bill. That is to say, the preponderance of power in the constituencies now lying in one quarter is not by it, in our opinion, to be carried over to another. We are met too much, I think, by suspicions and by fears. But with suspicion it is vain to deal; it is vain to deal with fear. The reasonable course is to go to the facts and figures and see how they stand. I am now going to estimate the maximum of this formidable invasion that we are given to understand the country may have to contend with if the Bill pass. There are 658 Members of Parliament; and I would ask first how far will the character of the representation be "tainted," so to call it, by an infusion of the influence of the labouring classes? To begin with, there are 254 county Members. Hon. Gentlemen are aware of the character of the county franchise; and I think they will be inclined to admit that that body of 254 county Members is almost free from "the contamination of the working classes." [*Cries of* "No, no!" *from the Opposition.*] I hear cries of "No!" Very well; but I am unable to endorse the opinion, unless, indeed, it be thought that one working man taints a county constituency like a fly in a pot of ointment. I say that, as far as I know, there are no county constituencies where the working class is predominant. I really think that is a proposition not admitting dispute, and it is the only proposition relevant to the present issue. For the inquiry I have now in contemplation is, how many are the seats in the elections to which the working class will be a majority. If I am told they will have an influence also when they are a minority, I reply that much more will the wealthier classes have an influence when they are a minority. Taking, then, the ruling character of each constituency from its majority (and this, I think, involves as to working men an unduly large admission) I put counties as a general rule, out of the question. It is true that county Members from Ireland are returned by a £12 rating franchise; but I presume we shall not call those persons working men unless they be tenants, and as tenants-at-will they may be more or less under influence, and can hardly be called working men in the sense we now contemplate.

Mr. DISRAELI: There are the 40*s.* freeholders, of whom a great many are working men.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: They are, I apprehend, for the most part, like the fly in the pot of ointment. ["No, no!" *from the Opposition.*] What is the proportion? If we are to carry on the debate in this interlocutory fashion, I would ask what is the proportion of 40*s.* freeholders in the constituency of Bucks?

Mr. DISRAELI: I will tell you when I speak.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: The right hon. Gentleman interpolates questions in the middle of my speech—very fairly I admit, and I make no complaint of it if that course be thought convenient—yet, when I invite him to continue the argument in his own way, he declines to follow. Then I only wish to say—and certainly I thought it generally believed—that the proportion of working men in the county constituencies is too small to allow us to reckon the county seats as seats which could be brought under their influence. I take it, then, that the county constituencies are free from the predominance of working-class influence. If it be not so, I shall be obliged to put the proposition in a manner much more unfavourable to my opponents. I have not dealt unfairly by you in saying the county constituencies, having only a minority of working men, are free from the influence of the working classes; because I have on the other side allowed nothing for the influence of minorities composed of the middle and upper class. Now, the towns in England and Wales where it is likely there may be a majority of working men in the constituency have 101 seats; the towns where they must apparently be a minority have 239 seats. I assume for the moment the same proportions in the Scotch and Irish towns. Upon that assumption the effect will be that the working classes will have a majority in 120 towns and cities of the three kingdoms, and they will be in a minority in 284 towns and cities. Then come the county constituencies, returning 254 Members. Therefore, putting these numbers together, the working classes will be in a minority in 538 seats, against 120 seats, in the filling of which they may be in a majority. Is that a transfer of power such as you ought to fear?

Sir, I am astonished when I find that it positively seems to be held by intelligent men, such is the effect of fears and suspicions, that property is a cause of weakness, and that mere numbers, in spite of all history and experience, are to be regarded as stronger in determining the force of political opinions than similar numbers when they happen to be backed by property. To the very liberal statement I have made I invite the closest consideration, and I presume to think that Members will be returned to fill at least 9·11ths of the seats of the country by constituencies where the influence of the working class cannot possibly, as a general rule, predominate.

Now, I am desirous to make well understood to the House the position in which the Government stands. I am not about to qualify or alter in any respect, but to confirm, what has already been asserted. To those Gentlemen whom we believe to be earnestly united with ourselves in desiring an extension of the franchise we have cheerfully made a concession. Although we ourselves believed, and believe it to be, the wisest course to dispose of the great subject of the franchise before we went forward to discuss in any way the question of re-distribution of seats, yet we have promised to set our views before you in the most definite and formal manner—that is, in the shape of Bills upon the Scotch and Irish franchise and upon the re-distribution of seats—before we go into Committee upon this Bill. That is what we have said; and we have also said, what I really until the day before yesterday had always believed to be unnecessary to state in express words, that in speaking of this great subject of the representation of the people as a matter vital to the credit, and, therefore, to the existence of the Government, we included the subject of re-distribution of seats along with the subject of the franchise. I had not thought it necessary to say this, because it seemed to me so obvious that nothing could be more contemptible and base than the conduct of a Government which could give forth, with a view of enlisting the generous confidence of its supporters, that it would deal with the subject of Reform and would stand or fall by its propositions, and which all the while could silently exclude from the scope of their declaration all portions of that question, except only the reduction of the franchise, though among such questions we find one only second in importance to that of the franchise itself.

Sir, I could wish the House more clearly to understand than they do at present, as to the mode in which the question of time has been treated by the Government, as it bears on the progress of this Bill. I have seen or heard it stated, in multitudinous forms, that I have made it known on the part of the Government that we will not go on with anything during the present year, except the question of the franchise. I have never said anything of the kind. But this I have declared—looking at the ordinary duration of the Session, and so much I said on the introduction of the Bill, we did not believe that within that period it would be practicable to deal with those other portions of the subject. Allowing for full and free discussion upon all parts of the subject, we could not expect that these two portions of it would be dealt with, and still less could we entertain a favourable expectation as to the other portions of it, within the ordinary and recognized period for the duration of the Session. But, beyond all this, I have stated, as is well known, that we for our parts, from motives of duty, are indisposed to proceed with any other part of the subject until the fate of the Franchise Bill is determined. When we shall conceive that its fate is determined, it will then be for us to review our position. A portion of our work will still, it is true, remain to be performed; but we shall then more fully know the state of public business, and the feeling and desires of the House. The Franchise Bill is so framed, and professedly so framed, as to afford ample time for disposing of the whole matter under that branch of the subject, without much disturbance of the arrangements of the House—I mean of hon. Members of this House. The notices to be given with a view to registration must be given, I think, on the 10th of June; and as the most sanguine among sanguine men would hardly suppose that this Bill could receive the Royal assent before the next 10th of June, it follows with certainty that the new constituency cannot be in existence till the end of the year 1867; and consequently, and beyond all fear of what may be the will of the Government of the day, either this Parliament, or, at any rate, one elected by the present constituency, has ample time for dealing with the whole subject. There may, however, be Gentlemen who have as great a love of comprehensive action as to be willing to make personal sacrifices on its behalf, and if there should be any extended desire for a prorogation or adjournment of the House there is nothing in the world to prevent our proceeding during the autumn and fall of the present year with the matter not contained in this Bill, but necessary to make up a complete measure for the amendment of the representation of the people. The appetite for redistribution seems to have grown so enormously within the last few weeks, that if there be a determination to let the grouse, the partridges, and the pheasants have a holiday, and to call Parliament together whether by prorogation or adjournment in order to get this great work out of hand it is not for us to plead our own personal convenience; we shall be ready to make the sacrifice and come up as well as we can, though with visages perhaps pale and languid enough, to set a last hand to the accomplishment of the work. That, Sir, is the position in which we stand as a Government.

Now, Sir, there is, as far as I know, but one allegation made in these debates which is broad enough to cover the opposition to the Bill. I am convinced that all attempts to show there is under the present electoral law a self-working enfranchisement, adequate to the cause, all attempts to show that every working man if only he be intelligent, respectable, and well-conducted, can now come upon the register, will utterly break down. Such allegations cannot be sustained on any careful investigation. There is only one allegation—I do not say whether it has been made—but it was that which was supposed to have been made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne. [Mr. Lowe: Understood to have been made.] And I am bound to say, as far as words have meaning, and so far as I can form a judgment of that meaning, rightly so understood. Of course, I accept at once the disclaimer of a man of whom I freely confess that, in my judgment, he is not more eminent for his extraordinary intellectual power—a power in many points never surpassed and rarely matched in this House, than he is entitled to the utmost respect for his integrity. And, Sir, I take this opportunity of making an apology to my right hon. Friend for having used hastily elsewhere some fugitive words which might have appeared to cast a reflection on his courage. I did not mean any such thing, and if I uttered words which appeared to convey that imputation, I am very sorry for it. But my right hon. Friend will allow me to explain, or rather allow me to answer his explanation, on my own behalf. He has publicly stated that I have been answering at Liverpool the speech which he made in the House of Commons. I did nothing of the kind. It was an answer, so far as it was an answer at all, to a letter which I perceived from the public journals that he had addressed to a portion of the electors of Calne; and I noticed the strange conclusions and the singular labyrinthine complications in which it appeared to me that a certain artful Mr. Bishop had contrived to entangle him. But my right hon. Friend says that, in the speech which he delivered in this House, he referred not to the mass of the labouring class, whom he very greatly respects, but to some persons in the different constituencies. I will not dwell on the fact that in his letter he went on to describe that very portion of the labouring class included within the several constituencies as men who had won their way there by forethought, and as men whom it would be an injustice to mix with the inferior persons below them. But my right hon. Friend, speaking of these guilty persons in possession of the franchise, used four memorable words. And my right hon. Friend's phrases are not words that evaporate, not like what has been said of lovers' vows—

> "In vento et rapidâ scribere oportet aquâ"

—he uses a pen of steel, and his words are written on the rock. "Ignorant, drunken, venal, violent;" words but too easily remembered! My right hon. Friend, he tells us in his letter, spoke of that portion of the labouring classes in the constituencies. Did he speak of them generally, or merely of one or two here and there among them? If he spoke of them generally, then I say his bold allegation is sufficient for its end. If he spoke of a few men among them, exceptions to the general conduct and character of their order, then his allegation is, as an argument, worthless; his arrow falls short of the mark. He has no right to apply Pride's Purge to the labouring class, and say, "from you we will riddle out, before we admit you to political rights, every man who is a spendthrift, every man who is a drunkard, every man who has broken any one of the Ten Commandments," while those higher in station, but exempt from the operation of this purge of his, may have been wanting in every one of these respects with perfect impunity, and may be admitted to the constituency, or to this House, without, forsooth, in the slightest degree impairing the efficiency of Parliament. But did my right hon. Friend speak only of the Members of existing constituencies? Is there a man now present, is there a man who heard my right hon. Friend deliver that notable speech, who forgets his famous simile of the Hyperboreans? Who and what were they? There was a belief, he informed us, among the ancients, that though the north wind brought cold from the region next to them—that was the region of the £10 constituencies; that is the region in which we stand now, yet that by going a little further towards the north —that is, by going successively to £9, to £8, to £7, and eventually to £6—at last they would arrive at a warm country. My right hon. Friend exposed the absurdity of the idea; and it was not the constituencies alone—it was the masses behind and below the constituencies to whom his observations applied, and who in his simile occupied the place of the still colder and colder tracts which we must encounter as we travel further and further north. Nor is this all. My right hon. Friend supplied us with another and yet more glaring proof of his meaning—though I had endeavoured to warn him off the ground—in the use which he made of an illustration from *Virgil*. I had said, speaking of the measure, surely this is no "monstrum infelix," no horse charged with armed men who are to be let loose from its womb only that they may carry fire and desolation through your homes. But my right hon. Friend, in his impatience, as though this instead of being a warning had been a hook that had been baited to allure him, rushed straight at his mark, and with portentous emphasis delivered the two lines from which my words were taken—

> "Instamus tamen immemores, cæcique furore,
> Et monstrum infelix sacratâ sistimus arce."

What is the "monstrum infelix?" Who are the persons contained within its hollow side? They are the voters at £7. Sir, I am not seeking to tie my right hon. Friend to this construction. What I have said, I have said to justify myself for having believed, with reluctance and with pain, but still for having honestly believed, that his speech was a denunciation of the working community. If I have been wrong, by all means let us hear it. For one, I shall hear it with joy. It is a matter of deep importance. It has affected the whole tone of thought and language on the question, within and beyond this House. My right hon. Friend has explained his speech. Let him explain his explanation. And when he explains it, let us distinctly understand — is this a charge against the mass of his working fellow-citizens, in which case it is untrue —or is it only a charge against certain bad characters among them, in which case it is insufficient? If that argument of my right hon. Friend can be sustained in the more unfavourable sense, then I admit it is sufficient to destroy this Bill. But, in that case, I think it sufficient to destroy a great deal else along with this Bill. It is sufficient to destroy the hopes of every generous heart and every intelligent mind; there is nothing to hope for England, if that picture which my right hon. Friend, with his matchless power, strove to draw be indeed a true picture. I thank the House for the great patience and kindness with which it has heard me on a subject such as this, and after what has occurred, it can hardly be but that men should become warm. But let us endeavour to keep our balance; let us recollect to look before and after. In this spirit I do earnestly intreat and conjure the House on whichever side, to remember that it is not enough for us now to say, as we shall soon be asked to say, "We are ready to entertain the question of Reform with a view to its settlement." Enough, and more than enough, there have been already, of barren, idle, mocking words. Deeds are what are wanted. I beseech you to be wise; and, above all, to be wise in time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. LOWE: Sir, I now only interpose for two minutes to retard the speech which the House of course wishes to hear, as I shall have, at a later period of the debate, to address the House on the subject of this Bill; but, as I desire very much to disentangle the discussion from anything of a personal nature, I ask permission, as one who has been much spoken against since the House met here last, to say now what I have to say in answer to the charge that has been brought up again to-night by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now, what I am anxious to meet is not any argument which can be drawn from my words. Any Gentleman is free to draw any inference, however unfavourable to me, from my own words, as long as he does so avowedly as an inference. But what I rise to protest against and to which I desire to call the attention of the House, and, through the House, of the country, is the gross, systematic and wilful perversion of the language which I used in this House. It was used entirely *alio intuitu.* Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer enjoy the inferences he drew; I am not going to waste the time of the House in partially entering upon these questions. I so little expected this attack to be renewed, after what has passed, that I did not come down to the House furnished even with the documents which would enable me accurately and word by word to refute it. I was arguing whether, well or ill, it was wise to lower the franchise. I drew this argument, or intended to draw it, from the notorious malpractices existing in many boroughs, and among a large number of the constituency in those boroughs. I meant to speak of matters of notorious fact, verified by the Reports of Committees and of Commissions appointed by this House. I did characterize the proceedings of those electors, I did refer to the Reports of those Committees, as showing that venality, drunkenness, ignorance, and violence were very prevalent in many constituencies. And that such was my intention is quite manifest from the beginning of the sentence. "I have some acquaintance with the constituencies of this country," I said, "and if you want to find persons possessing these four cardinal vices, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer calls them, where would you look — to the top or to the bottom?"—that is, of course, to the top or to the bottom of the constituencies. Well, Sir, certain gentlemen, whom it becomes me to speak of with every respect, got up an address to me in which they thought fit to leave out the beginning and the end of that passage in my speech. They left out the part which showed that I was referring to existing constituencies, and they left out the words, "Where will you go to look for them—to the top or to the bottom?" In manipulating my speech in that manner they were joined by the penny press, whose blessings the Chancellor of the Exchequer has dilated on to-night. Now, I have nothing to say to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for drawing any inference he likes from what I said here or what I have stated in print—what I have said I repeat: but I am informed—if I have been misinformed I can be contradicted—that to the meeting assembled around him yesterday the noble Earl the Prime Minister condescended to read that passage, garbling it exactly in the way it had been garbled before, and leaving out the concluding words, which show clearly the persons to whom my words apply. More than that, the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), in his speech at Rochdale, a few days ago, not only left out the words after "where will you go to look for them," but put in their place—"to the unrepresented classes"—words which I never spoke; words which are not in either of the reports of my speech to which I have referred; words which, though I do not know where the hon. Gentleman obtained them, I do not say he invented—probably were invented by some of his organs in the press. That is what I want to protest against—not only deliberate falsification, but the reprehensible arts of omission and suppression, of suggestion and the substitution of words never spoken. No man in the world has been subjected to more abuse than I have been during the last month. That abuse has been procured by the deliberate and purposed misrepresentation, misstatement, and misquotation of my language. The persons to whom that abuse has been addressed have not the opportunity of consulting the original record of my words. They have to take those words on the authority of the press which instructs, or the orators who inflame them. Sir, I make my protest in the face of this House against that process of political warfare. I entirely deny that I meant to speak of——

Mr. OWEN STANLEY rose to order, amid great cries of "Order!" and "Chair!" He was understood to say that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne would have an opportunity of speaking after the Amendment had been moved, and then would be the proper time for him to make the remarks which he had been proceeding to address to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has not pointed out anything which justified his interruption of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly in order.

Mr. LOWE: I only wish, Sir, to say in this public manner, that it never was my intention to say anything reflecting on the honour of the working classes of this country as a body. Whatever may be the inferences drawn from my speeches, those inferences are legitimate arguments, and I must meet them as I may; but I hope the House of Commons as an Assembly of gentlemen—for though you are a Court, you cannot, like the Court of Chancery, issue injunctions—will set their face against the attempt to put down a man by libel. For myself I can say—whatever my failings may be, and no one is more conscious of them than I am myself—in this matter of Parliamentary Reform I have acted as my conscience dictated and with perfect integrity.

Earl GROSVENOR: Sir, if the House will allow me, I will take the liberty of bringing it down to the region of commonplace. In rising to move the Resolution of which I have given notice, I must first of all beg the indulgence of this House, and more especially of those Members who sit on this side of it, in opposition to whom I have the misfortune on this occasion to appear to act—an indulgence which I know I shall not ask in vain. I am aware that the task which I have undertaken would require some one of more eloquence and ability, and a more practised debater than I am. The only merit that I can lay claim to is founded on the sincerity of my conviction in the course I am taking and on the honesty of my motives. I can assure the House that it was not without great hesitation, not without great anxiety, that I consented to move the Amendment of which I have given notice, nor did I do so without having taken the advice of men in high position well qualified to advise, and on whose judgment I could confidently rely. Sir, I have been the subject of very many attacks, both in writing and in speeches, since the time I gave notice of my Amendment; but no more unfair or more ungenerous an attack has been made upon me than that of the learned Member for Oxford. I do not wish to be understood for a moment as alluding to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies—a man of a high and noble mind, for whom I have the greatest respect. I allude to a speech delivered by the learned Gentleman the Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate), in which he is also represented to have said that it would be presumption on my part to interpose between the great intellects of the House, and that my part would rather be to give a silent vote on this question. My own inclination would have led me to give a silent vote on this as I have done on many former occasions; but I felt that there were times and occasions when inclination must give way to duty, and without affectation I may say that I conceived the present to be one of those occasions. I hope the House will allow me to say a word on a circumstance that occurred yesterday in reference to myself, as I believe the matter has been misunderstood. I was anxious to have a clear understanding with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the course to be taken by the Government in reference to the measure for the re-distribution of seats; as, judging from the detailed account given by *The Star* of a meeting held elsewhere, there seemed to be some misapprehension on the subject. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Lewes (Mr. Brand) said the Government were anxious to answer any question on the subject, and my object was to obtain either a corroboration or a contradiction of the statement as to the course which the Government intended to adopt in respect of that measure. I was not, however, able to put the question owing to the forms of the House. The noble Lord at the head of the Government was reported to have said, in reply to the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton), that he intended to proceed with the Bill for the extension of the franchise at once, but did not tie himself to any time in respect of proceeding with the other Bills. I think I am justified, in some measure, in bringing forward the Resolution of which I have given notice, by the fact that though the Government have practically conceded a portion of what it asks for by promising to lay the other Bills on the table of the House, yet the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech this evening, has totally evaded the question. He has made no reference to the main point on which the Resolution touches—namely, that before the House commits itself to the second reading of this Bill, it requires to have under its consideration the whole scheme of Reform contemplated by the Government. Sir, for many years I have been proud to follow the present Prime Minister; I have been a follower and a humble supporter of his and of other Liberal Administrations, in supporting the measures they have brought forward, which I considered conducive to the good of the country; and I know the great abilities of the noble Lord, and his heartfelt devotion to the cause of Reform. He began his career of Reform in 1821, and I for one have felt regret at the manner in which the noble Lord has been attacked in some portion of the press since he succeeded to the office of Prime Minister. I am aware that I lay myself open on this occasion not only to the imputation of deserting the Government, but also the party of which I have hitherto been a Member. When in 1859 the noble Lord moved a Resolution against the Reform Bill of Lord Derby's Government, I followed him into the lobby. May I be permitted to doubt now whether I was right in so doing? It may be wisdom after the event, but it has struck me since that the noble Lord and those who followed him then lost an opportunity of effectually settling the question of Reform in their desire to object to and defeat the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I would ask the question, whether the Government does not lay itself open, upon this question, to the charge of deserting its party, when in bringing forward a measure of Reform it consults mainly, and in the first instance, the feelings and wishes of hon. Gentlemen who sit below the gangway. Does not the accusation of deserting their party attach more properly to the Members of the Government than to some of the Members of that party? and are not the Government, in disregarding the feelings and opinions of the great majority of the Whig party, and forsaking the old traditions of that party and allowing themselves to be guided by the opinions of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, really deserting their party? I am proud on this occasion to be able to say on the part of some—it may be a few—Members on this side of the House, that they at all events are determined as to the course they will pursue on this question, preferring to consider the real interests of their country before their allegiance to the Government. Without in the least degree wishing to arrogate to myself any superior merit or extraordinary virtue, I may be permitted to inquire and wonder how it is so many Members on this side of the House, while partially approving this Bill as containing many good points, but disapproving it—

judging from what they have said in conversation in the lobby and also out of doors—because they consider some of its provisions ill-considered and not required by the circumstances of the times, find it consistent with their duty and with their conscience to support the Government on this occasion. Agreeing with the spirit of the Resolution I have the honour to propose, they yet deem it to be their duty to vote for the second reading of the Bill. I believe that those Members on this side of the House who are acting with me are acting a not unfriendly part to the Government and to their country. We know how the motives and acts of friends are sometimes misconstrued and misunderstood. I believe the time will come when our motives will be appreciated by a party stronger and more united because moderate in its views. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech at Liverpool announced that the trumpet of the Government would blow no uncertain sound. The right hon. Gentleman must have obtained renewed courage from the effect of his trumpet sound; for it will be in the recollection of the House that before the Easter recess there were on the paper several Notices of Motion on this subject; they have all disappeared—they have tumbled down, like the walls of Jericho, without apparent cause; and my Resolution alone remains, because, being founded on a rock, it was the only one able to withstand the terrific blast of the trumpet. My Resolution is founded on truth and justice, which are proverbially said always to prevail; I do not know whether my Resolution will be equally fortunate. We proceed by way of Resolution because we believe there are in the Bill some provisions which are worthy of being adopted by the House; and we have precedents for adopting this course in preference to moving a direct negative to the second reading of the Bill. We have the precedent of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, who in 1859 moved in this House a Resolution of a similar nature, which had the effect of throwing out the Reform Bill then introduced and so far preventing the settlement of the great question of Reform. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer on that occasion, although he disapproved the main and general principles of the Bill, yet had such a horror—a horror one can easily understand now—of the Resolution of the noble Lord that he went into the lobby with the right hon. Gentleman who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Disraeli) against the Resolution proposed by the present Prime Minister. The only part of the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman approved was that relating to the re-distribution of seats, and, on that occasion, he declared emphatically—

> "I feel bound in honour to say that upon the whole I cannot help approving that portion of the Bill (re-distribution of seats). This is no small nor trifling matter. In point of fact, the question of the re-distribution of seats is a full half of your whole Reform Bill. The re-distribution of seats and the arrangement of the franchise make up the measure."—[3 *Hansard*, cliii. 1053.]

No one can regret more than I do that the Resolution I have to propose is regarded by the right hon. Gentleman as a Vote of Censure on the Government, and a declaration of want of confidence in the Ministry. He has also said that it says one thing and means another. Nothing that the right hon. Gentleman has said proves that assertion, or gives the slightest support to it. In his great speech at Liverpool the right hon. Gentleman further said—

> "A Motion is to be made which declares—it is not important what it declares—no man cares what it declares—I don't suppose any man knows what it declares. It is not what it declares, but what it does not declare, that is the real question."

My Resolution, which has not been framed or worded by a Tory hand, as has been asserted, is as follows:—

> "That this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the franchise in England and Wales until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government for the amendment of the representation of the people."

I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman can understand the plainest English ever written, but words cannot be more explicit than they are in this Resolution. It is quite impossible to deny—although the right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to do so—that this House is ready to consider the question of Reform. In his speech at Liverpool the right hon. Gentleman passed that by with a sneer unworthy of him. He said, "The House ready to consider! I don't believe it is ready to consider anything of the sort." [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER made a remark which was not heard.] I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon if I misinterpret what I read in the report in *The Times*. I thought I was correct; if not, I beg to withdraw that observation. But the House has already given proofs that it is ready to consider this great question of Reform, and those proofs have come from both sides of the House. The Reform Bills of 1852, 1854, 1859, and 1860 are, at all events, sufficient proof of the disposition of the House to consider the question, particularly the last Bill, the debates upon which lasted night after night, though without any satisfactory conclusion. The introduction and discussion of these Bills prove conclusively that the House is ready at all times to consider the question. Sir James Graham, in almost the last speech he ever made, when in 1859 he joined with the present Prime Minister in drawing up the Resolution against the Reform Bill of that year, said that the one great object for Reformers was to prevent the necessity of further reformation, and that he objected to the Bill because the measure was incomplete and could not be considered a final settlement of the question. Now, does the Bill before the House fulfil the principle laid down by Sir James Graham? It deals with only half of the question—the franchise in boroughs and in counties. In speaking, in 1851, in opposition to the Bill of the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King), which proposed to reduce the county franchise to £10, the present Prime Minister said—

> "He would ask the House, considering the gravity of the subject, considering the great importance of any change made in the electoral body, and considering also that the laws enacted by, and the measures adopted in, the House of Commons depended very much upon the nature of that electoral body, whether it would be wise to adopt the Bill proposed by the hon. Gentleman now, and to take other measures afterwards one by one, or whether it would not be better to reject so partial a proposition and wait until the whole scheme for the alteration of the franchise was placed at once before the House."—[3 *Hansard*, cxv. 935.]

It may be said that the noble Lord has since changed his mind; but I hold that the reasons he gave and the principles he laid down then are as valid now as they were then. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think in 1859, found fault with the measure of 1854 for the reason that it went too far in its disfranchising clauses. In a great speech the right hon. Gentleman argued powerfully in favour of the retention of small boroughs; he said it was not politic or wise to introduce a sweeping measure of disfranchisement, and that the House would be content with a moderate measure of that nature. With regard to the distribution of seats, if the inequalities and anomalies are great now what must they be after the passage of this Bill, which would nearly double the constituencies in large towns, and add electors in small numbers to the smaller boroughs, a most unwise proceeding by itself? That fact alone renders the scheme for the re-distribution of seats absolutely necessary. We know the views of some of the party below the gangway. I may refer to a speech, already alluded to, made early in the recess by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Bass). That hon. Member approved the way in which the Government brought forward this Bill; because, he said, if they passed it and then went to the country, a new constituency would elect those who would proceed to deal with another measure for the re-distribution of seats, and he also said that a reduction of the borough franchise to £7 would only unsettle the question instead of settling it, and that for his part he would prefer household suffrage with three years' residence. These, I believe, are the views and objects of some hon. Gentlemen who sit below the gangway. A Mr. Gibbs, of Wolverhampton, has written an able pamphlet on this subject, from which, if the House will allow, I will read an extract. The writer says—

> "If the object of a Reform Bill be simply to increase the power of such gentlemen as have command over the labouring population of the towns and to destroy the influence of all who cannot appeal to their employment of labour and their wealth, then may we well expect that the first step will be a reduction of the voters' qualification, and that all other questions will be left for settlement until the new men have got into power. But if it is intended that a Reform Bill should provide for the fair and equitable representation of all who are fit to be trusted with a vote, then no question can claim precedence of this distribution of seats. And if it be one involving great care and an impartial manipulation of details, then let the principles only be affirmed, and let the working out of those principles be left to the leisurely and careful handling of an unbiased commission."

I believe the tendency of this Bill, if passed, will be to give a preponderance of political power to the working classes. In introducing his measure the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaking of a reduction of the borough franchise to £6 said, and he repeated the same thing to-night, that such a reduction would give to those classes a clear majority in the town constituencies. The right hon. Gentleman added—

> "Well, that has never been the intention of any Bill proposed in this House. I do not think it is

> a proposal that Parliament would adopt. I cannot say I think it would be attended with great danger, but I am sure it is not according to the view or expectation of Parliament. And although, for my own part, I do not think that much apprehension need be entertained with respect to the working classes, yet this I fully admit, that upon general grounds of political prudence it is not well to make sudden and extensive changes in the depository of political power. I do not think that we are called upon under the circumstances to give over the majority of town constituencies into the hands of the working class."

Well, but if the Returns which had been laid upon the table by the Government themselves tend to prove that this will be the effect of their Bill, how can the right hon. Gentleman consistently argue that such is not the fact? Those Returns go to show that the working classes have a much larger share of electoral power than was generally supposed, and that that share is increasing in a greater ratio than the population. They, therefore, require a more careful study and consideration than the Government appears to have yet devoted to them. It is a point well worthy the attention of the House that the late Sir James Graham, in 1859, argued in favour of a £6 borough franchise upon the assumption that the voters in this country were diminishing; and when the noble Lord (Earl Russell) brought in his measure of Reform in 1860, he seemed to be under a similar impression. Lord Russell's estimate, under a £6 franchise, of the number of electors in 1860, founded, I believe, on the Returns of 1858, was under 200,000. The accuracy of those Returns was disputed; it will be recollected that they formed the subject of an inquiry by the other House, and I believe it was admitted that they were incorrect. This shows how careful we ought to be not to legislate on one of the most vital questions that can engage our attention upon imperfect data and inaccurate information. The Returns for 1866 put the numbers that would be included under a £6 franchise at 336,700; thereby showing either that the other Returns must have been incorrect, or that a very great increase must have taken place in this class of persons. As far as I can make out, the borough electors from 1851 and 1866 have increased by 45 per cent; and the greater portion of this increase has, of course, consisted of the working classes, while the population has increased by 26 per cent. Sir, the great majority of the most able and influential organs of the press are favourable to the Resolution which I have to propose, and unfavourable to the course pursued by the Government. I may, perhaps, mention that one very able and respectable journal which I have always read with the greatest pleasure, and which is supposed to reflect the views of the right hon. Gentleman himself, seems altogether to have changed its staff of writers lately, and to have adopted a new style of argument, much resembling that followed by the organ which is supposed to represent the hon. Member for Birmingham. Those journals, instead of meeting the question by fair argument and reason, have put forward menaces and threats towards those Members of this House who venture to express their own honest and independent convictions. Sir, I can only say I feel quite certain that no threats, no abuse, no appeals to physical force, will deter any Members of this House from pursuing the course they think wise and patriotic. I can assure the House that no menaces of that nature, and no suggestions as to my unfortunate son being deprived of the property which he may one day expect to inherit, will prevent me from coming forward on this occasion and performing what I conceive to be a public duty. There is one point which it would not become me to pass entirely over, because it has been imputed to me, in no very delicate language, that I have been engaged in a "dirty conspiracy." Now, Sir, I have sat for many years in this House, and have listened on various occasions to perhaps some of the noblest sentiments, couched in the noblest language, from the lips of the hon. Member for Birmingham; and I am sure, therefore, that the House shares with me a feeling of sincere pain and regret that that hon. Gentleman should use language, either in his letters or his speeches out of doors, which no Gentleman in this Assembly would venture to use, and that no gentleman out of this House would tolerate. It is unnecessary for me to argue whether it is wise or prudent to make so great a change in the Constitution of this country as this Bill proposes to do. Thirty years since the Reform Bill of 1832 is a short time in the history of a country which has had a representative government for some 600 years. It may be the opinion of some that the working classes are fitted to be what are called depositories of political power. I believe that a silent change has been going on in the constituencies, and that many of the working men have become qualified, may qualify themselves, and are daily qualifying themselves, by their providence and intelligence, to come up to the £10 standard. The increase in the rate of wages, the rise in house rents, and the depreciation in the value of gold have no doubt accelerated that salutary process. I can only say that there is no nobler class of Englishmen than this; and if that class has been thus enabled to rise to the level of the franchise, I believe that no better class of voters could be found. I gladly embrace this opportunity of denying all the accusations made against myself—I leave others to take care of themselves—to the effect that I have aspersed the character of the working classes. Now, Sir, it has ever been my habit and my feeling—it has been the whole tenour of my life, to respect every class of my fellow-countrymen, and I have never uttered, or dreamt of uttering, a single word of contempt towards any class whatever—certainly not towards the working class. We know that the influences of religion, civilization, and education have produced a great effect among all classes of the people. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has borne eloquent testimony to the exertions of the ministers of religion to improve the condition of the people as contrasted with those of the ministers of a hundred years ago, as illustrating his argument that the working classes have yielded to those influences, and, therefore, that they should have the franchise. And what, Sir, did the hon. Member for Birmingham say in regard to the influence of education the other day at Rochdale? He deplored the fact that there were great masses of our fellow-countrymen belonging to the working classes who were never reached by those elevating influences, and who, while the legislation of this House remained what it was, never would be. But the same hon. Gentleman also lately declared that if the working classes of this country once had political power in their own hands they would then obtain—as was already the case in America—the blessings of education. In connection with this matter, I think the hon. Gentleman implied a charge against this House which was hardly fair. Some twenty years ago the Education Grant was, no doubt, very small—somewhere, I think, about £30,000. Now it amounts to about £800,000. I do not mean to say that nothing more could be done in the same direction by this House; but I think the argument used by the hon. Member for Birmingham was scarcely just towards this House; and, moreover, instead of telling in favour of granting a preponderance of political power to the working classes, it seemed to me to tell exactly the other way. Sir, I believe the majority of this House is desirous of passing a moderate measure of Reform. There are a few great objects and great principles which most of us agree in wishing to uphold; and among them are the good government of the country—which I think we now have—and also a fair representation of all clases of our fellow-countrymen. Have we got this? I believe we have not. We all wish to obtain it; the question is—how we are to do so. I am bound to say that I do not think the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman will enable us to attain the object in view. I believe no Reform Bill will ever pass this House which consults the views of those hon. Gentlemen who sit below the gangway, in preference to those who have hitherto supported the Government, and the hon. Gentlemen who sit on the opposite side of the House. I do not think there is any possibility of a Reform Bill passing until the question be taken out of the domain of party—an idea which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has regarded as Utopian—and put into the hands of some dispassionate tribunal, such as the Committee of the Privy Council, as suggested by Lord Grey. I believe that moderate opinions generally prevail throughout the country, and that they will continue to prevail; and unless a Bill be founded on moderate principle, on accurate information, and mature opinions, it will never meet with the approval of this House, and become the law of the country. I will now detain the House no longer. I thank the House with all sincerity for the patience with which it has listened to me. I would appeal to hon. Members who sit on this side of the House, and who concur in the spirit of my Resolution, and ask them whether they cannot in conscience support it. I believe the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman as it stands never will pass the House. I know there are Members around me who agree with the spirit of my Resolution, but whose idea of allegiance to the Government deters them from acting on their convictions. It is my duty now to move this Resolution—

"That this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People."

LORD STANLEY: Sir, I rise to second the Amendment which has been proposed by my noble Friend the Member for Chester. There are few Members of this House to whom it is less personally agreeable than to myself to take a prominent part in a debate of this kind; and assuredly I should not have done so if I did not entertain a conviction—which every day's consideration which I have given to the subject only serves to strengthen—of the impolicy, the inconvenience, the confusion, and the mischief which are involved—I do not say in the Ministerial Bill, for that has no part in my argument this evening—but in the mode of procedure which the Government has thought fit to adopt on this question. I do not intend to follow the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer through his long and able speech; I only hope he has been more accurate in his figures and deductions than he was in one or two of those digressions with which he enlivened though he hardly strengthened his argument. The right hon. Gentleman taunted my right hon. Friend the Member for Buckinghamshire with having sat on the Benches of "The Mountain," but at the time to which he referred, if my recollection serves me, my right hon. Friend was not a Member of this House. The right hon. Gentleman also quoted a passage from *The Quarterly Review*, just published, the bearing of which on his argument I did not very well understand, but which he appeared to wish to fix on the Conservative party as necessarily representing their views. Now, I have not seen that article—I have no doubt it is an able one—but I entirely deny that either an individual or a party is to be held responsible for a document with which they have had nothing to do. I do not know for what purpose the quotation was given to the House, unless it was to fix on the Conservative party—which the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed anxious to do—the stigma of having desired to go to war in defence of the American Confederacy. I thought, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to that, he was, in his own phrase, treading on somewhat tender ground, because it is a fact that from these Benches from the beginning to the end no suggestion or proposition was made favouring such a course as is referred to in the article; whereas the nearest approach to a recognition of the Confederate State that was made by any English statesman was the celebrated declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, that President Davis had "not only created an army but made a nation." The right hon. Gentleman closed his speech this evening with an impassioned appeal to us not only "to be wise"—that, of course, means voting for the Ministerial measure—but "to be wise in time." Now, I am curious to know at what moment the necessity for urgent haste in this matter began to dawn on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's mind. He was a leading and indispensable Member of Lord Palmerston's Government. That Government brought in a Reform Bill which was not thrown out by the House, but after passing its second reading was simply dropped by its authors, and was not taken up in subsequent years. I am not going to question their discretion in that respect; but I say this, that if they had a legitimate and reasonable right to hang up this question for six years without its having met with a defeat in this House, the Government are not justified in turning round upon us now and saying the case is urgent and you must not waste time—you must not lose a minute in discussion, but you must take the Bill as it is and pass it, and that with the least possible delay. I propose to confine myself as closely as I can to the Amendment of my noble Friend. I do not now intend to go into the details of the Bill, nor do I even desire to discuss its principles; all I wish to do is to establish the proposition contained in the Amendment; and my difficulty in doing so arises not from a want of arguments or reasons that can be urged in its defence, but rather from a fear of overlaying with cumbrous and superfluous proof propositions which, if we could discuss them apart from party interests and party feelings, would appear to every hon. Member to be so simple as to be almost self-evident. What is it the Government ask us to do? They ask us to act on a principle which they themselves, in the debate three weeks ago, acknowledged to be unsound and untenable. Of course, I do not expect that statement to pass unchallenged; and therefore let us see how the facts stand. The theory on which the Government originally proceeded was this—that the question of the franchise and that of the re-distribution of seats are wholly independent and distinct the one from the other; that they might be, and ought to be, separately considered; and, that as a matter of convenience, it was even better that one of these questions should be put out of the way before the House proceeded to deal with the other. That is a view consistent with itself, and capable to some extent of being supported. I do not think it a sound view; I think the objections that may be taken to it are exceedingly strong; but if Ministers had adhered to the principle with which they begun, they would at least have had the credit of showing their own conviction that what they were doing was right. But what have they done since that time? Why, they have distinctly acknowledged our right to know what they proposed to do about the re-distribution of seats before we go into the details of the Franchise Bill. The Government, however, say that the House must pledge itself first to the second reading of this Bill, and when the House has performed that act of faith in them, but not before, they will reward our submission and confidence by telling us—not what will be, but retrospectively what has been the effect of the vote we have given blind-folded. I wonder that Ministers do not see, or, seeing, that they do not care for the construction to which that course is necessarily exposed. No one can suppose they have not their plan ready, or believe that they do not now know as well as they will know a fortnight or three weeks hence what boroughs they intend to disfranchise, what boroughs they intend to group or enlarge, and what constituencies they intend to create. Of these facts they must have a knowledge; and these facts they keep back from the House—and purposely keep back—for what reason? Because, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said at Liverpool (and it seemed a curious remark coming from the leader of the House of Commons), "We know with whom we have to deal"—that is, putting on his words the only construction they will bear—"although we are going to ask the House of Commons to trust us, we are not inclined to trust the House of Commons, because we think" (I do not wish to put it unfairly) "if the two measures are brought forward at the same time, one of two things will happen—either the Disfranchisement Bill, if on a small scale, will disappoint and disgust, and make indifferent to the fate of the whole measure a certain number of our warmest supporters; or, on the other hand, if the scheme of disfranchisement is found to be large, then those Members whose constituencies were likely to be affected by the scheme will vote against the measure, and thus the cumulative objections to the two branches of the measure will be sufficient to defeat the whole." That I take to be their real position; and if it be so, then I contend that what they are proposing to do, is simply this—namely, that they are proposing to ask the House to consider separately and successively the two branches of a measure which they well know, if they had produced it as a whole, the House would not accept. Am I not right in saying that is not trusting the House of Commons? For my part, I only wonder that a device so transparent should have been deemed to be worth the trouble of adopting. It seems to me to be, after all, very artless art. It is true, indeed, that this is a new Parliament, and that we have within these walls a very considerable number of young Members; but I should have thought that there was no bird so innocent or so unfledged as to be snared in a net spread so openly before their eyes. And what, after all, do Ministers gain by this device? They gain a little time; they get rid of a certain amount of opposition on the second reading of the Franchise Bill; but they get rid of it only for the moment, for in laying on the table, as they now propose to do, a measure for the re-distribution of seats, before going into Committee on the Franchise Bill, they will have to encounter that opposition at a later stage, and one hardly sees what advantage they find in merely postponing it for a few days or weeks. But do they not see that a much more awkward construction may be put on the arrangement which they have adopted? Is it wholly impossible that the political fate, not of a Member, but of a constituency, may depend, or be considered to depend—which amounts to the same thing—on the vote which the representative of that constituency may give on the second reading of this Bill. Schedules, as we all know, are very elastic things. There is a very large number of boroughs on the border line between those which are so small as to be included in every plan of disfranchisement, and those which are so large as not to be endangered by any. A good deal may be done in the case of such boroughs, in the way of grouping and of extending boundaries, to swamp a hostile constituency or to save a friendly interest. Even in that sound and wise measure—as I believe it on the whole to be—the Reform Bill of 1832, there were, if I do not greatly mistake some arrangements of that kind, about which the less said the better. I must not be understood as charging the Government with intending to make any such corrupt bargain, but I think the House ought very carefully to consider the position in which we stand with regard to the matter. We are to have a Bill brought forward for the re-distribution of seats. The measure is not before us, and any addition to it, alteration, or omission which the Government may desire to make is still in their power. Ought we to be asked to vote on a measure on which the Government stake their existence with such a means of exercising influence as I have described —I do not say they are going to exercise it—retained in their hands? Let me put the matter in another point of view. We are to have a scheme for the re-distribution of seats laid on the table in the course of the present Session, but all action upon it is, I take it for granted, to be suspended until next year. I am quite aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer declined to express himself positively on the subject; but I have not forgotten a speech which he delivered not very long since, in which, with considerable detail and in his most convincing manner, he pointed out that there were only a certain number of Government nights at his disposal before the close of the Session, so that it would be simply useless to bring in any Bill except a Franchise Bill, in connection with the subject of Reform, inasmuch as the House would not be in a position, owing to want of time, to proceed with more than that one. I suppose that argument was used sincerely; and, if it is of any validity, the scheme for the re-distribution of seats must, as I have already suggested, be suspended until next Session. What, under these circumstances, is its value? Who is to guarantee the identity of the plan of 1866 with that of 1867? Will the Government themselves say that in a matter of this kind they will accept no Amendment, listen to no suggestion, and pledge themselves not to re-consider their perhaps hasty first thoughts? As sensible men they cannot hold such language; and if they cannot hold it then we must regard this Bill to be laid on the table but not proceeded with in the present Session as a pure work of fancy, worthless as a practical guide for our action, and attended with this additional inconvenience—that if the Franchise Bill should go through Committee, and if Members disliking that measure but approving the Bill for the re-distribution of seats should support the one for the sake of the other, and that afterwards into that other alterations should be introduced, then charges of inconsistency and want of good faith are sure to be made—not perhaps deserved—but plausible on the face of them, and which it may not be easy to meet. It comes to this—the pledge which the Government have given on this subject is simply a pledge to do a certain thing next year, provided that circumstances admit of their doing so, and provided also they do not in the meantime change their minds. If a pledge of that kind is to be taken literally, it is unmeaning; and if anything more than its literal meaning is given to it, it ceases to be unmeaning, but it becomes delusive. The question is not merely one of what a Ministry may wish to do, but of what they may have it in their power to accomplish. Who is to answer for the events of the next twelve months? Who can say that the Cabinet of next year, though still composed of Members sitting on the Liberal side of the House, will be the identical body which we now see before us? Who can tell what question, foreign or domestic, may arise, leading to a dissolution of Parliament after the passing of the Franchise Bill—supposing it to be passed in the present Session—and before the Bill for the re-distribution of seats is brought on for discussion? And if, in the interval between the passing of the two Bills, a dissolution should occur, in what an extraordinary position would not this House and the country be placed! If you appeal to the old constituencies, you make your appeal to those whom the House will have by its deliberate vote already condemned, and from which it will have transferred political power. If you appeal to the new constituencies you will have this still more extraordinary anomaly, that you will be called upon to perform the most important act known to the Constitution—that of appealing to the country to return Members to Parliament—under a provisional Constitution; for the constituency will be neither that of 1865 nor that of 1867—neither the old constituency which we have been accustomed to, nor the new constituency which Parliament will have sanctioned; but something between the two—an electoral body which will be the creation of an accident, and which no one ever intended to be the depositary of political power. This is a consideration which

I think it is but fair the House should take into account. What we really want is some guarantee that the body which deals with the question of enfranchisement shall be in a position also to deal with the question of the re-distribution of seats. Now, that guarantee cannot exist if the decision of the two questions is to be separated by an interval of twelve months. I may be asked what course I am, under those circumstances, prepared to adopt? Now, the course which I would propose may not be acceptable to hon. Gentlemen opposite, but its adoption would, I think, result rather in a saving than in a loss of time. I may in passing observe that I do not blame the Government for not having introduced this Bill earlier in the Session. They were, I think, quite right in making the preliminary inquiry which they instituted. That, indeed, was, I think, the wisest thing which they have done in the course of their proceedings. Nor do I complain that the inquiry has been unduly protracted, or the publication of its results delayed. Indeed, the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that so anxious was he not to lose time in the matter that the only copy of the blue book containing the statistics which the Government ordered to be collected was that which he laid on the table when about to introduce this Bill, and that he himself had had no opportunity of referring to its contents. I could wish that he had had a little more leisure; because it seemed to me that both his speech and his Bill were framed on the supposition that the figures would turn out to be somewhat different from what they really are. But, be that as it may, I do not blame the Government for having brought in the Bill. I quite admit that they could hardly have avoided doing so after what took place in 1860. It is, however, quite evident that the whole scheme cannot be passed this year; and the best way, in my opinion, would be to suspend the entire question until 1867, when it might be taken up at the very beginning of the Session as a whole; and if we were called together for that purpose at an earlier period than usual, I, for one, should not complain. That is the result to which the Amendment of my noble Friend naturally points, and that is the course which, even should the Amendment not be carried, must, I think, be ultimately adopted. It may, of course, be said that we should by pursuing this course be affording opportunities for agitation and the creating of disturbance. For my own part, I have not the slightest fear of agitation. I wish for nothing better than to have the deliberate opinion of the public on this question. I am not called upon to give advice, but if I were I certainly should not advise those who are interested in the success of this measure to call upon the working men to crowd the streets of London and surround the doors of this House—not because I am apprehensive of the consequences — but because, in the first place, such a demonstration is not easily got up; and, if it fails, it only brings ridicule on its promoters; whereas, if it succeeds a little too well, I can conceive of nothing which will more discredit the cause of Reform among the upper and middle classes. I hope I shall not be understood as maintaining that because there is no agitation in the country we ought not to proceed with a measure like this; all I say is, that in the present state of public feeling—a state not, as I believe, of indifference, but of calm rational interest in the matter—you are not called upon to rush precipitately into a scheme of which we know only a part, and to pass a bad Bill this year rather than to frame a good one for next year. But when we get the plan for the re-distribution of seats, even then we shall not have got the whole scheme complete. Is there not to be a Boundaries Bill, by which it is intended, I suppose, to take in the suburbs of great towns, when, as often happens, they lie beyond the limits of the Parliamentary boroughs? Has the Franchise Bill nothing to do with a measure of that kind? One most real and practical objection to the large extension of the borough franchise is the enormous and unwieldy size of the borough constituencies you are about to create; but if the suburbs of great towns are to be taken in, those constituencies, large as they now are, and larger as the new franchise will make them, will then be enlarged again. And what is the House asked to do? We are asked, first of all, to make one alteration of the constituencies by the francise Bill in the present year; afterwards, to alter them again next year by a re-distribution of seats; and again, to alter them a third time by a Boundaries Bill; and the House is called upon to make the first alteration without knowing the extent or the probable results of the second or third. This is not an instance of the common sense which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer displays when dealing with financial matters. If an hon. Member gets up and proposes a Resolution for the reduction or abolition of an unpopular tax, the official answer, and I think a sound one, invariably is, "Wait until the whole case is before you? Wait until you know what are the Ways and Means of the year, and what are the claims upon them; then, and not till then, you will be in a position to consider the matter." I should have thought that a permanent alteration of the Constitution was a matter of as much importance as the financial arrangements of a single year. Or is the defence this—that for Parliament to ask a Minister to adopt a measure on imperfect information is inexpedient and unjustifiable, but that for a Minister to ask Parliament to do the same thing, and enforce his request by a threat of dissolution, is only a legitimate exercise of power? I will go further, and say that even if you adopt the plan, unsound as I believe it to be, of dealing with this question piecemeal, still, even in that case, the Government have made a mistake by beginning at the wrong end. The question of the re-distribution of seats is that which ought to be taken first, because, of all matters connected with the representation of the people, undoubtedly the greatest anomaly is the unequal distribution of electoral power. I have not forgotten the taunt of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he spoke of Gentlemen who were just now greatly in favour of a re-distribution of seats, but who never were so before, and never would be again. That does not apply to me, for the language I am holding now is precisely that which I held eight months ago to my constituents, long before this question of the extension of the franchise was thought of. The evil, if an evil it be, of that partial exclusion of the working classes from the franchise which exists at present is in course of gradual reduction with the rise of rents and wages; but the other evil, the anomalies and inequalities in the distribution of electoral power, tends every year not to diminish, but to increase. £10 now represent a less value than £10 did thirty years ago, and thirty years hence the same nominal amount will represent a still smaller purchasing power. In that way the franchise is self-extending. But the case is very different with regard to the distribution of electoral power. Trade has a tendency to centralize itself; great towns grow fast, while the population of small boroughs is either stationary or falling off. Common sense, therefore, dictates that you should deal first with an evil growing greater rather than with one decreasing by lapse of time. But this is not all; the course proposed by the Government has a direct tendency to increase the disproportion between the small and the large constituencies, because by this Franchise Bill the constituencies are precisely those in which the numerical addition of strength will be greatest. There is another and most important consideration connected with this matter. When the question of re-distribution comes on, it is impossible to doubt that a very serious controversy will arise not only as to the extent to which that re-distribution should be carried, but also —and this will probably be the question about which the greatest difference will arise—as to what should be the distribution of the new seats. There is the claim for the counties, which if you take the tests of population and property is unanswerable. There is the claim also urged on the part of unrepresented towns, and also on the part of large represented towns for increased representation. There can be no doubt there will be conflicting claims of this kind, which we shall have to consider next year, and it is not at all improbable that the House and Government may come to different opinions on the subject. What I want to ascertain is, what security have we that the decision of these difficult questions will be left with the House? If I looked at the course adopted by the Government simply from a Ministerial point of view, I could make out a very good case for the manner in which they propose to proceed. I could understand the convenience, in case of any mishap to the Ministry, of having the new constituencies all ready as far as the franchise is concerned. No one doubts that the new voters would be grateful to the authors of their existence. Naturally enough, Government influence will for some time be predominant among them; and supposing that, in consequence of their scheme not finding favour here, the Government appeal to the country, then the proposition to defer the question of the new seats until after the new electors are created is a proposition to take from the House of Commons the power of dealing with that question, and to transfer it in the last resort to the new electoral body, in which the natural feeling of gratitude to the Government may be expected to overbear all opposition to the Ministerial scheme. That policy may be ingenious—it may be that of a skilful electioneering agent—but it is another question whether it is fair to the House or to the public. I do not know that I need follow the example of my noble Friend the Member for Chester, and vindicate myself from attacks made out of the House for the course we are now pursuing. I recollect that I read—and not with any feeling of indignation—the phrase "dirty conspiracy," used by the hon. Member for Birmingham, in reference to the supporters of this Amendment. I am not going to complain of strong language, though it is not such as I should like myself to use. People who feel strongly speak warmly, but when a phrase of that kind is used by a great master of the English language, I feel a natural curiosity to have its meaning defined. What is a dirty conspiracy? Does it mean the temporary junction of a minority of the Liberal party with the Conservative party in opposition to the Liberal leaders, for the purpose of accomplishing some particular result? That is the natural interpretation of the phrase; and I think I can remember such a union on two occasions within a few years past. One was in 1857 on the China War; the other, in 1858, was in the matter of the Orsini conspiracy, and on both occasions, I believe, we had the advantage of the support of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham.

Mr. BRIGHT, who rose amid loud cries of "Order!" said, I do not wish to interrupt the noble Lord—I only want to say that on the first occasion I was not in the House. ["Order, order!"]

Lord STANLEY: I do not refer to the hon. Gentleman alone; but I must remark that all this indignation and these hard words used by the hon. Gentleman and his friends and by a large portion of the press arise from this—that a certain number of Gentlemen of the Liberal party, setting their conscientious convictions against their party ties, have asserted their own individual right of judgment, and have revolted from democratic dictation. If that is the cause of all that we have heard and read against my noble Friend, we may form some judgment of the nature of the reign of freedom approaching, when day after day Members on the other side are told, "You have nothing to do with private opinions; all you have got to do is to swallow your scruples and follow your leader." From a party point of view nothing would give me greater pleasure than the adoption of such principles and rules of action in the Liberal ranks, because it would bring a greater accession of strength than anything else could do to the Conservative party. I will not notice mere invective, but one objection to the Amendment of my right hon. Friend will be used which I ought to deal with, because, although unfounded, it is obvious and plausible. It will be said, "What right have you to bring forward a Resolution of this kind when seven years ago, in 1859, you objected to a similar Resolution as factious and unfair?" I will not argue this question on the ground that we have a right to use the weapons that were used against us, because if it was unfair then it will be unfair now. Two wrongs do not make one right. But there is no similarity between the Resolution of 1859 and that of my noble Friend. The Resolution of 1859, moved on the second reading of the Bill proposed by the Government of the day, asserted that no settlement of the question could be satisfactory which did not include the lowering of the borough franchise. We objected to that as an unusual and improper course, and on this ground—that the alteration desired to be made in our Bill was one that if the Bill had been allowed to go to a second reading might have been made in Committee if such were the wish of the House; and that in Committee was, according to the practice of the House, the proper time to propose it. But in the present case we have no such option, and no such alteration can be made. The present Bill is one for dealing with the franchise only; and it would be impossible, according to the rules of the House, to insert a clause relating to the totally different matter of re-distribution. That is a very simple answer to the resemblance set up between the two cases; but although simple, it is conclusive. I have stated at greater length than I could have desired why I shall support the Amendment of my noble Friend; but let me impress upon the House that his is not an Amendment that negatives the principle of Reform, or that even expresses disapproval of the provisions of this Bill, if only we had the opportunity of dealing with all parts of the scheme. I want to deal frankly with the House. My opinion may be worth little, but after what has been said—after Ministerial pledges, Queen's Speeches, and frequent failures to settle this question—I should not be willing to vote against the second reading of the Bill, merely on the ground that it contains some provisions of which I cannot approve. Anything that can fairly be discussed in Committee ought to be settled there. Some things in the Bill are good, some are doubtful, and some, to my mind, exceedingly bad. If it gets into Committee, I think it will be possible to show that the Government have underrated the transfer of power which will be effected by this Bill. It is not a small measure, whatever else it may be. It is possibly not inferior, in extent and in the magnitude of its results, than the measure of 1830. But we are cut off from arguing this question of the transfer of power by the peculiar manner in which the Bill is brought forward. If I am able to show that in a large number of boroughs — one estimate makes it over fifty, returning ninety-five Members—the effect of the franchise is to give a large majority of votes to the working classes, and if I show that in about as many more they will be a minority so large as in any close contest turn the scale, I have proved nothing at all; for the question is not as to the effect of this Bill upon existing constituencies, but as to the effect of this new franchise in the existing constituencies plus those new boroughs which are about to be called into existence. These new boroughs, however, are entirely cut off from the discussion; we do not know how many, or what, they are to be—and we are, therefore, acting in the dark as to the ultimate balance of power between the different classes of the community. I am glad we have not to-night had a repetition of those phrases about "trusting the people," and of our being "all one flesh and blood.'' If distrust means exclusion, both parties exclude. I understand such taunts in the mouth of a supporter of universal suffrage; but I do not see how they can be consistently addressed to those who wish the franchise to remain at £10 by those who have no objection to draw a line of arbitary exclusion, and who only differ from them by placing it at a lower figure. And if there is no cause of alarm in numbers, and if we are all one people; that is, I suppose, having all the same interests and feelings, what is the use of figures, and why should we have an inquiry? What in that case is the value of the blue book for which we all waited, and which we have been studying with so much interest? But that plea cannot be seriously put forward. It is our duty to see that no class is excluded, and that no one class should overbear the rest. I do not propose now to discuss the exact rate at which the franchise should be fixed. If this Amendment is carried, it will be needless to discuss the £7 franchise this year. If not, there will be plenty of opportunity of discussing it before the Session is over. All that I contend for now is, that when we are framing that which really is a new Constitution for the country, it is as insane an act to sanction part of a scheme without knowing the whole as it would be to begin building a palace room by room without an estimate or a general plan, and with only the assurance of the architect that he understands his business. I would not trust any architect, however skilful and scientific, with an authority so unlimited. This is not merely a question of convenience; it is one of constitutional right and duty. We are intrusted by the Constitution with legislative power; we are bound to use that power according to our free and conscientious judgment; we are bound not to use it in ignorance, not to waive it under popular pressure, not to devolve on the Ministry or any one else the responsibility which belongs to us. Our judgment ought to be free, unbiased, and founded on full knowledge; and it is because no one of these conditions is complied with under the arrangement which Ministers propose that I shall support the Amendment of my noble Friend.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor,*)

— instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.''

Mr. P. WYKEHAM MARTIN (Rochester) said, that having given notice of an Amendment which he considered of vital importance, and which he should bring forward if the second reading were carried, he desired to state how much further his views extended than the Motion of which he had given notice. He represented a constituency in which, more than almost any other, the artizan class predominated. He had mixed with them much more freely, and on terms probably of more friendly intimacy, than most other Members were in the habit of doing with their constituents; and he must say, having visited at their houses and partaken of their hospitality, he had hardly ever been in the home of one of these respectable artizans in which, by the care they took of their furniture, the decent little library they possessed, and their general manners and habits, they did not give proof of refinement treading close on that of the class superior to them. He had therefore given notice of his Amendment, because he thought the Bill dealt hardly with some portion of the working classes; these details, however, he would reserve for another occasion. While he was prepared to resist the Amendment moved by the noble Lord the Member for Chester, he could not help thinking there was some inconsistency in the course which was pursued by the Government. Their conduct had been honourable and straightforward, and great indulgence ought to be shown them; but how did they carry out in practice their professed intentions with reference to the working class? His special duty, however, was with the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to disfranchise 20,000 voters in the dockyards. It was a curious clause in a Bill which was to add 200,000 to the borough voters. The Government had pleaded that there was not time to deal with the class of voters who were convicted of bribery and corruption; and if any appeal to the country should become necessary, the Nottingham lambs would be allowed to play as before, the electors of Totnes would have a voice, and the voters of Great Yarmouth would have another chance to lay in "toothstopping." The voters in those boroughs were to have indulgence because there was not time to deal with them; but yet, in direct conflict with the principle of the Bill, the Government proposed to disfranchise 20,000 against whom no such charge was brought. And in this Bill one class was to be visited with a punishment which had never been resorted to in the history of the country, except in cases of evident necessity and the grossest corruption. And yet corruption was not alleged against these men; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the introduction of the clause was not to protect them against their own corrupt desires, but to protect other people. Nothing could be alleged against these men. They had given up their only holiday in the year, last Easter Monday, to assist in getting off the *Northumberland;* and at a time when the Government were meditating to deprive them of their votes these men volunteered to give their services to the Admiralty without the expectation of reward, in order that they might save a private firm from loss and the country from reproach. Many of the dockyard men had saved enough to become the aristocracy of the constituencies, and had purchased freeholds to give them the right of a vote in the counties. It had been alleged that if the working men received the franchise they would combine together; but the dockyard voters had not so acted, though they spent the greater part of their lives in the same workshops. It could not be alleged that the dockyard men changed their views with the Government of the day. He had caused the votes of his own constituents to be analysed; and he found that during the last ten years only one voter from the dockyard men altered his views; and that for the same time, though the Government in three out of four of the contested elections were Liberal, the majority of the dockyard voters supported the Conservative candidates. In the last election the dockyard men voted against him in the proportion of 33 to 27. It had been said that these men did not care for the possession of the franchise; but the crowded nightly meetings in his own borough during the past fortnight showed that these men smarted under the sense of the punishment with which they were to be visited. There might be some reason for depriving policemen of the right to vote, because in times of excitement their province was to keep order, and during such times it was unwise to place them in a position which might cause them to have personal feelings; but the same principle could not hold in the case of revenue officers and *employés* of the Post Office. Mr. Massey, in his *History of the Reign of George* III., explained the reason why these men were deprived of the right to vote.

> "In a population of 8,000,000 there were no more than 160,000 electors. The representation of the people was merely a phrase. The people of England had for the most part no more voice in the election of the House of Commons than the people of Canada. The great and growing increase in the Customs and Excise since the late war had enlisted in the service of the Government numerous persons engaged in the collection and supervision of this extensive revenue. These men were necessarily spread over the country, and most of them had votes for Members of Parliament; holding their offices at pleasure their votes were of course at the command of the Government, and the memorable example of 1762, when the vengeance of the Minister for Parlia-

mentary insubordination was visited upon every public servant, from Lords Lieutenant and great Officers of State down to the humblest individual who ate his daily bread at the pleasure of the Crown, was doubtless still regarded as the leading rule and precedent. Dowdeswell moved for leave to bring in a Bill to disfranchise these revenue officers, and considering that they mainly influenced the elections in nearly seventy boroughs, and numbered nearly 12,000 votes in other places (such was the uncontradicted statement of Lord Rockingham when he introduced and carried a similar Bill in 1782), it is not surprising that the Government made a strenuous effort to defeat a measure which, if carried, might have gone far to destroy their influence in the House of Commons." The proper remedy for this state of things would have been to extend the franchise and thus swamp the influence of the servants of the Crown instead of depriving them of their votes. The Parliament, however, showed no such extraordinary haste as the Government was showing now, for they did not bring in a Bill to disfranchise these men until they had taken twelve years to consider it. He would say to the Government, if they were resolved to disfranchise them, to go and do likewise, for this time twelve years would be quite time enough to set about it. Would any man tell him there was any public necessity now to disfranchise these 20,000 voters at a time when they were about to raise the constituencies to 1,300,000 ? If the secrets of the prison-house could be revealed, he believed the history of this miserable clause would be this. When the Government were preparing this Reform Bill, several hon. Members (himself included) called attention to the fact that in Kent the wages averaged 15*s.* a week. The Government maintained they were 13*s.* ; but he (Mr. Martin) said they did not know the state of wages in Kent as well as he did, and so some Member of the Cabinet probably said, "Disfranchise them quietly," for they were suspected of appealing to him and other hon. Members to get them an increase of pay. But was the House to be told in 1866 that it was a crime for an Englishman to try to improve his condition in a peaceable way ? He had not the slightest intention of opposing the Bill at its present stage, for the Government, he thought, had made out their case in point of time ; but he would ask them to deal justly in this matter, and strike out a clause which was opposed to the principle and to the very title of their Bill. He was pledged to his constituents to divide on every possible occasion against the clause, and he was determined to keep his pledge. If he were forced to oppose the Government in a formal way, he had every hope from the support promised him that he would be successful ; at any rate such a course would play sad havoc with the twelve days which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them were alone available for passing the Bill.

MR. HORSFALL hoped that, as the borough which he had the honour to represent (Liverpool) had been put forward as an illustration of the probable working of the Bill, and as, moreover, it had been taken last week under the special patronage of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he might be allowed to occupy the attention of the House for a few minutes. He must say he thought too much importance had been attached to the right hon. Gentleman's visit to Liverpool, and to the three gatherings held there. The first of these was a dinner given by the Liberal electors of South Lancashire, six months after the election, in honour of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had been elected a Member for that constituency, standing the third on the poll. That dinner, he had no doubt, like all Liverpool dinners, was a very excellent one, and the newspapers informed them of whom the company consisted. It appeared that, in addition to twenty-five invited guests and twenty-eight reporters, about 500 gentlemen sat down to dinner, besides 600 ladies in the gallery attended by 800 gentlemen. Now, all he had to say was, that if a Chancellor of the Exchequer, a distinguished orator, a Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a noble Lord who was an Admiral, and a noble Duke, would go down to Liverpool and would have in the gallery 600 ladies, or, as they were called in his county, Lancashire witches, he would undertake to say that there would be as enthusiastic a meeting—if not a more enthusiastic one—in favour of Conservative principles. Well, the next gathering was entitled a public meeting in the Amphitheatre ; but how were persons admitted on that occasion ? Why, by ticket, and they knew full well to whom those tickets would be distributed for a meeting of that kind. Far be it from him to say a word in disparagement of any gentleman who was present there—but of course free discussion was out of the question. He knew the building, and how many people it would contain — namely, from 3,000 to 3,500. He freely admitted that the meeting was full and was enthusiastic ; but what of that? He had frequently attended meetings in that building when there was a far less important subject under discussion, and far less important personages present, and yet that building had been equally crowded and equally enthusiastic. Lastly, there was a so-called "mass meeting," but there never was a greater misnomer. He could not speak from his own observation, but he found in one of the local papers an account the accuracy of which, he thought, would not be questioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was the account which that paper gave of the mass meeting—

> "A demonstration of the working classes of Liverpool in favour of the present Reform Bill was announced by placard to be held on Saturday afternoon, at three o'clock, in front of the Wellington Monument. At that hour there were about thirty people at the place appointed, and the expectation of the enthusiasm which was anticipated seemed to be altogether hopeless, when suddenly a small body of prominent Liberals—in the person of Mr. R. J. Jeffery, Mr. Robertson Gladstone, and one or two others—made their appearance at the corner of London Road. They directed their way to the vacant space in front of St. George's Hall, whither they were eagerly followed by the people who had gathered together. Beside the place where the famous 'lions' of Liverpool are stationed a couple of floats, as they are called, were put, into which as many as could be accommodated scrambled in the most extraordinary manner. Something like an appearance of order was given to the arrangement by the placing of several chairs on one of the floats. By this time the crowd had considerably enlarged, and numbered perhaps a few hundreds. It was composed partly of working men who had come with the intention of hearing the speeches, but chiefly of clerks and others who were on their way home after leaving office, and who evidently came to listen to the proceedings more from a feeling of curiosity than from any interest they had in the result. As always happens on such occasions a good deal of 'chaffing' prevailed, but even in that respect (perhaps owing to the fact that at no time was the number of those persons above 1,000) the affair was a miserable failure."

It was an absurdity to designate as a mass meeting an assembly of 1,000 persons in a place like Liverpool, which had a population of half a million. He had himself been present at a meeting in that town of 5,000 working men, who had assembled for the purpose of petitioning Parliament on a far more important question than the present, and that was the closing of public-houses on Sunday. Yet that petition was disregarded by the House. He would pass on to some of the observations made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had told his audience that one great object of the Reform Bill was to improve the composition of the House of Commons; and he proceeded to illustrate that by pointing to my hon. Friend and late Colleague Mr. Ewart, who occupied the chair, and saying—

> "With reference to the constitution of the House of Commons, one method in which you may improve that constitution is, I will venture to say, by sending back among us my respected Friend who sits in the chair."

Now, he had nothing detrimental to say against Mr. Ewart, with whom, though they sat on opposite sides of the House, he had acted cordially for ten years, and he would pass over the compliment paid to his hon. Colleague and himself, for it was plain Mr. Ewart could only be re-elected by turning one or the other of the present Members out; but what did the Chancellor of the Exchequer go on to say? And here he might remark that he had never heard or read a speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's which contained such unhappy illustrations as that delivered by the right hon. Gentleman at Liverpool. As an illustration of the necessity for a Reform Bill, though he did not admit that the present electoral franchise was bad, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Suppose a merchant has a flourishing business, with all its arrangements complete, and suppose an opening is made evident to him that by some increased outlay and venture he may, in perfect consonance with the rules of prudence, make a more increased profit on his industry and capital, does that merchant require to be shown that his business already is a bad one? No, certainly not; but he says, 'I will make it as good as I can.'"

Now his (Mr. Horsfall's) experience in mercantile life told him that where a merchant had a good and a flourishing business he ought to be content. He had known very melancholy consequences to arise when a merchant who was carrying on a flourishing business had fancied that he could improve it. The result, too, frequently was that he brought ruin upon himself and caused serious loss to others. Again, the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave his audience another illustration. His words were these—

> "Gentlemen, how often do you usually in business transactions allow a man to renew a bill. The measure has been considered by five Governments, and been mentioned in seven Queen's Speeches. The question now is, Is there a serious proposal? All we can do is to step ourselves upon it. The matter will rest with the country. Whatever word we can speak —whatever act we can do is solemnly pledged, and long ago. It rests with that public of which you form an important part to determine what shall be the issue. We call upon you to say whether you are satisfied with this attempt

for the seventh or eighth time to put off that which I shall best describe in Liverpool as a mere renewal of a Bill."

Now, he would appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite who were engaged in mercantile pursuits as to whether, in the first place, the renewal of a Bill did not create distrust. When, however, that Bill had been renewed seven or eight times was not all confidence lost in the parties connected with it? He would now make a few remarks as to the practical working of this Bill in Liverpool, and his reason for doing so was because Liverpool had been put forward as an illustration of what the working of the Reform Bill would be throughout England. Assuming that the Parliamentary Return was correct as far as Liverpool was concerned, the number of voters on the register of that borough was 20,618, and 22,526 votes were given at the last election. This apparently was a contradiction; but he apprehended that the party who made out the Return had made the total by adding together the votes polled for each of the three candidates. But, admitting the Return to be accurate, he protested against 20,618 being taken as the greatest number of voters who could vote in Liverpool. Every male occupier of a house was on the rate book, and might vote, as the law stood at present, if he chose to pay rates. Supposing they were all to do so, the number on the register would be 40,000 instead of 20,000. He would, however, give the Government and their Bill the benefit of a reduction of 10 per cent, in respect of those ratepayers who would not be qualified to vote owing to want of the proper length of residence. This would reduce the number to 36,000. Again, the Return showed that by reducing the qualification from £10 to £7, 15,917 additional voters would be admitted to the franchise. Well, if 10 per cent were deducted from these also for want of the residence qualification, the number of fresh voters would, in round numbers, be 14,500, making an aggregate of 50,500 voters. It must not be forgotten that that number did not include those who would be added by the lodger and the savings bank qualifications. The former would, according to the Government Return, let in only 2,000 voters; but the number of voters with the savings bank qualification it was impossible to estimate. At any rate, under this Bill the constituency of Liverpool would be nearer 60,000 than 50,000. Now, he wondered whether the Government had ever considered the expense attending an election with such a constituency? Everybody was aware that every 300 voters required a separate compartment at the polling place. It was easy to calculate, therefore, how many compartments would be required for between 50,000 and 60,000 voters. It would be necessary, of course, to have a deputy town clerk in every booth, and these deputy town clerks would have to be paid three guineas a day. Why, the hustings and the incidental expenses alone would amount to between £2,000 and £3,000. With regard to the freemen, he had seen it stated that there were some 2,000 or 3,000 in Liverpool; that the votes of all might be had for a consideration, and that they had the power of turning an election. Now, he believed the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a freeman of Liverpool; at all events, the right hon. Gentleman's brother was, and the Return showed that only 312 of the freemen belonged to the working classes; so that if all their votes were to be purchased they could not influence the result of the election. For his own part, he did not hesitate to say that the freemen of Liverpool were as pure and as uncorrupted as the £10 householders. He was sorry to observe that the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) was not in his place, because that hon. Gentleman had upon more than one occasion undertaken to lecture the constituency of Liverpool on the election of its Members. In one of his rural speeches the hon. Gentleman had said that Liverpool had stultified itself by returning one Member to vote one way, and a second to vote another. At a meeting held at Liverpool he (Mr. Horsfall) had taken the opportunity of replying to that statement by saying that the hon. Member for Birmingham was perfectly correct in his view of the matter as to party questions, because on party questions he and his late Colleague (Mr. Ewart) had voted differently; but on every question of local interest, and on every question of commercial interest, his late Colleague and himself invariably voted on the same side. He further told the meeting that Liverpool was more consistent than Birmingham, as upon the most important commercial and political question of that day—the war in America—one hon. Member for Birmingham stoutly advocated the interests of the North, while the other as stoutly defended the interests of the South. However, the people of Liverpool had since thought proper to act upon the advice of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and they had accordingly returned two representatives who voted alike on every question. It might have been supposed that the hon. Member for Birmingham would have been now satisfied; but in December last, at Blackburn, the hon. Member made use of the following language:—

> "But whether your election was a blunder or not, I have asked myself how it happens that there can possibly be in a populous manufacturing town a Tory party strong enough to return two Members to Parliament, and I find that in this county, which very ignorant people at head-quarters sometimes fancy to be very democratic, we have three great populations, each of which is represented by two Tory Members—the great commerciality of Liverpool and the great manufacturing boroughs of Preston and Blackburn. Now, if we did not know this to be the fact, we should scarcely believe it to be possible, for hardly anything can be more strange, hardly anything more discreditable, hardly anything which we can scarcely account for, than that these great manufacturing and industrial populations should permit themselves to be represented in the Imperial Parliament by Members of that party whose whole career has been one of permanent and virulent hostility to commerce."

Having with his Colleague for many years been engaged in doing his utmost for the interests of commerce, he was much surprised to hear himself accused of permanent and virulent hostility to those interests. He supposed that the hon. Member for Birmingham knew what would be for the interest of Liverpool better than Liverpool itself did. The speech of the hon. Member reminded him of the case of an unfortunate man who was confined in an asylum, and who, on being asked why he was there, replied, "Oh, through a mere difference of opinion. I thought all the world was mad, and all the world thought I was mad." He protested against the hon. Gentleman being supposed to speak the opinions of Liverpool, or the opinions of England. What was the position occupied by the hon. Gentleman? He had been returned by the Liberal city of Manchester; but, when the inhabitants of that city had had some experience of his extreme views, he was rejected at a subsequent election by a majority of 3,000. Then he went to Birmingham, of which—that town being the great centre for the manufacture of fire-arms—he might be regarded as the most fitting representative. Yet even there he did not head the poll, but came in second. He (Mr. Horsfall) would now proceed to make one or two observations upon the general policy of the Bill before them. He did not intend to touch upon the question of the county franchise which he left to the county Members to deal with. In dealing with the borough franchise he had endeavoured to show what would be the effect of the proposed Bill upon Liverpool, which had been selected by the Government to illustrate the working of the Bill. He did not look upon the franchise as a right, but as a trust for the benefit of the country, and in the selection of the trustees they must consider who were the best qualified to hold it. Although he thought that it would not be advisable to reduce the franchise below £10 in such towns as Liverpool, yet he was not prepared to say that if the subject of Reform had been fairly and fully considered, if the principle contained in the admirable Amendment of the noble Lord opposite had been carried out, and if the Old Whig party, or if hon. Members on that side of the House, had been consulted, he did not doubt that some compromise would have been come to, or some arrangement entered into, which would have been not only beneficial, but acceptable to the country. Cordially approving as he did of the Amendment, he had given it the support of his voice, and he should certainly give it the support of his vote.

MR. PIM said, that connected as he was chiefly, but not exclusively, with the Liberal party of the city which he had the honour to represent (Dublin), and sitting amongst Gentlemen with most of whose views he sympathized, he felt great difficulty in refusing his support to the Government on the present occasion. He felt very strongly the necessity of adhering to the party in whose general views he coincided, and there were comparatively few questions on which he should be willing to take the part he was now doing; he felt the necessity of acting with a party, and he had not been in the House two nights before he was convinced that an independent Member was frequently an independent and useless unit. Still, he must say that when he was addressing his constituents on the hustings, he stated that whilst he was prepared to give an honest support to the party then represented by Lord Palmerston, it would be an independent support, and that he would not vote for any measure that might be brought in unless he thought it a good one. He felt it necessary, in regard to his constituents and to his own honour, to keep the pledge he had given, and he was satisfied that many persons who had voted for him would not have done so if he had not made that declaration.

He would not give a factious vote against the Government. He did not, however, consider this to be a factious vote. It had been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government would consider a vote against them on this occasion as amounting to a Vote of Want of Confidence; but, so far as he was concerned, he repudiated the accusation. He was anxious that his vote on the present occasion should not be viewed in that light, for he had no want of confidence in the Cabinet, and he should be very sorry indeed to see the administration of affairs pass out of their hands; but, notwithstanding his confidence in the Ministry, he felt that he ought not to be led blindfold into a course of which he could not approve. He could not vote for a Reform Bill which dealt with only one part of the great question of Reform—which did not touch a most important branch of Reform. He was not opposed to Reform in the representation of the people; but he did think that to agree to merely an enlargement of the franchise, without at the same time dealing with the other points of the great Reform question, was to be led blindfold. At the same time, he had no sympathy with those who said that there was no necessity for Reform, because there was no outdoor agitation upon the subject. Such an assertion appeared to him to be very unstatesmanlike. He did not see why they should need agitation to prompt them to the performance of their duty; what they had to do was to do the best they could for the country they represented. He knew that on a former occasion there had been great agitation; and he might say that during the fortnight's recess which had just terminated there had been a sufficient amount of feeling shown in the country to prevent the necessity of any such talk. Some things had been proposed which were, in his opinion, very far from what they ought to have been; they were unconstitutional replies to an unstatesmanlike taunt. There had been quite sufficient feeling shown in the country to prevent the necessity of any reference to a want of feeling, otherwise he should ask hon. Members if they thought it necessary or desirable to have such an agitation as occurred in 1832 in order to warrant them in making the alterations which were conceived to be for the benefit of the country. He was one of the young Members of the House, but he thought there were not many Members who recollected the proceedings of 1832 so well as he did; and certainly he believed that those who did recollect them, however much they might have sympathized with them at the time, and however valuable they might have considered the object in view, would never wish to see such an agitation again. He recollected the minor measures which were proposed before 1832 to disfranchise one or two small boroughs and transfer their Members to Manchester and Birmingham, and he remembered the feeling it caused in the country when these minor reforms were rejected. No one, he felt sure, would wish to see a repetition of the riots that then took place. Popular feeling was shown to a very large extent, and some endeavour was made to coerce Members of that House; but he did not think such things could happen again under present circumstances. If anything would lead to it, however, he thought it would be the taunts used against those Gentlemen who advocate Reform when it was said that they had no support out of doors. The fact that there was no very strong excitement out of doors was the very reason why they should make use of that period of quiet in order to settle this important question. It was of the greatest importance that the question should be settled. It had been brought forward on several occasions, and the objection to its so continually occupying their attention, arose not so much from the fact that it excited feeling out of doors, as from the stoppage that it caused to the proper business of the House, which was in reality of great importance. That business was really so great that it seemed to him to be somewhat like the throng in Fleet Street or Cheapside, and the running in of the Reform omnibus could have no other effect than to block up the way and stop the traffic. He supposed nothing else would be dealt with during that Session. He did not think that any Member could deny the necessity for Reform. There could be no question about that, for they all knew that there were places returning Members which, under present circumstances, should be disfranchised. He would not say whether alterations should be made by enlargement or by the addition of other constituencies, but some change in that respect was necessary; and that was, in fact, the most important part of a Reform Bill. He was far from doubting the propriety of an extension of the franchise; for, he thought, they should extend the basis of the representation, or, he might say, of the Constitution.

There were several propositions contained in the Government Bill, but this was not the time for considering their value, and he did not wish to be understood that in taking the line he had adopted he was opposed to those propositions. He did not mean to say that there might not be objections to some of them, and he should have been better pleased if it had not been proposed to take the franchise lower than £8 in boroughs, instead of carrying it down to £7. The latter, indeed, would, in his opinion, effect that sudden change which had been deprecated that night by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he said that sudden changes were undesirable. He could not see much value in the objection that the present measure would not be final; because no measure that the House could agree to could have that character. He recollected on a former occasion the excitement caused by the hon. Member for Birmingham making use of the words "for a time;" but surely no one could expect anything else than that the measure should only be for a time? They were not going to bind their successors; they had no right nor power to do so; and no arrangement could be good except for a time. Still, they had a right to expect that any arrangement they might make should last a generation at least. It was for the reason so well stated in the Amendment that he objected to the course taken in introducing a measure which only dealt with one portion of Parliamentary Reform. In the year 1859 a Bill was brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman on the opposite side of the House (Mr. Disraeli), which he believed at the time —and he had not seen any reason since to change his opinion—might easily have been made into a good Bill. Though several things in it required alteration, he thought, had it gone into Committee, it might have been made an useful Reform Bill. On that occasion an Amendment was proposed to that Bill which he would read to the House. The hon. Gentleman who proposed it (Mr. Baxter) spoke of the project then before the House as piecemeal legislation, and moved as an Amendment—

> "That it is expedient to consider the laws relating to the representation of the people in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, not separately, but in one measure."

That Amendment was subsequently withdrawn, and it was not upon it that the division took place; but he held that in principle it was a right one. The principle was not only that the representation of the people and the re-distribution of the seats should be considered in one measure, but that the Bills for England, Scotland, and Ireland, ought all to be submitted to the House at one time. As an Irishman he said that, even as regarded the representation of the people, the measures intended for Ireland and Scotland should be laid upon the table at the same time as the English Bill. To this it had been objected that it could not be done for want of time. That might to a certain extent be true; but the question of time in a matter of that sort was of secondary importance compared with having what they wanted to do done well. If the necessary information was laid before the House —and he did not see why additional information should not be obtained—at the commencement of next Session—as early as they liked in January or February—and measures for England, Scotland, and Ireland, in one Bill or in three, were prepared, and if the Government declared that all the Bills should be prosecuted together, he thought they would settle the question better than they were likely to do by the present Bill. He thought there was no subject which less deserved to be treated as a party question. Many reasons might be given for that view, and among the rest it might be said that both the great parties in the House had pledged themselves to Reform. It had been said that those that had made pledges which they found it inconvenient to fulfil could relieve themselves of their responsibility by resigning; but a party could not get out of its difficulties in the same way—a party could not resign. The only mode by which they could get rid of their pledges was by coming forward boldly and manfully and admitting that they had made a mistake and done wrong, and giving arguments to show that the arguments they had previously used were bad. If they did that the country would understand them; but if not, their pledges remained, and he would say that if hon. Members on the other (the Opposition) side supported the Amendment of the noble Lord (Earl Grosvenor), they were giving another pledge that they would support a good practical measure of Reform. If they afterwards declined to support a fair measure with the view of obtaining a complete settlement of the question, it would be discreditable to them as a party; but he could not believe that, under such circumstances, they would decline to give that support. It was essential to any Bill which had a chance of success that it should not be a party Bill, by whichever side it might be brought forward. It should not be intrinsically a party Bill, but should be moderate in its tone; for there was a large number of Members in the House who would not accept anything which they did not consider moderate. No Bill had any chance of success which did not engage the sympathies of the moderate Members on both sides of the House. He denied that a vote in favour of the Amendment could reasonably be construed into a Vote of Want of Confidence. He believed that the Government were sincere in their intention to bring forward a fair and honest Bill, as they had promised, but no one could tell what might happen in the meanwhile. The Government no doubt had not held out on that occasion a threat of dissolving Parliament; but it was, nevertheless, possible that before the question was settled the rejection of a Bill might involve the dissolution of Parliament. If we were to suppose that, this Franchise Bill having passed, the Government were to lose their promised Bill for the Re-distribution of Seats, and were in consequence to dissolve Parliament, it would be observed that the new Parliament would be elected by the new constituencies created by the Bill under consideration. That would be no common difficulty, and would lay the Government open to the charge of having got the Franchise Bill passed in order that, if they lose the future Bills, they could, by dissolving, get a Parliament more to their liking. Many Gentlemen had spoken highly of the independence of the working classes of the country, and he believed their statements upon that subject were well founded; but it was impossible not to conclude from the facts which had more than once been brought under the notice of Election Committees, that in the smaller boroughs there were many persons of that class whom a £7 qualification would serve to enfranchise that did not possess the incorruptibility of the great mass of operatives in Lancashire or Yorkshire. He was not, however, anxious to see the smaller boroughs deprived of the power of electing Members of Parliament. They sent to that House many of its most distinguished Members, and he hoped that in any scheme of Reform that might be adopted some means would be found—such, for instance, as the grouping together of smaller towns—which would afford the chance of a seat in Parliament to gentlemen of the same capacity and position. He should also be glad to see an extension of the number of learned bodies who had the right of returning Members. The Universities, which had hitherto been intrusted with the privilege, had not, for the most part, elected Gentlemen of whose political opinions he could approve; but those Gentlemen had, in the great majority of instances, been distinguished by their ability and character; and if the same right were conferred upon such bodies as the University of London, the Queen's Colleges in Ireland, and the Universities in Scotland, he hoped they would select representatives who would unite with the same high personal qualities warmer and more extended popular sympathies. The argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was fallacious in one respect. He omitted to state, when speaking of the places where the working classes would and would not predominate, in what way the re-distribution of seats would influence those constituencies where the working classes would have a majority. It might be that the promised Bill for the Re-distribution of Seats would give those places where the working classes were predominant another Member. He was favourable to making the voters more numerous, because the larger their number the more interest would be taken in the proceedings of Parliament, and because it was well for a man to feel that he formed a part of the machinery which governed this great country. He confessed, however, that he had more confidence in the power of an enlightened public opinion as a means of ensuring an efficient House of Commons than in any change in our electoral system, and he had no fear but that an honest and intelligent people would find fitting Parliamentary representatives.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, in rising to oppose the Amendment which has been moved this evening by my noble Friend the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor), I wish to say that I at least am quite willing to concede to him not only the merit of perfect honesty and sincerity in bringing it forward, but also to give him credit for perfect political consistency. My noble Friend is not now, nor has he been for the last year, an advocate of Parliamentary Reform. I do not know what he may have been in former times; but certainly he showed he was not an advocate of Parliamentary Reform, as far as a reduction of the franchise is concerned, when the Motion of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) was before the House during the last Session of Parliament. Lest some misunderstanding should exist respecting the vote which he gave upon that occasion, he very shortly afterward sissued an address to his constituents, in which he gave more fully than is usual in documents of that description an explanation of his conduct, and the reasons which had induced him to act as he had. The noble Lord said, in the letter to his constituents—

> "I think it right to issue my address at once, in order to explain the reasons which induced me on that occasion to vote against the reduction of the borough franchise."

And then, after giving those reasons, with which I need not trouble the House, he concludes by stating that he was opposed to the lowering of the franchise. Thus, it is evident his opinion was well formed last year; and I think his speech this evening has shown that he is still not an advocate of the extension of the franchise. ["No, no!"] I retract the word "extension." I mean, as I said before, that he is not an advocate of a reduction of the franchise. Accordingly, I do not see that he has committed any breach of consistency in moving an Amendment of such a nature as will enable him to get rid of the Bill, altogether, if possible. But, although I admit the noble Lord's consistency in this respect, I cannot understand why, holding the opinions he does, he thought it necessary to oppose the second reading of the Bill in any other manner than by a direct negative. I can understand that many parties in this House may have their reasons for declining to meet this Bill by a direct negative. For anything I know, Members of the party opposite may have their reasons, for I cannot tell what their present sentiments with regard to the reduction of the franchise in boroughs are. I know that in 1859 they were opposed to any such reduction. I know that in 1860, by the mouth of their leader, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli), they admitted that they were prepared to consider the question of such a reduction. What their views now may be I am unable to say; but I think it perfectly possible that while they may be willing to entertain the question of reduction of the franchise, they may not be willing to entertain it in the manner in which it is brought forward by the Bill of the Government. It may even be that some hon. Members behind me feel objections to the way in which the subject has been introduced; but, of all Members of the House, my noble Friend the Member for Chester has the least ground of complaint. The noble Lord, in the course of the speech which he made to-night, stated that it was with great pain he separated himself from those with whom he had previously acted, and said that on many occasions he had somewhat strained a point in order to maintain consistency of action with his political friends. Among the votes which he mentioned that he had given with some hesitation was, I think, the vote in favour of the Amendment moved by the noble Lord now at the head of the Government to the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, and he added that if that Amendment had not been carried, it was possible the question of Reform might then have been settled. I think I understood him to express his regret that that Bill had not been given a chance. Well, if that be the view of my noble Friend, I wonder that he did not take a lesson from his own past experience. Regretting, as he does, that this question has been allowed to go on for seven years longer, I do wonder that on the first occasion when a really practical proposition—[*Ironical cheers from the Opposition Benches.*] Sir, I do not understand the cheers of hon. Gentlemen opposite. That they may object to the proposal is intelligible, but that it is a real proposal cannot, I think, be denied. Whatever the Bill may appear in the eyes of the noble Lord who moved the Amendment, the noble Lord who seconded it (Lord Stanley) said, that whatever else the Bill might be, it was no inconsiderable one, and he evidently thought it had some reality and importance. When, therefore, there is again a chance of the matter being brought to a conclusion, I do wonder that the noble Lord the Member for Chester should adopt a course which he himself deplores that he took seven years ago, and should bring forward an Amendment, the only result of which, if it should be successful, can be to postpone a settlement for nobody knows how many years. The noble Lord, in addition to the objections which we all know that he entertains to any reduction of the franchise, appeared to attach great weight to the objection that this Bill was brought forward by the Government at the dictation of the hon. Member for Birmingham. I should like to know on what tittle or particle of evidence that allegation rests. In the speech made by the hon. Member for Birmingham in the course of last winter—which I suppose is the one alluded to—he made four distinct recommendations. First, that the questions of the franchise and the distribution of seats should be separated, and that the question of the reduction of the franchise should be dealt with first; secondly, he recommended that it should be reserved for another Parliament to deal with the question of the re-distribution of seats; in the third place, he recommended that the present county franchise should be reduced to £10; and fourthly, that the borough franchise should be reduced to £6. It is perfectly true that one of these recommendations has been adopted in the Bill of the Government, and it is equally true that of the other three recommendations, all of which he made as distinctly and emphatically as he made the first, not one has been adopted. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Which has been adopted? If the mere reason that a certain course was recommended by the hon. Member for Birmingham, which course appeared to the Government in any particular to be the best which they could adopt, I say it would have been unworthy of the position which they occupy to reject that course simply and solely because it happened to have been recommended by the hon. Member for Birmingham. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn and hon. Gentlemen opposite, appear to entertain great objection to the manner in which the Bill is brought forward. Let us see what the noble Lord recommends. He himself, as well as his Amendment, professes a desire to consider this question of Reform with a view to its settlement. I turn again to the address which he issued to his constituents, and I find these words—

> "But as in all important matters Legislative action is preceded by inquiry, such inquiry should, in my opinion, be instituted to show how, without affecting the present balance of the Constitution, the franchise should be extended. We could then proceed to legislate on a sound and ascertained basis."

When I read over that passage the other day, I was not quite sure what course the noble Lord was pointing to; but after his speech this evening, I think there is very little doubt that he is a convert to the recommendation of the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), and that he means to delegate the investigation of this question. In fact, I believe my noble Friend this evening suggested, as an alternative to the Motion of the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire, that instead of a Commission the matter should be referred to a Committee of the Privy Council for investigation. Now, I ask Reformers on this side of the House, and I ask Gentlemen on the other side of the House, who are so desirous to consider this question with a view to its settlement, whether they really believe that the question would be advanced one step by the adoption of such a course. I would ask first, what is the Cabinet that sits upon these Benches but a Committee of the Privy Council? They have already considered the question, and they have brought forward their deliberate opinions for discussion in this House. I should like to know what further object is to be gained by discussing this question before a Royal Commission or a Committee of the Privy Council. I am not aware that the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire ever explained what he thought this Commission would do. It seems to me, judging from the speech which the noble Lord delivered on the Franchise Bill last year, that the object which he had in view in referring this question to a Royal Commission was simply that the Commission should devise means by which the grant of an extended franchise to an additional number of our fellow-countrymen should be surrounded with restrictions and hedged in by provisions making the boon altogether nugatory and delusive. In fact, it would be doing the very thing which the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli) told us six years ago we must not do—it would be keeping the promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope. Much as I regret that my noble Friend should have felt it necessary to take the course which he has adopted on the present occasion—for I feel quite sure that my noble Friend has no intention of separating himself permanently from the party with which he and his ancestors have so long acted—I do regret that on this occasion he should have thought it necessary to separate himself so distinctly and decisively from those who, whatever may have been their mistakes, whatever may have been their failures, have at any rate been the consistent friends of the extension of political rights. I do regret that, if my noble Friend does not intend to leave our ranks for ever and to take his seat on those Benches opposite, he should have been induced to bring forward a Motion such as he has proposed to-night. The Amendment, however, has been moved, and, such as it is, it must be met. As I have said, I am not at all surprised at the attitude of the party opposite. They no doubt see in this Amendment the best way of getting rid of the Bill before the House, if not the best way of getting rid of the Government that has brought it in. It is possible they may think they see the best way of getting rid of the whole question. I do not think that extraordinary at all. I do not complain of the party opposite because they support this Amendment. If they think it likely that there will be a majority for the Amendment their doing so is a perfectly fair party move. The noble Lord who seconded this Amendment (Lord Stanley) also spoke of the Amendment moved in 1859. I am not at all desirous of proving that the two Amendments resemble each other; and I think there are other grounds of dissimilarity which the noble Lord did not mention. I think there was this difference in the Amendment moved in 1859 by the noble Lord now at the head of the Government —that it declared, in as distinct and emphatic a manner as words could do, what it was we did object to in the Bill before the House. That may not have been a good mode of proceeding—that is not the question now before the House; but, whether it was or was not right or politic on our part to say what objections we had before the second reading, we did distinctly state our grounds of objections. But I defy any one to make out the meaning of the Amendment now before us. It may be made by those who vote for it to mean anything. In the mouth of the noble Lord who moved it, it means a total opposition to a reduction of the franchise; in the mouth of the noble Lord who seconded it, it means that in his opinion we ought not to have brought forward a Reform Bill at all this year. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn thought that separating the re-distribution of seats from the extension of the franchise was an inconvenient mode of dealing with the question, and he saw no reason why we should not have postponed the whole subject for another year; so that for the noble Lord who seconded it it does not mean the same thing, or anything like the same thing, as what it means for my noble Friend who proposed it—because, if I understand the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, he does not oppose a reduction of the franchise. No doubt much might be urged in favour of the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn; but I should like to know whether, if we had postponed the Reform question till next year, the position of the Government would have been a very honourable one; or, to put it on lower grounds, whether their position would have been a very comfortable one? Had we taken such a course we should have been told that we were purchasing a year of office by shifts and dodges. The noble Lord may be right in saying the question ought to have been postponed or he may not; but I think there can be no doubt that from the opposite side of the House the Government would have had very little peace if they had announced it was their intention to postpone bringing in the Bill for another year. Suppose most of the Members on that side vote for the Amendment of my noble Friend, knowing what we do of the composition of the House, I think we may assume that unless it receives support on this side of the House they are not very likely to succeed in carrying that Amendment. The most practical question to consider therefore is, what amount of support is the Amendment likely to obtain from this side of the House? No doubt a great many Gentlemen who sit on this side—being very ardent and sincere Reformers, as I suppose we all are now—did entertain a very strong objection to the mode in which we proposed to deal with the question—namely, by separate Bills; but I must say that, as far as I can see, this is not a question of principle—this seems to me to be simply a question of convenience—of the best practical mode of doing what we all are agreed has to be done—namely, of passing some measure of Reform. I think I am justified in saying it is not a question of principle; and though there are some very ardent Reformers on this side of the House as well on the other who object to our mode of dealing with the matter, there are other authorities who approve the course we are taking. As showing that all Reformers are not of the same way of thinking on this point, it would be sufficient to quote the opinion of the hon. Member for Birmingham in favour of one view, and that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) in favour of another. But another objection is that we have made concessions to those who entertain somewhat different views from the views of the Government with respect to the mode of dealing with the question. Well, I quite admit we have made some concessions. I think it is perfectly fair and honourable to the Government to make some concessions. I go further, and say, I think it the duty of the Government to make concessions to men really and sincerely desirous of acting in unison with them in the main, which they might, perhaps, decline to make on objections urged by a party hostile to them. No doubt, when the Bill was brought in, we found a much stronger objection entertained to dealing with the Reform question by separate Bills than we had anticipated. No doubt, we found that many Members on this side of the House did attach great importance to knowing what were the intentions of the Government with regard to disfranchisement before they were called on to vote for the second reading of this Bill; and, therefore, I cannot see any unworthy concession in the promise of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer that after the second reading the Bill for the re-distribution of seats would be laid on the table. The difference, therefore, between the Government and those hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House who support the Amendment is really as to whether we ought to deal with this question in one Bill or in two Bills. And I submit that there are some reasons to be urged in favour of the plan which we have adopted. In the first place, let us have regard to what we have learnt from experience. This is not a subject on which we are without experience. It is quite true that in 1832 a Reform Bill dealing with the whole question was passed; but that was passed, as we all know, in a time of great tumult and excitement, when the whole social system of the country was to a certain extent disorganized. I suppose the Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House do not wish for the recurrence of a state of things like that. I can assure them that we on this side do not desire it. But since 1832 we have had additional experience. There have been, I think, four or five Reform Bills since that time, every one of which has attempted to deal with the subject as a whole. Every one of them has failed; and certainly that is a *primâ facie* argument against such a mode being a judicious one. So far as experience goes, then, there is some reason for the other mode of dealing with the question. There is another argument also—that of convenience. Though I am quite willing to admit that the two matters have an intimate connection with each other, there is a different principle involved in a Bill for the re-distribution of seats from that involved in a Bill for an extension of the franchise. We have promised the House to put them in possession of our views on both points; but even if the House should not like the Bill for the re-distribution of seats, still it will always be in their power to pass the Franchise Bill. Several objections have been urged to the Bill now before the House. It has been said that we are legislating in the dark—in other words, it is said that we cannot tell what will be the result of this Bill until we see the Re-distribution Bill to be passed along with it. If any one believes that the Government, in spite of their repeated assertions to the contrary, are acting on the advice of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and that, although they have several times denied it, they have deliberately preferred to postpone a Re-distribution Bill until a better Parliament has been elected—if there is any party in the House thinks that, I quite agree with them that the sooner they vote for this Amendment and pass any Motion that will get rid of us and of our Bill the better; for in that case the Government, having repeatedly asserted the contrary, is utterly unworthy of the confidence of the country, of the House, and of any section of the Gentlemen sitting behind us. It is said that if even the Government are honest in this matter—about which there appears to be considerable doubt—it is quite possible that circumstances over which neither we nor any one could have control might prevent a Re-distribution Bill being passed this Session or next, and that it is possible there may be a dissolution, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary, before a Re-distribution Bill is passed. I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Birmingham that such an event would be particularly favourable to a very democratic Re-distribution Bill; but what would be our condition in that event? We should know, the country would know, all the small boroughs whose existence it is proposed to threaten by a democratic Re-distribution Bill would be thoroughly aware of the position in which they were placed. They, at least, would take care to elect Members who would be opposed to any such Bill. In the other boroughs, in the larger number of boroughs in which it is not maintained or asserted that this Bill would give any preponderance to a new and more democratic class of voters, the class of £10 voters, who are now considered by hon. Gentlemen opposite to be so Conservative and so highly worthy of the possession of political power, would also be thoroughly awake to the situation, and would probably be disposed to return candidates who would not vote for a democratic Re-distribution Bill. Further, there would be the whole influence of the counties:—and with all these Conservative influences at work I do not see, even in the contingency of a dissolution taking place before the Re-distribution Bill is passed, that there is any reason to apprehend that the result would be the passing of a very democratic measure. I object to the doctrine that has been so prominently put forward—a class doctrine altogether, an assertion that I have not heard supported by a tittle of proof — that even in the constituencies in which, by the addition of new voters, the working classes will have a majority, they will all be inclined to vote one way for political purposes. In what case have they done so? Is the election of Members the only way in which the working classes, if they were so disposed, could exercise political power? We know their power of organization for certain purposes, and if they had wanted to use it for any political purpose whatever, is it not possible that before now they might have found some mode of doing it? Until you have some evidence that you have not adduced that the working classes are prepared to vote in a body against the voters on the register now for a particular class purpose, the assertion is one that you have no right to make in argument. I do not think that the objections dealing with this question in two Bills instead of one are very satisfactory or conclusive. I quite admit that my opinion is a biased opinion, but I maintain it is a sincere opinion; and it is that the House would do a great deal better to reject the Amendment of my noble Friend, and to proceed to the discussion of the measure before it. I do not say this because the passing of the Amendment involves the fall of the Government. I think the settlement of the question of Reform is of far greater importance than the existence of a Government, were its existence of ten times the importance it is. I believe that neither we nor you on the opposite Benches can escape from the pledges we and you have given on this subject. I am quite sure we do not wish to escape from them, and I doubt whether you on the other Benches do. I believe that the pledges which have been given, though they may have been rash, have been sincere. I do not suppose any one doubts the sincerity of Earl Russell on this matter. I, for one, do not doubt the perfect sincerity of Gentlemen opposite when they take this matter in hand. But I would remind the House, whether they consider these pledges were rash or not, they must be fulfilled; and even though it might cross our minds that they should be repudiated, it would be impossible. It is all very well to say that no excitement about Reform prevails at present. Is it impossible that a contingency might arise in which something might happen to disturb the tranquillity of the country, and produce a great political agitation? I am far from saying it is impossible to resist successfully a great political agitation; but I do say that the only ground on which you should successfully resist agitation should be the high ground of justice, patriotism, and honour, and I say that we cannot build a platform on which to raise ourselves to that height out of broken promises and abandoned pledges. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) quoted the eloquent and beautiful lines of the poet—

> "His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful made him falsely true."

I must say I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman should have quoted one of our greatest poets in defence of a policy which, whatever we may say of its expediency, cannot be recommended as one of high and chivalrous honour. I do not believe that any poet who ever wrote or any statesman who was ever worthy of the name and exercised power in this House would counsel any party or any Member in this House to cast away pledges so solemnly given as those which we have given, and to which we now desire to give effect.

GENERAL PEEL: The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us at the commencement of his speech this evening that he spoke for the purpose of acquainting the House with the grounds on which the present Government brought forward this Reform Bill. Perhaps he will allow me to state what I think were the reasons which induced the Government to bring forward this Bill in the Palmerston House of Commons. I call it the "Palmerston House of Commons," because it is notorious that the last House of Commons was dissolved sooner than it otherwise would have been for the express purpose of securing to the Government the very great advantage of the popularity of Lord Palmerston. I am far from finding fault with them; indeed, I think it is the wisest thing they ever did. There is a very great similarity between the circumstances under which the last Parliament was dissolved and the first General Election I can remember as a boy. George III. at that time was what Lord Palmerston undoubtedly was last year, the most popular man in the kingdom, and his Government took advantage of that and dissolved the Parliament, upon the cry—"The good old King and No Popery." Last year the cry was—"The good old Lord Palmerston and No Reform." I do not mean to say that the cry of "No Reform" was loudly uttered; but it was perfectly notorious that so long as Lord Palmerston was at the head of the Government no Reform Bill would be brought in. There are many hon. Members opposite who were elected with no other pledge and no other definition of their principles than that they supported Lord Palmerston and his policy. I ask you whether a Reform Bill formed any portion of that policy? How was it, then, as we are told, that at the first Cabinet meeting after the death of Lord Palmerston it was decided to bring in a Reform Bill? I do not know whether there was any Cabinet meeting between the elections and Lord Palmerston's death; but if there was, I venture to say Reform was never mentioned at it. How was it, then, that this change in the policy of the Government occurred? No doubt, you will say you had a new Prime Minister, and a veteran Reformer was at the head of the Government; but recollect that this veteran Reformer had been a leading Member of Lord Palmerston's Government, had been an accomplice in the withdrawal of the Bill of 1860; and, so far from being pledged to any further Reform Bill, he himself had advised the country to "Rest and be thankful," satisfied with what it had already got. I do not mean to say that Lord Palmerston's death did not make a very great change in the position and prospects of the Government. I will not say of that Government, as was said of another Whig Government, I think in 1835, that when the brains were knocked out, it was impossible for the carcase to continue to exist:—I do not say that Lord Palmerston monopolized the brains of the Cabinet, but he was the heart and life of it; and, with the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), he monopolized the whole of the confidence and the popularity which it enjoyed in the country. The right hon. Gentleman from that moment became a necessity to that Cabinet. His position in regard to Reform was different from that of any of his Colleagues. I am perfectly willing to admit that after the remarkable speech made by the right hon. Gentleman two or three Sessions ago it was impossible for him to remain in any Cabinet—I do not think he could have remained in Lord Palmerston's Cabinet—if it had not brought forward a Reform Bill. Well, the right hon. Gentleman being a necessity to the Cabinet, and a Reform Bill being a necessity to the right hon. Gentleman, something, of course, had to be done; and what did they do? They created a sort of new office; although I have never seen it gazetted, and they called in the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) as the adviser, of the advisers of the Crown. Another right hon. Gentleman, and a Member of the Government, has told us that bringing in a Reform Bill was a question of honour, of morality, and of respectability. Now, I draw the greatest possible distinction between the personal honour, the personal morality, and the personal respectability of right hon. Gentlemen opposite and their political honour, morality, and respectability. For the one I have a great respect, but for the other none at all. If, however, it was a question of your honour, morality, and respectability, I ask how it was that you allowed your honour, your morality, and your respectability to go to sleep for six years? reconciling it to your consciences, I suppose, by placing over them the usual consolatory epitaph—

"Weep not for us, our masters dear,
We are not dead, but sleeping here."

And when your honour, morality, and respectability awoke again into life, they took the shape of this Franchise Bill. The right hon. Gentleman told us that this measure was framed upon the electoral statistics which he placed on the table. There was no particular reason, *à priori*, why the figures hit upon for the franchise should have been £14 for the counties and £7 for the boroughs; £10 or £20 in the one case, and £6 or £8, or any other figures, might just as well have been chosen, for aught that anybody could see. But the right hon. Gentleman took the pains to tell us that £14 and £7 were the precise results produced by the Electoral Returns which were presented to us, and he invited the House to enter with him into a rule of three sum, in order to convince us of the correctness of his figures. Nobody, I believe, availed themselves of his offer. They accepted his numbers rather than take the trouble of going through his rule of three sum. But if I recollect aright the result of his figures was to produce an addition of 400,000 to the constituencies, of whom about 200,000 would belong to the working classes in the boroughs; but he also told us that the middle classes in the boroughs would still retain a majority of about 30,000. Well, objections were taken to our proceeding with this Bill, until it was known what were the intentions of the Government with respect to a re-distribution of seats. The right hon. Gentleman had been exceedingly coy upon that point. He refused to pledge the Government to anything but the Franchise Bill which he had placed before us. But when he saw the storm that was gathering round him he made a change in his order of battle. I do not think he was fairly liable to the military censure passed upon him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Buckinghamshire. Certainly, it is a very dangerous operation to change your front in the presence of the enemy; but sometimes it is absolutely necessary. When all the strong positions taken up are in your rear, and a heavy fire is opened upon your rear and flank, you are compelled to alter the disposition of your forces. And the operation was perfectly successful; for the right hon. Gentleman soon found out that the hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. Kinglake), the right hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. Hutt), and the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Oliphant), were only firing blank cartridge. They were completely frightened at the position they had taken up, and at once slunk back into the ranks they had left with a celerity that does the utmost possible credit to the discipline enforced by the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Brand). It is to be hoped that some future military historian who may trace the career of this Reform Battle will give a much better account of these manœuvres than the hon. and right hon. Members who performed them have done. But it is not quite correct to say that the right hon. Gentleman opposite changed his front. He put forward his Franchise Bill in the front, and he stuck to it. He said, "I will bring this Franchise Bill into action and leave it to its fate; and although I have got in reserve all the things that you ask for—a Re-distribution of Seats Bill, a Boundaries Bill, and Heaven knows how many other Bills besides—I will not show you any one of them until you have decided the fate of this measure." I am not sure that that was not good generalship on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. We know that with an army composed of mixed forces it is often good strategy to keep some of them out of sight as long as you can. They are much more likely to produce a panic among your own troops than strike terror into your enemy. But surely, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman has treated the House of Commons as if we were children. He has treated us as some nurses treat children to whom they show one thing and say, "Shut your eyes and open your mouth and see what we will put into it." I think they are bad nurses who do that; it is not a good course, even in the case of children; but I am quite certain it will never do to deal in that way with a British House of Commons. I say, treat us like men; tell us what is the scheme of Reform that you have to propose. You told us that you had brought forward a Franchise Bill, measured for and fitted to, the present distribution of seats. You now tell us that you are going to change that altogether, and give us a re-distribution of seats. But nobody can say what effect your re-distribution of seats will have upon your Franchise Bill. You may completely alter your numbers; and instead of your 400,000 new voters, we may have 500,000 or 600,000; instead of a majority of 30,000 being left with the middle classes, the 30,000 may be quite the other way, and your 30,000 may turn out to be 100,000. Then, forsooth, we are told not to inquire into the figures, because all these persons who are to be introduced into the constituencies are, after all, only "our own fellow-countrymen, our fellow-Christians, our own flesh and blood." Why, that is exactly the same argument, clothed only in different words, that the right hon. Gentleman made use of some two Sessions ago, when he declared that every man was entitled to the franchise unless you proved that he was specially disqualified. Are not the other millions whom you yourselves are to exclude equally "your own fellow-countrymen, your own fellow-Christians, your own flesh and blood," with those whom you propose to admit? Sir, for my own part, I disclaim altogether looking upon the working classes "as an invading army." I have always said, and I now repeat what I volunteered to say on the hustings at the last election, although nobody had asked me a single question about Reform, namely—that there are many people without the right of voting who might not only very safely but very advantageously be admitted to the franchise; but that I have no idea that for the purpose of admitting them you should open the door so widely as to overwhelm those who already possess that right. I am delighted to find by the Returns before us that the constituencies are increasing so fast; and, with the assistance of some of those franchises which when we brought them forward you called "fancy franchises," and would not hear of, I hope that every man who is properly entitled to the suffrage may very easily obtain it. But you say, "Why are you afraid of the working classes? Why do you higgle about the numbers to be admitted?" Well, I confess that I am not half so afraid of the working classes as of those by whom they are likely to be led or rather misled. I do not wish to see the connection between representation and taxation completely put aside. I do not wish the working classes to have a majority of the representatives in this House. I know perfectly well that one of the avowed objects of some extreme Reformers is to substitute direct taxation for all indirect taxation. Let me ask, would they not be most warmly supported in that by those among their constituents who would pay very little or nothing at all towards the direct taxes? Would they not be perfectly indifferent to the amount of that taxation, and to the amount of the public expenditure? I recollect perfectly well that one of the principal arguments for the first Reform Bill was that a reformed House of Commons would be a better guardian of the public purse, and would reduce our taxation and expenditure. Why, the noble Lord now at the head of the Government made use of that argument as his answer when he was asked why he brought forward the Reform Bill. He said that the then House of Commons had been exceedingly lavish of public money; that it had not attended to the wishes of the people in regard to the reduction of taxation and expenditure. Well, what has been the effect of the first Reform Bill? Why, whereas the taxation in 1852 was about £50,000,000, the reformed House of Commons has added £20,000,000 to that amount. And the great difficulty now felt is not to increase, but to resist the increase of your public expenditure. Why, the last great economical Reformer you had in this House, who represented Lambeth (Mr. Williams), was always found haggling about a few odd pounds, shillings, and pence in the Estimates, and at the same time asking for a Vote for thousands to provide a park for his own constituents. I always believed that the late Mr. Hume, although I never agreed and never voted with him, was a perfectly honest and sincere man, and I can easily imagine that if he could now return to this House his very first question would be, "What is the amount of your Army and Navy Estimates?" And when he was told their present amount he would exclaim, "Surely you must have some great war going on." Well, we have had a great war since you left us, and several smaller ones too—small with regard to the Powers we attacked, and still smaller as to the honour we derived from them, but by no means small in a pecuniary point of view. Indeed, the fault was not with the Liberal Governments if we have not had a war with everybody, for they have interfered with the affairs of every country, and have interfered in such a way that the prediction of the late Sir Robert Peel has been fulfilled to the letter. In the last speech he made in this House he said—

> "The time will come when, frightened by your own interference, you will withdraw your support from those whose hopes you have excited, and leave them to the bitter recollection that they have been betrayed."

Mr. Hume would then say, "Well, I do not think that the reform of the House of Commons has done much with regard to economy, or the honour of the country; but no doubt a liberal and paternal Government has had its attention directed to the promotion of the liberty and the welfare of the country. No doubt he would say that Ireland at this moment is the happiest, the most loyal, and the freest country in the world, and that all our colonies are in a state of prosperity? To this I should reply, This is an awkward moment to answer your inquiries, for I believe every barony in Ireland is proclaimed, the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended—but that is always so when Lord Russell is Prime Minister. And as to the colonies. I am sorry to say Jamaica has thrown up her constitution, and a Royal Commission is instituting an inquiry into the cause of the deplorable proceedings which have taken place in that island. We have had a mutiny in India since you left us. We have had a war in New Zealand, the circumstances of which it is difficult to understand; and now Canada is armed to the teeth for fear of an invasion. But all these things, we are informed, are to be set right by another Reform Bill. "Another Reform Bill!" Mr. Hume would exclaim, "why I suppose you must be going back again to the old constituencies, who selected sensible men to represent them, and who would never have allowed such a state of things to exist?" Well I should say we are partly going back again. You recollect all the freemen, potwallopers, and scot and lot voters who used to cut such a conspicuous figure before the Election Committees, and we are going to get them all back again only under a new name, £7 householders, and I have no doubt with their assistance every borough in England will have its market price. Some of the ten-pounders have been doing a good stroke of business on their own accounts, but we shall be able to have a regular list of prices, the amount of mint sauce required for the lambs of Nottingham, the price of Yarmouth bloaters, and a scale of prices for the Totnes tenants of the Duke of Somerset. I have not the slightest doubt that joint-stock companies will be formed, with regular circulars respecting seats in Parliament to be disposed of; and the Stock Exchange will be the arena for the transaction of business of this description. The right hon. Gentleman gave us another reason for bringing in a Reform Bill. He told us that some fifteen years ago the hon. Member for Surrey (Mr. Locke King) obtained leave by a majority to bring in a Bill to reduce the franchise in counties to £10; but he did not state that on the second reading it was thrown out by a large majority. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman was wise to remind us of that Bill at all, because there was not a single argument made use of on that occasion that would not apply at the present moment to a Bill for the reduction of the proposed franchise from £14 to £7 in counties. The argument was that if a £10 voter had a right to vote in the borough, he had an equal right to vote in the county. I now ask, will anybody get up and tell me that the Bill now before the House is likely to bring about a final settlement of the question? Would it not be made use of to make fresh demands and new extortions, so soon as the Liberal Government finds itself in a new emergency. Will the measure satisfy those who advocate a £6 franchise, or those who desire universal suffrage, at the head of whom the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer must be considered as taking his stand? Why, the very unanimity with which Gentlemen who advocate different franchises support the Bill is suspicious. Are they saying one thing and meaning another? Or are they only looking forward to this Bill as a step to that democratic form of Government which prevails in America, and which has been so much lauded? Now I, for one, have no hesitation in saying that I am for maintaining that old English Constitution which has carried us through so many perils to which other forms of government have succumbed. I shall continue to support the division of power between the Crown, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. I hold that the maintenance of the prerogatives of the Crown and of the House of Lords is just as essential to the liberties of the country as the maintenance of those of the House of Commons. The House of Lords has often rescued the country from an ill-considered or tyrannical vote of the House of Commons, which had been probably carried through some such gentle pressure as that spoken of as coming from the multitude assembled between Charing Cross and the venerable Abbey. The hon. Member for Birmingham lately reminded his constituents of what their fathers were prepared to do in 1831, for fear they should have forgotten it; but his version of the case I believe to be perfectly untrue. He told them that the country was within twenty-four hours of a revolution, and that nothing could save the Crown, and that the House of Lords ran great risk of being thrown into the river. I have such a perfect reliance, not only on the good sense, but on the loyalty of all classes of the people of this country—not only on their loyalty to the Throne, but on their preference for the institutions of the country over those of any other country in the world—that I believe the demagogues who counselled such measures would be more likely to be thrown themselves into the Thames, and that there are millions of Her Majesty's subjects who would much rather see the Thames flowing with blood instead of water, than that the Monarchy should be swept away to give place to a

Republican form of Government. It is all idle talk about danger; there is no danger of the institutions of the country being assailed. I believe there never was a monarch in the history of this country—I will not say so popular, because I think that word does not express the meaning—so thoroughly beloved by every class of subjects as Queen Victoria is at the present moment; but that is love for the individual and not for the kingly power. It is impossible to disguise the fact that the power of the Crown and the power of the House of Lords have been materially interfered with since the passing of the last Reform Bill. Why, the hon. Member for Birmingham himself admitted, in this House, I think, that the power of the Crown, and the power of the House of Lords had been diminished, and that the power of the House of Commons had been increased. We all consider it to be the duty of the monarchs of this country, not for their own sakes only, but for the sake of their descendants and that of the people of this country, to look with the greatest jealousy upon any encroachments upon the prerogatives of the Crown. We have been threatened within the last week or fortnight with a dissolution of Parliament if this Bill should not pass. I think that is a most unconstitutional threat, and that in making it you are encroaching upon the prerogative of the Crown. Now, in regard to this Bill, I have no hesitation in saying I would not, under any circumstances, vote for an indiscriminate reduction of the franchise in boroughs to £7. I would not vote for that under the present distribution of seats, and a re-distribution of seats would only add to my objections to it, because it would increase the evils I anticipate from it. The Government have told the people that they have a right to know what the intentions of the Government are, and that their trumpet shall give no uncertain sound; but I can imagine nothing so vague and uncertain as the sound they have given. They do not allow us to know what the proportions of this Franchise Bill will be when it is fitted to a new distribution of seats. You will shortly be called upon to say "Aye" or "No" to the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester; but if you believe that this is not a proper way of dealing with this question; if you think you ought to say "Aye" to the Amendment of the noble Lord opposite, while for party purposes you are going to say "No;" if your lips say "No," although your consciences says "Aye,"—then will you be pursuing a course which reminds me of the two lines addressed by Achilles to the ambassador—

> "Him count I hateful as the doors of Hell
> Who in his heart thinks other than his tongue doth tell."

Mr. KINGLAKE said, he could not understand why he, who had taken no part in the debate, should have been assailed by the shafts of the gallant General, to many of whose statements he thought the maxim *humanum est errare* might be very properly applied. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman accused him in the first place of having withdrawn the Amendment which he had placed on the Notice Book; and secondly, of having fired blank cartridge—an offence which must be regarded as being rather of a serious character. In answer to the first charge he would only say that he had never withdrawn his Amendment, and that it up to the present moment stood on the Order Book of the House, where it would remain until the conditions on which it was based had been faithfully fulfilled. To the second charge, that the Amendment was merely blank cartridge, the answer which he had to give was, he thought, conclusive. He proposed to move, on the Motion for going into Committee on the Franchise Bill, that it was not expedient to do so until the House had before it the expected Bill for a re-distribution of seats. What had been the result of the notice to that effect which he had given? Why, that it had been followed the very next day by a statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he announced that the Government would not ask the House to go into Committee on the Franchise Bill until they had before them the Bill for the re-distribution of seats; thus proving, in the most express way, that the terms of his Amendment should be complied with. So far, therefore, from having fired blank cartridge, he had, by means of his Amendment, dealt an effectual blow, inasmuch as it was now certain that the House would, before going into Committee on the Franchise Bill, have a Bill for the re-distribution of seats laid on the table.

Mr. BANKS STANHOPE said, that he thoroughly agreed with the noble Lord who seconded the Amendment (Lord Stanley) in the opinion that it was desirable the question of Reform should, if possible, be settled, in placing complete trust in all classes of his countrymen, and in welcoming all those who by their industry had raised themselves to the franchise. The question, however, was not, he thought, whether there was to be any Reform; but rather, was that the proper Reform which the Government proposed? He did not feel himself bound to defend all the details of the Reform Bill of 1832, although he was ready to admit that it had been productive of benefit. He was not prepared, for instance, to defend the principle that because a man happened to live in a £10 house he should have a vote, while his neighbour who occupied a lodging was excluded from the franchise. Neither was he a supporter of the principle of a man who lived in a borough having by some quibble two votes, one for the borough and one for the county, or that upon which a large number of towns that were larger than some small boroughs should be unrepresented instead of being grouped together and have Members to represent them. He did not, he might add, defend the numerous discrepancies between the number of Members which were returned for boroughs and for counties. He could not see why counties — and he thought the figures were very significant— with a population of 11,000,000, and an estimated rental of £69,000,000, should have only 162 Members, while boroughs with a population of only 9,000,000 and an estimated rental of £41,000,000 should have 334 Members. If, therefore, there were a re-settlement of the question of Reform, he should be very glad, because he did not think that matters as they stood were entirely perfect. He could not, however, look on the Bill under discussion as one which was entitled to his support. It reminded him of an amateur builder who in erecting a fine house made one mistake in the plan and another in the estimate. His bedrooms were as good as the rooms in which he was to live, were magnificent, but he forgot the staircase. His estimate also was most moderate, but he forgot his kitchen, offices, and stables. The Government also had made one mistake in their plan, and one in their estimate. Was their Reform Bill, he would ask, likely to effect a real settlement at all of the question with which it dealt? In discussing that point he would quote from a book which contained several speeches of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and he quoted these speeches because they laid down very clearly the basis on which a measure of Reform ought, in the opinion of its most earnest advocates, to be founded. A speech which he made at Birmingham, in 1858, is most valuable as giving his plans for Reform. The hon. Gentleman said—

> "Whenever a Reform Bill is brought into the House of Commons by any Government be as watchful and exacting as you like on the subject of the franchise, but never, I beg, take your eye for one moment from the question of the distribution of the Members, for in it lies the great subject of dispute, and unless you guard your rights you will have to fight your battle over again and to begin it the very day after the next Bill has passed."

Again, speaking at Bradford, in 1859, he used the following language:—

> "Now, the Reform Bill of 1832 gave sixty-three seats to boroughs, and, I think, sixty-five seats to counties. I believe, generally, from that time to this, there has been a feeling among all those who are in favour of Reform that the Reform Bill gave too large an influence to the counties and to the landed interest in the distribution of Members which was made by it. Repudiate without mercy any Bill of any Government, whatever its franchise, whatever its seeming concession may be, if it does not distribute the seats which are obtained from the extinction of small boroughs mainly among the great city and town populations of the kingdom. The question of distribution is the very soul of the question of Reform, and unless you watch that you will be deceived, and when the Bill is passed you may possibly turn back to lament that you are not in the position in which you now find yourselves."

A few months ago he said—

> "I argue, therefore, that it would be an incumbrance to a Suffrage Bill at this moment to interfere with the distribution of seats; it would make it more difficult to carry a Bill, and whatever distribution of seats you could now make must necessarily be trifling and unsatisfactory, and would leave that question still unsettled, even for the shortest possible period. You will carry such a Bill much more easily; public opinion hereafter will be more ripe to deal with the question of the re-distribution when there are a larger number of electors returning your Members to Parliament; I mean a larger number in the different boroughs. You will have what a mechanic will call a larger lever and a better Parliament, which would deal more satisfactorily with all questions which may come before you."

What, then, was the use of introducing such a measure as that under discussion when it would not settle the question even for "the shortest possible time." In Schedule A the hon. Member proposed to knock out nine places; in Schedule B some more; to the towns he gave 129, a very large number of them to the metropolis and the large towns; and he gave only twenty-nine to the counties. Supposing in any way that they obtained a Redistribution Bill, remarked the hon. Member for Birmingham, then they would have a better Parliament and a larger lever, which would give them 191 more Liberal Members. But why was it, it might be asked, that the hon. Member for Birmingham seemed to have changed his opinions on the subject? Because his own plan of the re-distribution of seats could not be carried out in the present House of Commons, and because he had arranged that the question of re-distribution should be left to a future Radical Parliament. This measure, then, could not be considered a perfect measure, because it did not secure to them those measures which the hon. Member for Birmingham and others held to be absolutely necessary. The hon. Gentleman further said that no measure would be satisfactory that did not give the voters the shelter of the ballot. Might he (Mr. B. Stanhope) ask, whether the Members for Lancashire generally protested against this measure unless accompanied by the measure of the ballot? But the hon. Member for Birmingham had expressed himself in favour of household suffrage in preference to any other description of franchise. Well, then, they had there a distinct declaration from the hon. Member for Birmingham that no Reform Bill would be satisfactory unless it contained provisions for the re-distribution of seats, the ballot, and household suffrage. The Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day had—unintentionally, no doubt—created a wrong impression at Liverpool in leading the people to believe that the opponents of this measure viewed the working classes who were to be admitted to the franchise under this Bill as a hostile body. Now, he (Mr. B. Stanhope) must say he had entire confidence in the working classes of the country. The householders in boroughs that would be admitted under the Bill were estimated at 300,000. Now, if that number added to the present constituency were sufficient to destroy the agricultural interest, however well disposed each man might be individually, so far as those 300,000 new voters were concerned, they were clearly in the position of an invading army. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech when proposing this measure adduced a vast amount of figures, and subsequently the Government laid on the table a volume of statistics extending over 354 pages. When he (Mr. B. Stanhope) ventured to say that some of those figures were inaccurate the right hon. Gentleman became greatly excited—he might almost say angry—in his reply. "What have you to do with figures," said the right hon. Gentleman; "you treat these working classes as an invading army, though they are our fellow Christians, and of the same flesh and blood as ourselves." So the moment they commenced to deal with figures the Chancellor of the Exchequer met them with sentimentality of that sort; and the moment they talked common sense the right hon. Gentleman asserted that they were dealing with the working classes as if they were an invading army. He (Mr. B. Stanhope) submitted that that was not a fair discussion, and he did not think that the House generally would approve of the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman conducted the business of the House. On what basis were they to admit the working man? Was it to be on the basis of facts and figures? Was it to be on the basis of mutual confidence, or upon the claim of being fellow Christians and flesh and blood like themselves? Now, he (Mr. B. Stanhope) yielded to no man in respect towards the working classes. At the same time, he confessed he was not prepared to give them unlimited power. The English aristocracy was the best in the world, but he was not prepared to give them unlimited power. He contended that the middle classes were the very mainstay of the wealth of the country; nevertheless, that was no reason why they should possess unlimited power. It was not fair to ask the House to place unlimited confidence in the working classes, or to give them unlimited power. It was argued the other day that because the people of Lancashire behaved so well during their recent heavy distress they were entitled to votes. Now, he admitted that no people could have borne their long suffering with greater patience. Nevertheless, it should be recollected that they had a great moral force at their back. They were aided, too, by great pecuniary contributions from England, Australia, and many other parts of the world. They had also the active and generous support of Lord Derby, and other men of station and wealth. But what was the reason that the working man living in Lincolnshire was not equally entitled to a vote as the working man living in Manchester or other places in Lancashire? From 1847 to 1852 the men of Lincolnshire underwent an amount of privation which few were aware of; and they bore their sufferings with equal patience as those men of Lancashire, although they had no public subscription, nor any general sympathy to aid or console them. In a letter of Mr. Haughton, recently published, the agricultural labourers were estimated at 885,000. Now, there were an enormous number of freeholders who might be called working men. About 200,000 working men, he believed, had the franchise. Were not the whole of these classes our fellow Christians and our own flesh and blood? Well, if they were to push this fellow-Christian theory to the utmost, should not the five millions of adult women in the country be considered? Was there any man who would dare to say that the women were not fit to govern? Social trust could certainly be placed in the working men in the counties, but that did not imply political confidence. He could not place implicit social trust in the working man in boroughs, because he was always engaged in strikes. The tailors, carpenters, and bricklayers had their strikes in 1865-6, and the ironmen had a terrible strike in 1864. He was afraid, indeed, that the effect of these strikes would be to send our capital and business to foreign countries. He would not place political confidence in the working classes, because they believed almost everything they were told. The hon. Member for Birmingham, addressing his constituents in 1858, said—

> "There is no actuary in existence who can calculate how much of the wealth, of the strength, of the supremacy of the territorial families of England has been derived from an unholy participation in the fruits of the industry of the people, which have been wrested from them by every device of taxation and squandered in every conceivable crime of which a Government could possibly be guilty. The more you examine this matter, the more you will come to the conclusion which I have arrived at, that this foreign policy, this regard for 'the liberties of Europe,' this care at one time for 'the Protestant interests,' this excessive love for 'the balance of power,' is neither more nor less than a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a speech at Liverpool the other day, in which he compared the £250,000,000 income of the working man with the £300,000,000 income of the people who pay income tax. The income of the working man he made out to be three-sevenths, or as equal to 3 or 4. But there was a gigantic fallacy in the right hon. Gentleman's argument, because the income of the working man was payment for his labour from the capital of others; the income of the taxpayer was interest on his own capital, while the muscles of a working man were his capital. He would not go into the subject how far the muscular capital of the working man was above or below the money capital of those who paid income tax. If they wished, however, to represent clearly the amount of money of both they must multiply the £300,000,000, the property of the income taxpayers, by 17, which would give a total of £5,000,000,000 as against £250,000,000 the income of the working classes. This proportion, instead of being as 3 to 4, was but 3 to 70. The Chancellor of the Exchequer undertook to give his audience at Liverpool the meaning of the word "democracy." He said—

> "The word 'democracy' has different meanings. If by democracy he meant liberty—if by democracy he meant the extension to each man in his own sphere of every privilege and of every franchise that he can exercise with advantage to himself and safety to the country, then I must say I do not see much to alarm me in the word 'democracy.'"

This was the most dangerous sentence he ever read, for the word "if" led either to no franchise at all or universal suffrage. It must lead to universal suffrage, for no one would dare to tell the masses that they could not "exercise the franchise with advantage to themselves and safety to the State." This was a mere repetition of the statement made in 1863 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that—

> "Every person not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger was morally entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution."

If they carried out even household suffrage—and he did not see how they were to stop short of it—and if every working man was to have a vote, the question was, "What he would do with it?" The hon. Member for Birmingham said at Glasgow, in 1858—

> "I am no advocate for a law to force the division of land. I do not want any landlord to be compelled to have a greater or smaller number of tenants, but I say the system of legislation on primogeniture on the law of entail, which is intended to keep vast estates in one hand through successive generations to prevent that economical disposition and change of property found so advantageous in every other kind of property—I say that state of things is full of the most pernicious consequences, not only to the agricultural classes, but to all other classes of our countrymen, for all are affected by it."

And the hon. Gentleman, in the same speech, said—

> "Is there any reason why land should not be as free as machinery, or ships, or household furniture, or cattle, or the goods and manufactures in your warehouses?"

The hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill), in his *Political Economy*, wrote—

> "When the sacredness of property is talked of, it should always be remembered that any such sacredness does not belong in the same degree to

landed property. No man made the land. It is the original inheritance of the whole species. Its appropriation is wholly a question of general expediency. Where private property in land is not expedient, it is unjust.

If property because it was land was not to be sacred, a landowner would ask how many years' purchase his land was worth? The question next arose, who in the new Parliament, and under the proposed distribution of seats, were to settle for the future the finances, questions of peace and war, or our foreign relations? The hon. Member for Birmingham said, on these subjects—

> "In our Foreign Office we have no massively constructed columns, we have no statues, but we have a mystery as profound—for in the innermost recesses we find some miserable intrigue, in the defence of which your fleets are traversing every ocean, your armies are perishing in every clime, and the precious blood of our country's children is squandered and regarded as valueless. I hope that an improved representation will change all this, that that great portion of our expenditure which is incurred in carrying out the secret and irresponsible doings of our Foreign Office will be placed directly under the free control of a Parliament elected by the great body of the United Kingdom, and then, and not till then, will your industry be secured from that gigantic taxation to which it has been subjected during the last 150 years."

It was highly important to know on what principles the Government was to be carried on under the new representation. The agricultural interest, it was plain, was meant to be—and must be—destroyed by this Bill. He would not go into statistics, but would only say, that if the Government gave county votes to the householders in towns—say 300,000 votes—they would swamp the county constituency. The House had recently combined to carry out measures of repression with regard to the cattle plague, which the Government had not had the nerve to adopt. The cry thereupon arose that the agricultural interest was too strong, and, therefore, this Bill was brought in and re-distribution postponed. If 129 borough Members (to be destroyed like flies in a December frost) voted for the Bill, they would emulate the courage of the gladiators who died for the amusement of the masses. Before they voted they ought (as the gladiators did) to bow to their ruler (the Member for Birmingham), and before taking their fatal and final march, they ought to defile (as gladiators did) before him and cry—

> "Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutamus."

The House of Commons must not legislate under a panic, or be supposed to be "dictated to" or be influenced by threats, or fear of personal violence. Now, what said the hon. Member for Birmingham in his letter to his constituents on the 25th of March? He said this—

> "What should be done, and what must be done under these circumstances? You know what your fathers did thirty-four years ago, and you know the result. The men who in every speech they utter insult the working men, describing them as a multitude given up to ignorance and vice, will be the first to yield when the popular will is loudly and resolutely expressed. If Parliament Street from Charing Cross to the venerable Abbey were filled with men seeking a Reform Bill, as it was two years ago with men come to do honour to an illustrious Italian, these slanderers of their countrymen would learn to be civil, if they did not learn to love freedom."

Who was the Member for Birmingham to threaten the House of Commons? He had no fear of a row, because he had social trust in his countrymen; and there would be none, because the Member for Birmingham knew he was legally, as well as morally, answerable. That House was a peculiar House. He knew not its mission, its end, its name in history. It might be "The Short Parliament," or "The Black Parliament" that began democracy. At present its name was "Lord Palmerston's Parliament." It was elected to maintain him and support his policy. Lord Palmerston had been buried with all honours by his Colleagues. North American Indians bury their great chiefs with their weapons as a mark of their greatest respect, to assist them on to what they call the "happy hunting grounds." The Government had similarly honoured their chief. They interred Lord Palmerston, and they buried his principles with him. He confidently appealed to both sides of the House to re-echo the words he was about to utter—that the House of Commons would not and should not be dictated to by the Member for Birmingham.

MR. BAXTER moved the adjournment of the debate.

MR. AYRTON thought that debates on great questions like this ought not to be regarded as of secondary importance, and that the debate should not, as a matter of course, be adjourned at twelve o'clock. Such was not the case in former days. They did not formerly give up at twelve o'clock, or give way to a feeble wearisomeness, but discussed the question until an hour at which they could reasonably adjourn. Now-a-days Members went in the morning and read the debates, and came down repeating what they had read; so that the debates were not only protracted but tiresome. He hoped whenever the debate was resumed that it would be brought to a conclusion.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the practice to which the hon. and learned Gentleman had alluded was one which had now prevailed for twenty-five years, and he very much doubted whether at any period of our history the House had ever sat till three or four o'clock with the view of then adjourning a debate. But what he ventured to presume was, that there would be a disposition, through the kindness of hon. Members, to facilitate the progress of the debate; and as the rule which placed Supply as the first Order on Friday enabled Members to introduce a variety of topics which were not likely to be listened to with much advantage to-morrow, he would appeal to those having Motions on the paper to give way, so as to enable this debate to be then proceeded with.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated, as a reason for not having introduced a more comprehensive measure, that he could not trust much to the tender mercies of private Members, who were not to be expected to give up the only nights they had for bringing forward questions in which they felt an interest, and therefore the Government would have only about twelve nights at their disposal for the discussion of the Reform Bill. Under these circumstances, it was rather hard to ask Gentlemen who were not inclined to facilitate the passing of the Reform Bill to give up their nights. If, then, out of deference to the wishes of the House and the Government, and in opposition to his own conviction of the necessity of the question, he was to yield his right, he was justified in asking Her Majesty's Government to give him a day for bringing forward the subject which stood in his name for to-morrow evening.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, it would be impossible for the Government to give a day. His right hon. Friend had made a suggestion which was in conformity with the general feeling of the House, and the good sense of the hon. Gentleman would, no doubt, lead him to act in deference to that feeling.

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter
before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, April 13, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Took the Oath*—The Viscount Leinster and the Lord Vaux of Harrowden.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH, who had presented numerous petitions against the Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill, said, that as pertinent to the subject-matter of the petitions which he had presented, and which he was sure would receive the serious consideration of their Lordships, he felt it his duty to allude to a Bill which had been brought into the House of Commons by two or three Roman Catholic Members for the purpose of doing away with the declaration against transubstantiation.

Earl GRANVILLE: I must interrupt the noble Marquess. He is quite out of order in alluding to a Bill now before the House of Commons, and which has not come before this House.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH said, he could put himself in order, because one of Her Majesty's Ministers said that he accepted the Bill and stated that he would bring in a measure on the subject.

Earl GRANVILLE: It does not matter whether the person alluded to by the noble Marquess is a Member of Her Majesty's Government or not. The noble Marquess is quite out of order.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH said, he supposed the Government, at all events, would not refuse to give some intimation of the nature of the Bill then promised, because there was a great and natural alarm abroad that the declaration established in 1688 was to be done away with. ["Order, order!"] He could put himself in Order in a moment by referring to the Bill (Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill) which was on their Lordships' table. He had not intended to allude to that Bill, because it would come on for consideration on Monday next; however, he would refer to its schedule. In the reign of Charles II. the Bill of Rights was passed, and in it was laid down, as one of the bulwarks of the British Constitution, that from that time forth the Sovereign of the country and others should make a declaration against transubstantiation. Now, if their Lordships looked into the schedule of the Bill which was upon the table they would perceive that it was proposed therein to repeal the unrepealed portions of the Act of Charles II., to which he referred, of which the declaration against transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass was the most material part. That declaration had been taken by our most gracious Sovereign, and in what position would she be placed by this Parliamentary Oaths Bill? The Prince of Wales was bound to make that declaration when he was twelve years old, if he should then arrive at the throne, or, if not then, upon his arriving of age. Now, that declaration was in fact the charter upon which the Protestant succession in this country was based. Would the Lord Chancellor inform him if it was possible, in accordance with the provisions of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, for Parliament to repeal the unrepealed portions of the Act of Charles II.? Their attention had been called to certain proceedings in many Protestant churches, which showed that Popish practices were in full swing; and there was very great alarm in the public mind, and some concern to know what were the intentions of the Government upon this most important subject. The Oath of Allegiance, as contained in the Bill on their Lordships' table, would not bind those who took it to "defend" the Protestant succession, as the word "defend" was, as we perceive, purposely omitted; and by that omission the whole character of the oath was altered, and the British Constitution was changed. Vast numbers of petitions had been presented from persons who did not wish that the Protestant institutions of the country should be mixed up in any way with the affairs of the dynasty. The people of England felt strongly that things were being done which could not be tolerated longer; and he would warn the Roman Catholic laity to moderate the claims and qualify the spirit indicated by the presentation to the House of Commons, on one night before the Easter recess, of eighty-one identical petitions for the disendowment of the Protestant Church—petitions which evidently originated with the Roman Catholic clergy, whose bidding, as they knew, the laity must do. The facts he had referred to showed that the Catholic animus was against the Protestant succession to the Crown, and that was the reason he had given notice of the Motion which, in conclusion, he now moved. The noble Marquess then moved an Address to Her Majesty for—

Copies of the Declaration against Transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass, as required by Law to be taken by certain Protestants holding Office under the Crown, and of any other Oaths bearing on Religion to be taken by Persons in any Civil Office.—(*The Marquess of Westmeath.*)

Earl **RUSSELL** said, he should decline to discuss the declaration against transubstantiation, and would say that it would be time enough on Monday to speak upon the Bill, the second reading of which was fixed for that night. He was not aware what officers were required to make the declarations referred to, but there would be no objection to produce copies of them.

Motion *agreed to.*

The Marquess of **WESTMEATH**, understanding that the noble Earl (Earl Russell) had inquired what officers were required to make these declarations, said, he believed they were the two Lord Chancellors, the Chief Justices of the Queen's Bench in England and Ireland, the Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland, and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, April 13, 1866.

MINUTES.] — Select Committee — On Contagious Diseases, Lord Hotham *discharged,* Sir Charles Russell *added;* London (City) Corporation Gas *nominated.*

Public Bills — *First Reading*—Divorce and Matrimonial Causes * [102] [*Lords.*]

Second Reading—Representation of the People * [68]; debate *resumed,* and further *adjourned.*

Third Reading—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases * [78]; Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland) * [72].

MARINE DEPARTMENT—BOARD OF TRADE.—QUESTION.

Mr. **LAIRD** said, he wished to ask the First Commissioner of Works, Whether any correspondence has taken place between the Office of Works and Board of Trade in reference to the very inadequate office accommodation for carrying on the business of the Marine Department of that Board; and, if any communications have passed, whether he will state to the House the nature of them, and lay all Documents on this subject upon the table of the House?

Mr. COWPER said, in reply, that steps had been taken for increasing the accommodation of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, and that on a future day he would lay on the table the documents bearing upon the subject.

ARMY — ARTILLERY — ARMSTRONG GUNS.—QUESTION.

Mr. HENRY BAILLIE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, If it is true that the second 600-pounder Armstrong Gun burst at the fiftieth round; and, if so, whether it will not be advisable to at once stop the rifling of heavy guns on the Woolwich Shunt, and Whitworth Systems, until the War Department have ascertained the most enduring system of rifling heavy Artillery?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON, in reply, said, it was the fact that an Armstrong gun had burst in such a manner that it had become unserviceable. He was, however, unable to give the hon. Member any definite reply to his Question until further investigation had been made as to whether the cause of the bursting of the gun could be attributed to the system of rifling the gun, or to the excessive charges that had been fired from it.

ARMY—ARTILLERY—RIFLED GUNS.

QUESTION.

Mr. O'BEIRNE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, If he will lay upon the table of the House Copies of Correspondence between the War Department and Mr. Lancaster, from the 9th day of May, 1863, to the present time, on the subject of the endurance of heavy rifled Guns?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, in reply, that the Question of the hon. Member had been put on several occasions, and his reply had been that such correspondence as that referred to ought not to be laid upon the table, so that encouragement might not be given to inventors to write long letters, in order to get them published at the public expense. Of course, occasions might happen when it would be proper to make an exception to this general rule. The hon. Member, however, had the opportunity of bringing forward the subject in the form of a Motion, when he could state his reasons for desiring the production of the correspondence he had referred to.

ARMY—SURGEONS IN THE GUARDS.

QUESTION.

Captain VIVIAN said, he wished to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will object to lay upon the table of the House a Copy of the Warrant of 1860 under which the system of promotion of the Assistant Surgeons of the Brigade of Foot Guards has been altered; and, whether a Copy of such Warrant has been forwarded to Officers commanding those Regiments?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON, in reply, said, the hon. Baronet the Member for Fifeshire (Sir Robert Anstruther) had given notice of his intention to move for the documents bearing upon the subject in question, and until then he should abstain from making any remarks upon the matter.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE—IMPORTATION OF DISEASED DUTCH CATTLE.

QUESTION.

Mr. DU CANE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a Report in *The Times* of that day of what had taken place at the Middlesex Sessions held the previous day with regard to the cattle plague, at which a Mr. Glossop was reported to have said, in moving for a rate of 1*d.* in the pound to meet the compensation required under the Cattle Plague Act, that he regretted to have to state that in that county the cattle plague was increasing, and that great ravages of the disease had occurred in consequence of the introduction of diseased Dutch cattle by the ship *Mars*? These cattle were landed at Blackwall, and driven through the metropolis to the extreme verge of the county of Middlesex, having been smuggled in by the agents of Lord Granville and Lord Taunton. The animals made a hole in a hedge, and then proceeded to other farms. These cattle had since died, and the worst of the matter was that this loss would fall on the ratepayers. The committee had ordered prosecutions, but it was feared that the only persons who would be convicted would be the drovers, and not the persons who employed them, who were morally responsible. He would, therefore, beg to ask, Whether the right hon. Gentleman will inquire into the accuracy of the above statement, and, in the event of its being confirmed, devise some remedy against the repetition of a similar practice?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, he had not seen the statement referred to up to within the last five minutes, when his attention was called to it by the hon. Member. He then informed the hon. Member that there must be some mis-statement in the report in question, and that if he would postpone his Question until Monday he would inquire into the matter. The hon. Member, however, declined to do so, and therefore he could only say now that he would make inquiries on the subject, accompanying that assurance with an expression of the belief that there must be some misapprehension in the matter.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*: Committee *deferred* to *Monday* next.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[Bill 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was—

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. BAXTER said the question before them appeared to him to be one of such paramount importance, and its decision by that House must of necessity exercise such a mighty influence upon the history of the empire, that he hoped they would not allow considerations of a mere party nature to prevent their discussing it in a dispassionate spirit, and in eventually disposing of the Bill upon its merits alone. All he could say for himself was that he would not introduce into this debate anything whatever of a personal nature; for he confessed that he was somewhat tired of the personalities which had been indulged in upon both sides of the House. Differing very widely as he did from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), and regretting the course which that right hon. Gentleman had thought it to be his duty to take on this great public question, he had no intention of saying one word in his disparagement:—in the first place, because he thought the great abilities and the logical powers of the right hon. Gentleman reflected lustre on the House; and secondly, because he believed conscientiously that no man in England had done more both to promote the enfranchisement of the working classes, and to promote the passing of the Bill before the House. He might be permitted to say, at the same time, that he hoped the discussion would be allowed to go on without any more personal and monotonous attacks upon the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). He was sure the country was tired of those incessant personal references. The other day he met a gentleman who was constantly in the habit of attending the debates in that House, and who entirely differed from the hon. Member for Birmingham in politics, and he (Mr. Baxter) asked why he had not appeared lately in the gallery? He replied, "You people in the House of Commons seem to be doing nothing but discussing John Bright, and I am quite sick of it." He could not help thinking that that mode of warfare did not tend to uphold the dignity of the Imperial Parliament. He did not stand there as the apologist of Her Majesty's Government. He was not a party man, for he had before now helped to turn out previous Whig administrations, and it was extremely probable that he should have to do the same again. Therefore, whatever faults might be justly or unjustly laid to the charge of Her Majesty's Ministers in regard to the management of the Reform Bill mattered very little to him: his concern was not with the merits or demerits of the actors, but with the piece itself. Having bestowed much thought and taken great pains in considering this subject, he would venture to offer one or two brief observations to the House upon it; and he assured them that those observations should be brief, as he had too much respect for the House, and was too conscious of his own inability, to detain them long. They had heard a great deal lately of the dangers which were impending from what was called unbridled democracy; and in looking over the speeches which had been delivered in that House, not only on the present Bill, but on previous Bills of a similar nature, one might imagine that there were embodied in all those schemes provisions at least as democratic as those which were embodied in the People's Charter. Such expressions as "the dominion of mere numbers"—"the rule of the uneducated masses"—"the swamping of property and the transfer of power entirely to the lower orders," had been made use of with a consistency and a levity which was most astonishing, considering the small foundation which they had in fact. The speeches of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) and of the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope) were still ringing in his ears; and if any hon. Gentlemen in that House really believed in the dangers which these Gentlemen stated threatened the landed interest of this country, the House of Lords, and the throne of their beloved Queen herself, he did not think they could have slept in their beds. The speech of the right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon, if it meant anything, was an attack upon the great Reform Act of 1832; but he was surprised how any one with his admirable sense could possibly believe that the proposition on the part of the Government to enfranchise 400,000 men would be attended with consequences so outrageous. It quite passed his (Mr. Baxter's) comprehension. There was no man in that House more alive to the great danger of handing over the monopoly of political power to mere multitudes and uneducated masses than he was. Those who had studied the history of the question as taught by the events in Europe from 1789 to 1848, and those who had had, like himself, an opportunity of studying politics in the south-western States of America, where no admirable school system, as in the North, fitted the people for the possession of political power, might well be alive to the great perils of universal suffrage; but he thought that the acknowledged existence of those very perils afforded undoubtedly an admirable and cogent argument in favour of the changes now proposed by the Bill before the House. Gradual changes made in time, wise concessions gracefully given, did not tend to bring about revolutions. It was that policy of determined resistance to all changes, and the persistent refusal to grant reasonable popular demands, which in the end endangered the constitution. He would join issue with the hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon when he said, there was no danger to the institutions of this country during the perilous times of the Reform Bill of 1832. When he listened to the speeches which had been delivered upon this question, they reminded him not so much of the speeches of Sir Charles Wetherall and others against the Reform Bill of that year, but they had a ring about them reminding one of the tone adopted by the different continental *regimes* before the great popular commotions swept them all away. He had heard it over and over again said in those debates, that if they reduced the franchise below £10 they would remove the barrier which prevented the rush of democracy. His opinion was that the consequence of reducing the franchise now would be precisely the same as that which followed the Act of 1832. That change bore back the tide of the uneducated masses, and it had saved them from a further change for more than thirty years. If the Upper Ten Thousand had refused to give way upon that occasion, he believed the people would have insisted on having universal suffrage; and if the present bill should be refused now, he thought the same thing would be asked for, and hon. Members would perhaps have cause to repent that they had not yielded to just demands in time. His complaint against the opponents of the Bill was that it was impossible to divine the precise grounds of their opposition. Their resolutions and their speeches were in entirely different language. They argued—nearly all of them—for he did not include the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn—against the enfranchisement of the working classes; whereas, to judge from their resolutions, they seemed to wish for a much more comprehensive measure of Reform than had been proposed by the Government. Their voice was the voice of Jacob, but their hands were the hands of Esau. If that wanted any confirmation it would be found in the speech delivered last night by the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor). The noble Lord took care not to tell us what were his views, but the general impression conveyed by his observations was that he was opposed to all extension of the borough franchise. Having refreshed his memory that morning by a reference to the papers, he found that the noble Lord thought that there was so much difference of opinion, as to make it impossible to settle this question of Reform without taking it out of the dominion of party and referring it to some impartial tribunal, such as the Privy Council. But his resolution, on the other hand, told an entirely different story, inasmuch as it appeared to pledge the House to the opinion that they were ready not only to grapple with, but to settle, the question of Reform. He asked these Gentlemen what they wanted the country to believe; and were they, as their resolution expressed, greater Reformers than Her Majesty's Ministers? Judging from the resolution, they were in favour of a more extensive plan than that proposed by the Government, whereas they were in reality opposed to the vertical extension of the suffrage altogether. The right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon had made no secret of that on the previous night, when he told them that if he was opposed to a £7 franchise with the present distribution of seats, he would, in the event of a redistribution of seats, be more opposed to it still. Judging, therefore, by the speeches of Conservatives, and of some Whigs also, the complaint was that Government had not embarked all at once in a vast series of measures including the redistribution of seats, a rearrangement of boundaries, laws for preventing corruption at elections, and various other matters. Why, one would imagine that they were the greatest Radicals in the country. Lastly, one of the most distinguished of our advanced Liberals was accused of demanding too much, and now Gentlemen opposite turned round on them and asked, were they going to be so green as to be satisfied with so little. But he could assure them that the whole country thought the thing a mere farce. [*Opposition Cheers.*] He understood the meaning of that cheer. What the country said was, that it was a mere farce to pretend to want all manner of reforms whilst their speeches were directed against all Reform. [*Cheers.*] Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) side of the House, and the men who supported them in the country, were opposed to any Reform Bill which had the slightest chance of passing, whilst all their admiration was given to some comprehensive scheme which they knew could never be carried. He thought, however, that the country had pretty plainly indicated its opinion of such a policy by the petitions which had poured in from every quarter, and which had been presented by Gentlemen on both sides of the House. These petitions must have convinced the House that all true Liberals had found out the hollowness of the pretext upon which the Bill was opposed. He was also delighted to find, from certain indications, that even the great united Conservative party were not entirely at one on the question. He had the pleasure of knowing several Conservatives who said that their leaders had not adopted a wise policy in opposing the Bill. He was anxious they should know what Conservatives in remote parts of the country thought of the amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester; and if the House would permit him, he would read a short extract from the leading article of a Conservative newspaper published in one of the boroughs with which he was connected. The writer said there could be little doubt that the object of the Resolution moved by the noble Earl the Member for Chester was not merely to postpone the Bill as a partial exposition of the Ministerial intentions, but the real aim was a complete shelving of the whole question. The writer described the Bill as a more Conservative measure than any other the Conservative party were likely to get, and was likely to extend the privilege of voting to large numbers of intelligent artizans. Finally, the writer said it would be a lasting settlement of the question. [" Name."] It was *The Standard* — *The Standard* of the borough he had the honour to represent. He believed that the course the Government had taken was not only a wise course, but the wisest and most honest course that was open to them. Had they brought in a great comprehensive scheme such as they were now told they ought to have introduced, nobody knew better than the framers and supporters of this Amendment that such a measure would have been sure to be a failure; and even the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn had admitted on the previous night, that it would take the whole of the time at their disposal this Session to discuss the

Franchise Bill then before them. If they were told that it was because a great comprehensive scheme had not been introduced that the present measure was opposed, what became of the action of that great party in 1860 when they had a comprehensive Bill, and opposed it by talking against time for several weeks? ["Oh, oh!"] He had never been able to see why they should not discuss these questions *seriatim*, and if they adopted any other plan no measure could pass during the present Session. July would not see the end of the discussion. To have dealt first with the redistribution of seats would have been inconvenient, because it would have necessitated an immediate dissolution before the question of the franchise was settled. Had the Government adopted such a course he for one would have had great doubts of their sincerity; but he regarded the present Bill as an evidence of their honesty and their desire to succeed. He was one of those who did not believe in the necessity of doing all these things at once, and he had never seen any good reason against what was called bit-by-bit Reform. He must confess that the Bill of Her Majesty's Government did not come up to his expectations: he believed that it would have been more beneficial to the country had it gone further, and had extended the franchise more in a vertical direction; but still he thankfully accepted a measure which enfranchised 400,000 of his fellow-countrymen and gave the working classes a larger share than they had at present, although still a very small one, of political power. He now came to the electoral statistics which had been laid before the House, and he could not help thinking that they conveyed to their minds rather an exaggerated idea of the number of artizans who were at present entitled to vote. He had never understood—in fact it was quite new to him—that persons working at handicraft trades and employing apprentices, or whose wives kept shops, were to be classed among the artizans. He had always regarded them as traders, as in fact the lower portion of the middle class. If they deducted them, the freemen, and the artizans employed in the public dockyards, they would find the total of 128,500 to be much reduced. Another important point which had not been touched on was the extremely unequal distribution of the working men in the existing constituencies. In these constituencies, in which there were many freemen, or where the Government had large works, the proportion was very large; whilst, in the great seats of our textile manufactures, it was very small. In Birmingham and Ashton-under-Lyne it was about one-sixth; in Bradford, where there were 5,189 electors, of whom only 438 were working men, the proportion was one in eleven; in Dudley it was one-sixth; in Halifax, with 1,771 electors, it was one-tenth, or 171 working men. In Huddersfield the proportion was about one-eighth, whilst in Leeds, with 7,217 electors, there were 523 working men, or about one-fourteenth. He could go on multiplying examples of that sort, but he would not take up the time of the House. He told the great party opposite that greater attention should have been given to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the previous evening, which was entirely borne out by the statistics, that with regard to the majority of borough constituencies in which the proportion of working men was the largest, Conservatives were generally returned. In Beverley, Canterbury, Coventry, Devonport, Dover, Harwich, and many other places, this was the case. With these facts before them, he could not understand why Gentlemen opposite should show such new-born zeal in favour of the redistribution of seats whilst so much opposed to a vertical extension of the franchise. He thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had put the number of working men who were, under the Bill, to receive the franchise, much too high; it appeared to him that 110,000 would be much nearer the mark than 200,000; but even granting the proportions of the right hon. Gentleman to be correct, admitting that the old and new constituencies together would give 300,000 working men, that was only one-fifth the whole constituency of the country; whilst the upper and middle classes would have more than a million: so that if any element of danger really existed in that class, they would never have the power to develop it. But he denied that there was the slightest danger in enfranchising a much larger number of his fellow-countrymen than was proposed by the Bill of the Government. This peculiarity he had noticed in all the discussions on the subject, that the measure which went to a vertical extension of the franchise was opposed by Gentlemen who had few opportunities of mixing with the working classes, and therefore few opportunities of judging of their fitness for political power; whilst the men who supported this measure were the men who knew the working classes best, were great employers of labour, and who were in the habit of frequently acting with them at public meetings. During the Easter recess he met a friend who had spent his life among the working classes, and had made a fortune. That gentleman, who was no politician, said to him, "That was an exceedingly able speech which was made by Mr. Lowe, but surely he knows nothing of the working classes. Had he known them, as well as I do—had he been present at the great meeting in Dundee, where, out of 2,000 of the working classes, only 13 hands were held up in favour of manhood suffrage, he would have had a very different opinion of the class." No doubt he has by this time been convinced how mistaken he was in saying that the working men would not accept a £6 Bill, or anything like it, but would go for manhood suffrage. The fact was quite the other way. The working men would unanimously support this Bill. But there were other reasons why he approved this measure. He thought the existence and splendid success of co-operative societies afforded a strong argument for the extension of the franchise. Nor was he at all scared by what was said about trades unions. He believed the existence of these unions, with their many faults and their many evils, showed the desire of the working classes to do better for themselves, and were indications of intelligence on their part which only required to be directed to proper objects. He would read a single sentence from the opinions of the Rev. Mr. Kingsley, who knew as much as any one of the opinions and sympathies of the working classes. In *Alton Locke* he said :—

> "These trades unions still talk violence, nonsense, and false political economy, inherited from the evil times of 1830–40. Very likely; but the working classes feel they have no alternative, no other means of making their opinions known to the British Government. Could they but send a few men to Parliament who would state their case fairly to the British House of Commons the case would be different."

It was said that the working men were indifferent to the franchise. Trusting, perhaps too implicitly, to the repeated promises of Government, but chiefly relying on the justice and wisdom of the Imperial Parliament, they believed they would at length obtain enfranchisement without clamour, agitation, or violence; but if they were told those promises ought not to be fulfilled, they would very soon assume a different tone. He quoted the opinion of a Scottish clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Blaikie, of Edinburgh, who had devoted a lifetime in endeavouring to improve the condition of the working class, and had an excellent opportunity of obtaining their confidence, to the effect that political exclusion created a sense of neglect and mistrust, and tended to separate their sympathies from the governing class. The gradual extension of the suffrage would have a happier and better effect upon them than most people believed. The extension of the franchise would greatly diminish corruption. Large masses could not be bribed. There was no bribery to speak of in the counties or in the large towns. There was nothing like bribery in American elections. ["Oh, oh!"] He repeated the statement. He had never met an intelligent American, however much he might be opposed to universal suffrage, who said that anything like bribery existed in America. The only clause in this Bill which he thought objectionable was the savings-bank clause, and he did earnestly hope it would receive further consideration from the Government. At the very best it would enfranchise an infinitesimally small number; but it was open to very grave objection. It was very likely to open the door to fraud. It might be taken advantage of for the manufacture of votes. Let hon. Gentlemen opposite remember that, whereas under the operation of the act before 1832 working men formed 30 per cent of the constituency, they had since been reduced to the extent of 10 per cent, whilst during the same period they had made unprecedented strides in intelligence, and in everything, in fact, which fitted them for the due exercise of the elective franchise. Notwithstanding all that had been stated in the interesting speech made last night by the right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel), his thorough conviction was that all classes of the community were now much more loyal and firmly attached to the institutions of the country than they were before the Reform Bill. He did not think that because at some distant period of time the increased value of money and the increased rent of houses might bring about a greater enfranchisement of the working classes than now existed; they should on that account refuse to grant the franchise to a body of men—the very bone and sinew of this great nation—who were in every way qualified to exercise it. He had the firmest confidence that Parliament would do nothing of the kind. He believed that House would receive them cheerfully—not with a grudge, but with a welcome—and in so doing they would not only extend the basis but increase the stability of the Constitution. A larger representation of the working classes would also, he believed, have a happy effect in bringing about an early settlement of some important questions affecting capital and labour. These were briefly his reasons for supporting the Bill, and for applauding the honest course which had been taken by Her Majesty's Government. He earnestly hoped that it would become law before the autumn, because he feared that its rejection would be attended with danger to the peace of the country, whilst it would be disrespectful to the oft repeated recommendations of the Crown.

SIR E. BULWER-LYTTON: Sir, I approach this subject with deep and sincere anxiety. I cannot bring myself to regard it in a mere party point of view. It is not to my mind a question, whether the Government of to-day is to be confirmed or displaced: it is not to my mind only a question, how many seats a party called Liberal, or a party called Conservative, may gain or lose. The consequences of the measure before us go far beyond these considerations. They affect, for good or for evil, the permanent character of this House, whether it be regarded as the fair representation of various classes and various interests, or as a faithful likeness of the mind and state of the whole nation, or as a deliberative assembly requiring an amount of prudence and of cultivated intelligence beyond that of any other popular chamber in the world; because no other popular chamber, either in Europe or America, exerts the same control over the executive, arrogates the same authority in maintaining peace and provoking war, or, by the temper of its debates and the grandeur of its renown, commands the same influence over the ideas and the destinies of mankind. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking elsewhere, said that the magnitude of the proposed change is imperfectly understood in the country; yet in his speech here last night it seemed to me rather his object to conceal its magnitude and parade its insignificance. A reform is the correction of abuses, a revolution is a transfer of power. A Bill for the redistribution of seats is a correction of abuses; a Bill for a large alteration of the franchise is, and must be, more or less, a transfer of political power. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gives no glimpse of that part of the Government scheme which belongs to Reform, and I think I can show that he greatly understates that part which belongs to Revolution.

Sir, the last time Her Majesty's Government proposed a Reform Bill I ventured to state that, while the admission of a certain proportion of the working class into the franchise was essential to a well-balanced representation, first, that that class was not inconsiderably represented at present; and, secondly, that a £6 franchise would give to it the lion's share of the representation. Both of these propositions were strongly contested, but contested by none with more confident assurance than by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In condescending to answer my remarks, he asserted that the working class were now, except in some infinitesimal degree, altogether excluded from the pale of the Constitution, and that a £6 franchise, according "to the best, most comprehensive, and most accurate information that could be obtained," would admit them in numbers so moderate that it would be idle to talk of the lion's share, it would admit them to less than one-third of the whole borough constituency. Now, it is clear from the statistics furnished by the Government, that in both those propositions I was within the facts. Now, we know that by the existing suffrage the working class already commands something more than a fourth of the whole borough constituency, and that a £6 franchise would give to it that lion's share, that electoral preponderance over all other classes of the borough constituencies which the Chancellor of the Exchequer frankly says Parliament never contemplated, and is not prepared to concede. Therefore, as the lowest verge to which the Government can venture to descend, my right hon. Friend contents himself with proposing a £7 franchise, which gives to the working class not far short of half the borough constituency, taking it altogether, namely, as 333,000 to 362,000 electors of the other classes. That may be the proportion this year; but it is not for this year that we legislate. And even granting that a £7 franchise is not lowered by Parliament, a £6 rental is raised to its level by time, and raised so rapidly that within three years from the next registration, owing to permanent causes which necessitate the rise of urban rentals, the man who pays between £6 and £7 a year for his house will pay £7 and become a voter. And if you pass this Bill you give in all Parliamentary boroughs an additional and irresistible impetus to the rise of rent. It will be the interest of landlords and builders, the object of political parties, the natural desire of petty householders who covet a vote, whether for its own sake or as money's worth in some shape or another, to bridge over the narrow space that divides the £7 voter from the man who pays a trifling iota less; for it is not the rental of £6, but rather the rental of £6 10*s*., or 2*s*. 6*d*. a week, which forms the general staple of rents between £6 and £7; and the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines), addressing his constituents the other day, truly said that the absence of the ratepaying condition is equivalent to the other 10*s*. in the pound. So that it must be perfectly clear to every man of sense and candour that, should you pass this Bill, that which is now a £6 rental will be a £7 franchise within three, or at most four, years, viz. within the natural life of the present Parliament; and thus that you will create that very preponderance of the working class which the existent £6 rental would insure, but which the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us Parliament never contemplated, and is not prepared to concede. This does not rest on assumption; we have ample evidence of the fact in the case of the £10 franchise. Look down these statistical tables and see how comparatively few occupiers there are in the £9 column; and why? because the old £9 occupiers have been absorbed into the £10 franchise. And the reason why the increase of the £10 voters was more rapid in the early years after the Bill of 1832 than it has been lately is, that in those years the process of the absorption left less for the following years to effect. As a general rule, at whatever rent you wish to fix a franchise, especially if freed from ratepaying conditions, you must calculate the real numbers so admitted to be within three years those that are represented by the rental of £1 below it. But some hon. Gentlemen have said, that if the poor householder was induced, by the gain of the franchise, to pay more for a better house, that would be a social benefit, and an argument in favour of the Bill. Yes; but the rise of rent does not necessarily mean the improvement of the house. Many Gentlemen present know that they must now pay £300 a year for a London house which four years ago would have been thought dear at £200. Nothing in this age of progress is so rapidly progressive as the rise of rents in all the large towns. In Parliamentary boroughs the house that is now worth £6 10*s*., or even £6, will remain just as squalid as it now is; the £7 franchise raises its rental without bettering its accommodation. But then it is said, with great plausibility, that the vote itself is a moral benefit to every man, whatever his education or condition of life; it raises his sense of dignity and self-respect. Does experience tell you so? Was the vote a moral benefit to the freeman and potwalloper? Do you suppose that the freemen were corrupt merely because they were called freemen? No; they were corrupt because they belonged to a condition of life in which, no doubt, there are many upright and earnest politicians, but in which there are many others who, of two rival candidates, prefer Smith and a £5-note to Brown and the Rights of Man. You disfranchised the freemen of Yarmouth. Did you extinguish corruption at Yarmouth? No; you find this very year that the same class of men are not less corrupt as petty householders than they were as freemen. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the first reading of this Bill, cited as a notable illustration of the soundness of his proposal a distinguished instance of "the intelligence and self-guiding power of the working class." Where does he go for that instance? To one of those eight boroughs in which the electors of the working class are most equal in number to those of the middle class? No; he goes to the borough of Rochdale, where the electors that belong to the working class are only as one to twenty of the electoral population. Does he not see how his illustration tells against his argument? These admirable specimens of the working class required no £7 franchise to develope their intelligence and self-guiding power. Is there anything in the air of Rochdale more favourable to virtue than the air of Yarmouth? No; but those voters of Yarmouth had been for a long series of years exposed to the strongest temptations poverty can undergo when it is canvassed by wealth —temptations to which these noble operatives of Rochdale had never been subjected. But the operatives of Rochdale having been left thus free to mature uncorrupted their self-guiding power would now, I grant, be strong enough to resist such temptation. To artizans of that kind, whatever their political creed, I am willing to grant the franchise. Willing, do I say? That word is too cold. I might almost wish that, like some old commonwealth of Greece, we could admit them to the franchise by acclamation, too proud of such fellow-citizens to ask what rent they pay for their houses. But if you want to make a safe experiment of a working class suffrage, and an experiment fair to themselves and true to the dignity of honest and thoughtful labour, are you sure that it can be made by the abstract principle of your Bill? that is, by an uniform abasement of the franchise applied equally to all boroughs, whatever their population and whatever their character? Perhaps for such an experiment the wiser plan would be to revive that variety of suffrage which is agreeable to the ancient custom of the Constitution, and which was strongly recommended by the high authority of Sir James Mackintosh, in any further extension of populous constituencies; and having decided how many boroughs should be devoted to majorities of the working class, then select those constituencies in which the prevalence of skilled labour tends to create a superior class of artizans, and in which their numbers alone would be some safeguard against the bribes of a candidate; and giving there such a suffrage as would amply secure your object, decline to apply the same low rate of franchise to those other and numerous middle-sized boroughs in which the skilled artizans are too few to become a fair representation of the intelligence and integrity of their class, and the electoral population not sufficiently large to frustrate the bribery by which the ambition of the rich man tempts the necessities of the poor. For, do consider what are these boroughs in which, take them altogether, we are asked to make this abrupt and wholesale transfer of electoral power. Are they not really the predominant influence on the legislation of this House, and therefore in the choice and control of the Imperial Government? Despite the greater wealth, despite the larger numbers represented by the county Members, the boroughs have so decided a majority in the House of Commons, that no Government can last which does not obtain the support of a considerable proportion of the borough Members; whereas a Government opposed by the almost unanimity of county Members, if it has the general support of the boroughs, carries its measures, and secures its existence. Gentlemen have gone into calculations as to the number of boroughs in which the working classes at a £7 franchise will have majorities. The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimates the number at 60 boroughs, or 101 seats; but in a very able pamphlet by Mr. Baxter —a namesake of the hon. Member for Montrose—the result given of a very elaborate calculation is, that the effect of a £7 franchise would be absolute majorities in the election of 95 Members—nearly majorities in the election of 93—and from one-third to two-fifths in the election of 85. But if I am right in maintaining that the rise of rent in Parliamentary boroughs will rapidly make what is now a £6 rental a £7 franchise, the number will be considerably increased; and in most of the boroughs where the working classes will not actually have the majority, their proportion will be so large that the election will be practically in their hands. It seems to me that this fallacy pervades the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that it is only in those boroughs where the working classes are to have a clear majority that he considers their influence predominant. But a class may have a minority so large as to be practically predominant. In the county I represent it is said, and perhaps truly, that the tenant-farmers can carry an election; yet the tenant-farmers do not appear by the books to be much more than a third of the constituency. A class that has a third of a constituency has, by combining itself with one party or the other, an election in its power. When, therefore, you hand over the boroughs to the urban working class, it is the urban working class who will ultimately become the arbiters of all that concerns the system of this elaborate monarchy and this commercial commonwealth.

But it is said, "Well, but you have been admitting the urban working class to a fourth share of the suffrage without danger; you have not even been conscious that they were admitted, and therefore it can be no danger to give them a half share upon a principle which must rapidly give them a preponderant majority." Sir, that argument reminds me of the Irishman's bull: "If one quince can give so good a flavour to an apple pie, how wonderfully good must be an apple pie that is all quinces." The franchise of the urban working class is a generous stimulant to the action of a free state. But it is a stimulant, and you may carry a stimulant too far. The physician may recommend a certain quantity of alcohol in our daily drink, and the more it does us good the less are we conscious of the amount of the alcohol we have taken. But would the hardy Scotchman, who was all the better for his temperate glass of whisky and water, advance to a finer state of health, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer implied in his speech at Liverpool, in proportion as he swamped the water and increased the whisky?

So much for the persuasive line of argument adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer: but the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) gives us, instead, what schoolmen call the *argumentum baculinum*. He says, "wretched Parliament that you are, take this change now before some accident occurs, by which the working class may compel you to take something much worse." And it is not the fault of the Member for Birmingham if one of those accidents does not now occur in the shape of a fortuitous concourse of tumultuary atoms, extending from Charing Cross to the doors of the House of Commons. Sir, on this subject of accidents, something is said by Montesquieu, which the Emperor of the French thinks sufficiently striking to quote with approval in his preface to the *History of Cæsar*. "It is not Fortune," says Montesquieu, "which rules the world. There are general causes which act in every monarchy, and all accidents are subject to those causes. If the failure of a battle has ruined a state, there was a general cause which made it necessary that state should perish through a single battle. In a word, the principal cause drags with it the particular accident." If, then, we

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wish to create a general cause that may make any particular accident of a revolutionary character fatal to the independence and dignity of this grand Assembly, let us accept this argument of the bludgeon, and proclaim to the masses that we yield to intimidation that which we refuse to reason. And, Sir, if we desire to create a general cause that may make any particular accident of a democratic character fatal to the mixed Constitution of this country, let us at once accept this Bill, which, should any accident occur of a nature to accelerate the impetus and widen the circle of democracy, makes the political leaders of the urban working class the masters of the situation. Sir, I am not one of those who have an abstract and absolute horror of democracy, and who can only speak of it in the language we apply to something monstrous and abnormal. I recognize democracy as one of the genuine and legitimate forms of national polity. Like every form of government, it has its defects and faults. But it has also merits of its own—merits identified in the history of the world with marvellous achievements of individual genius, of national energies, of passionate devotion to the public cause. I would even here undertake the defence of our Anglo-Saxon colonies from much that has been said against them. But democracy seems to me essentially the Government that belongs to societies in their youth, and in which the habits of men, even more than their laws, produce a certain equality of manners and education. There is no special form of Government adapted to every varying community in every different epoch of its existence. But if there be a country in the world in which democracy would be a ruinous experiment, it is surely a country like England, with a very limited area of soil compared to the pressure of its population, with a commerce so based upon credit and national prestige, that it would perish for ever if by any neglect of democratic economy, or, what is more probable, any adventure of democratic rashness, our naval power were destroyed; and with differences of religious sects so serious that we should find it impossible to precede democracy by that universal and generous system of education without which it would be madness to make the working class the sovereign constituency of a Legislative Assembly. I may here, indeed, quote the authority of the Member for Birmingham, who, speaking the other day at Manchester on the subject of education, showed that in the States of New England education did not follow, but long preceded, the establishment of democracy. So that even in America, despite the unequalled bounty of nature, the true fathers of the future republic made a period of 150 years of education, brought home to the door of the poorest citizen, precede the establishment of a democracy, the action of which is even now qualified by checks on the Representative Chamber which, as I will show you presently, are unknown to the English House of Commons. But this Bill, you may say, does not create such a democracy. No; but it is the inevitable step to it, and it is received and understood as such by its enthusiastic supporters out of doors, who, laughing at it as a settlement of the question, even of the franchise, hail and applaud it as an instalment of the principle to which absolute democracy is the only goal. This Bill, I say, is the inevitable step to democracy, not so much because of the actual franchise it gives now either in towns or counties, but because of the abstract principle, adorned by the eloquence of members of the Government, which alone wins to their Bill the approval of the National Reform League, viz. that every working man has a right to a vote; and while no political community could exist for a quarter of an hour if all rights which speculative philosophers say we take from nature were not merged in an acquiescence to the social compact, that we have no rights except those that we take by law, this solitary right of an electoral vote forms an exception, and the privation of it constitutes a wrong. By this principle you create and sanction and perpetuate a discontent on the part of every working man whom the suffrage you bestow on his fellow-workmen still excludes, and you gather round the doors that your principle keeps ajar the millions whom your principle invites to enter. "What, then," says the Chancellor of the Exchequer? "Do not regard these new applicants as an invading army. Are they not your own fellow-Christians? Are they not your own flesh and blood?" I share in the amazement general among his warmest admirers, how a man like my right hon. Friend can descend to a species of argument so hollow in itself, and so perilous in its logical deductions. So hollow in itself, because suppose, for instance, I introduced a Reform Bill by which I admitted rural voters to swamp the urban voters, as you propose to admit the urban voters to swamp the agricultural element; and suppose I said, "Do not regard these honest farmers as an invading army. Are they not your own fellow-Christians? Are they not your own flesh and blood?" Would you not answer then—perhaps less civilly than we wish to answer now—"All that may be very fine; but the mind and opinion of one set of fellow-Christians are not to be overborne by the flesh and the blood of another set?" But see how perilous are the deductions to be drawn from an irrelevant platitude when it is used as an argument by a man in authority, and inscribed, as the very few Liberal journals which favour the Bill say that this platitude shall be inscribed, on the banner of Democratic Reform. I will assume for the moment—my right hon. Friend will pardon and correct me if I am wrong—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not in favour of universal suffrage. But how can he oppose it consistently with his own inscription on his own banner of Reform? What has he to say to the millions who will ask him one day, "Are we an invading army? Are we not fellow-Christians? Are we not your own flesh and blood?" Does he think it will be answer enough to give that kind of modified opinion which he put forth last night, and to say, "Well, that is very true. For my own part, in my individual capacity, I cannot see that there is any danger in admitting you, but still you know it is wise to proceed gradually. A £7 voter is real flesh and blood, but you are only gradual flesh and blood. Read Darwin on the origin of species, and learn that you are fellow-Christians in an imperfect state of development." That which is an amiable sentiment when applied to the claim of all mankind to our humanity and compassion, becomes a doctrine formidable to those who dislike universal suffrage when it is applied to a principle of political franchise by the most conspicuous Minister of the British Crown. Sir, the most painful part of this discussion is that which is forced upon us by the Government statistics, sharply separating the working class from the rest of the community, and thus rendering it difficult to argue against the abstract principle of Democracy without wounding the honourable pride of men with whom every employer of labour, be he manufacturer, merchant, or country gentleman, is brought into affectionate and familiar contact. Do you suppose it does not go to the heart of a gentleman if he utter a word which, either from his own defect of language, or from an unfair perversion of his meaning, hurts the manly feelings even of the humble labourer with whom he has formed an intimacy as cordial as any which exists among those equals whom he calls his honourable and noble friends? And what man of letters does not revere those lofty aspirations of the educated artizan towards a more perfect form of human society—which may, indeed, be Utopian, but which form an eternal link between the aims of educated labour and the dreams of philosophy and genius? But surely, looking to this present state of this workday world, it is no disrespect to the urban working class if, in their relation to the State, I object to cut out of them a rude slice, and, without any test whatever of intelligence, give to that slice a preponderating influence in the constituent body and the legislation of this complicated empire. Why, Sir, I should have the same objection to the preponderating influence of scholars and men of science, or of great merchants, or of a territorial aristocracy. Each of such sections, however indisputably honest and intelligent, would fail to represent that common sense of the common interest which is best expressed by the word "commonwealth," and which can only be fairly represented where the middle class is, on the whole, largely preponderant. Not that the middle class has not as many faults of its own as any other class above or below, but that, on the whole, it the most faithfully represents all the interests and opinions which constitute the mind and welfare of a nation, and the most felicitously reconciles the securities of order with the demands of freedom. And are men to be stigmatized as traitors and conspirators because they desire to preserve from virtual disfranchisement and political subjugation the middle-class constituents of which they are as yet the trustees? The Chancellor of the Exchequer lays much stress on the fact that all the working class do not pull together—that they are not all of one mind as respects politics. I do not say that they are; but I say this—that where the working class obtain a marked and general predominance, they cannot fail to colour and influence legislation, especially where questions in which they feel a special interest are concerned. All clergymen do not agree in politics; but if they returned the majority of Members, I fancy you would feel their influence in a division on church rates. All farmers do not agree in politics, but if they returned the majority of Members you would feel their influence in a division on the malt tax. All working men do not agree in politics, but as soon as they return the majority of Members, rely upon it you will feel their influence in those questions between labour and capital, between manufacturer and mechanic, between supply and demand, upon which the very existence of this commercial England depends. Even in foreign affairs as well as domestic, the very virtues of the working men, in their detestation of what they consider tyranny and injustice, would be a perpetual source of danger, did they return a majority of Members. The Member for Birmingham says, this Bill is wanted to save the country from the risk of war, provoked by the depravity of Tories. It might be answer enough to say, that all the wars in which we have been engaged since 1815 had their origin under Liberal Administrations. But what says the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), who spoke on the first reading of this Bill with so much ability and promise? Why, that the working class would have gone to war with Russia on behalf of Poland. That is quite consistent with their generous tendency to side with the weak against the strong. A House of Commons, had the large majority been chosen by the working class, would then have wished to provoke a war with Russia. But a war more disproportioned to our powers, less sanctioned by our interests, and more vainly exhaustive of blood and treasure, the imagination of man cannot conceive. Why do such dangers never occur in America and France—countries in which universal suffrage is adopted? Because both in America and France the popular Chamber has not the same voice in foreign affairs, in creating Cabinets and determining the choice between peace and war. And the example of both those countries makes the fact clear, that in proportion as you lower the scale of franchise to the preponderance of the working class, the safety of the State compels you to limit the powers and authority of the Representative Chamber. Nay—if law did not, public opinion would. The more you lower the standard of the constituency below the average education of the country, the more you will transfer the intellectual power of this House to some upper Chamber, whether it be an English House of Lords or an American Senate. Take America itself. Every man there looks, not to the House of Representatives, but to the Senate, on questions that affect the general interests of the nation. The Senate there alone discusses foreign affairs, and when it likes can become the executive body, resolve itself into a Secret Committee, and exclude the reporters. The wise safeguard of America against her popular suffrage is in the scantiness of the powers she leaves to her House of Representatives. I dare say you might grant not only the £7 franchise, but even universal suffrage in this country, with safety as to foreign affairs, with safety as to making and unmaking Cabinets, and with safety to everything except genuine freedom, if you then left to the House of Commons as little influence, power, weight, and authority as are left to the Representative Chambers of America and France.

But, Sir, whatever objection there may be in the principle of this Bill itself is increased to an extent which no man can define by the mode in which the Government propose to deal with it. We are favoured with a volume of statistics, by which we are to compute how many boroughs will represent a majority of the working class, how many will represent a majority of the middle class, to what degree the balance between rural and urban constituencies will be disturbed or maintained; and yet it is perfectly clear that all our calculations may be made utterly worthless by a new distribution of seats and a new definition of the boundaries of boroughs. It is true that, before we proceed to Committee, the Government will favour us with their ideas on these subjects. But how? By Bills with which they do not intend to proceed till this Bill becomes law. What answer have you to the masterly argument of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn? "Supposing we were satisfied with the scheme submitted as to re-distribution, what guarantee should we have that that scheme might not be altogether changed next Session?" Possibly, during the recess, those "advanced Reformers" who advise Her Majesty's advisers may declare that a scheme much more comprehensive is absolutely essential, and Her Majesty's Ministers may think it necessary to listen to their advice. Possibly the material and spirit of the Government may be as much changed next Session as by one lamented loss it has been changed since the last; and the Cabinet of 1867 may as much vary from the Cabinet of 1866 in its views of Reform as the Cabinet of 1866 has varied from the Cabinet of 1865. But the Government will, I understand, declare that, as it stands or falls by this Bill, so it will stand or fall by its other Bills—that is, next year. Well, but if it carries this Bill and stands, before it carries the other Bills it may fall, or Parliament may be dissolved, and the whole question as to seats and boundaries and remedies against corruption may be referred to new constituencies created by a Bill of which the only ardent advocates are in favour of electoral districts and vote by ballot. But if, having once passed this Bill and made it law, we were then to proceed immediately to the other Government measures necessary for the completion of their scheme of Reform, would this House be as competent as the Chancellor of the Exchequer assures us to the task of making that scheme conclusive and binding? We should be literally Members without constituencies. We should have extinguished our old constituencies, and be without authority to act for the new constituencies, that have never chosen us. Suppose we did deal with some 20 or 30 seats, and in so dealing failed to satisfy the next Parliament, chosen by a more democratic suffrage, would not our successors say, with truth, that when we extinguished our constituencies we had lost the right of representatives to prejudge questions affecting the electoral bodies to which we were without any existent responsibilities? And with what heart should we set about the most ordinary work of legislation! With what uncertainty of temper should we address ourselves, no longer to the men who sent us here, but to that Virgilian threshold of souls not yet launched into the world, whom we must seek to propitiate before they are even born! We should drag out the rest of our doleful existence like those monks of La Trappe who have no other thought but that of *memento mori*, and no other occupation but that of digging their own graves. Sir, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer must forgive me if I venture to doubt, whether there is an educated man in this House or out of it who accepts the validity of his reason—the want of time—for thrusting upon us this measure, isolated and detached from all other portions of a general scheme of Reform, and insisting that we shall affirm its principle without even a guess as to the constituent bodies to which that principle is to be applied. No, Sir; every one must feel that the true reason for this mode of dealing with the question is that which was so frankly announced some months ago by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham, namely, that if the House can be persuaded to pass this Bill in its simple and severe integrity, the Bill itself becomes the leverage for lifting out of the representation, whether in this Parliament or the next, many of the very Members who may thus be entrapped to their own perdition—many Members, indeed, whom a Bill for redistribution of seats may spare for the moment, but whom a Parliament chosen by the provisions of this Bill will sacrifice to the *manes* of those whom they have assisted to destroy. Indeed, I have observed that in all the public meetings held in favour of this Bill, no speaker has accepted the reason for not proceeding simultaneously with the question of redistribution, but every speaker has accepted the reason stated by the Member for Birmingham (often interrupted by loud cries from the body of his audience), —"Let us in, let us in, and we'll soon settle the question of seats." Sir, no one can blame the Member for Birmingham for the candour with which he avows his share in a conspiracy to which I will not be so discourteous as to apply the epithet of "dirty," but a conspiracy in which Members are to be allured to resign "this pleasing, anxious being," and kept so blindfold that they have even not the privilege to "cast a lingering look behind." But, with all deference to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think the House has a right to complain of him that he does not imitate the candour of the Member for Birmingham. Sir, the leader of this House is more than the chief of party, more than the organ of a Cabinet—he owes a duty to the House itself, and in all things that appertain to our common existence we have a right to expect from him an ingenuous frankness, incompatible with these masked batteries and these crafty decoys into the dark. If there be among us any Members who, in voting for the principle of this Bill, will by the completion of the scheme it involves destroy their own seats in Parliament, I think they have a right to be so far warned of their fate as to have the scheme put plainly before them by the Minister who, in leading the House of Commons, represents that good faith and straight-forward dealing between man and man, without which no conceivable suffrage could make us the true image of the English nation.

Now, Sir, before I conclude, let me, with great respect, address a few words to those moderate Liberals who do not desire to be buried alive in that memorable tomb in Westminster Abbey in which the last of the Whigs is to rest, and his countrymen to be thankful that he can repose. To them I say, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "Be wise, and be wise in time." Be wise before you cross the Rubicon and burn your vessels. There is a story of a famous French preacher, who, delivering a sermon on the duty of wives, said, "I see a woman present who has been guilty of disobedience to her husband, and, in order to point her out to universal condemnation, I will fling this breviary at her head." He lifted the book, and every female head present ducked and dived. "Alas!" said the preacher, "the multitude of the offenders necessitates a general amnesty." Now, I see a Gentleman opposite who is guilty of detesting this Bill, and yet intends to vote for it; and if, in order to point him out to universal condemnation, the courtesies of Parliament would permit me to fling these statistics at his head, so many heads opposite would duck and dive that nothing but a general amnesty could deal with such a multitude of offenders. Sir, I am the last man to disparage that loyal discipline of party by which we must all so often suborn our individual opinions to the decision of those whom we accept as our leaders. I do not, therefore, presume to impugn the motives of any fellow Member who, though detesting this Bill, yet intends to vote for it. But I believe that the respect and gratitude of that large portion of the Liberal public which is represented by so powerful a majority of the Liberal press, will be the reward of those who, on a question so grave, and of which the results are so irrevocable, prefer the welfare and safety of their native country to a blind submission to a Government that has not even the courage of its own opinions; for it does not dare to invite to its Cabinet the powerful orator who tells it the way to go; and thus, at least, make him responsible to his Sovereign for the counsels he dictates to Her Ministers. For my part I can honestly say that, looking to the nature of this Bill, the mode in which it is introduced, and the arguments by which it is defended, my vote against it will be given, not as Conservative against Liberal, not as employer against workman, not as Englishman against Englishman, but as Englishman for the sake of our common England.

MR. J. STUART MILL: Although the question which will be put from the Chair relates ostensibly to the mere order of proceeding, it will hardly be denied, and least of all after the speech of the right hon. Baronet, that the question we are really discussing is, whether the Bill ought to pass. Indeed, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn is the only speaker on the Opposition side who has argued the nominal issue as if he thought that it was the real one, or has even laid any great stress upon it. That noble Lord, in a speech marked by all the fairness and candour which were known to be his characteristics, and by even more than the ability—at least, by more varied and sustained ability—has said, I think, the very most and the very best that can be said in favour of the Amendment, considered as a substantive Motion. He has brought forward considerations well calculated to make an impression, but only on one part of his audience—on those who, though they may be willing to consent to some Reform, look with extreme jealousy on the most important part of it, the enfranchisement of a portion of the working classes—who regard this less as a good to be desired, than as a doubtful, perhaps a dangerous, experiment, and tremble lest they should eventually find themselves committed to giving those classes a trifle more representation than they were duly warned of beforehand. What is the very worst extremity of evil with which the noble Lord threatens the House in case it should be so unguarded as to pass this Bill without the other measures of Parliamentary Reform by which it is to be succeeded? Why, it is this—that if something happens which it requires the most improbable concurrence of chances to bring about, something against which neither the personal honour of the Government, nor the inexorable dates fixed by the Registration Acts, nor even the expressed will of Parliament, if Parliament should think fit to express its will, can guarantee us; in this all but impossible case there may happen—what? That the redistribution of seats may, in spite of all that can be done, possibly devolve upon a House of Commons elected under the enlarged franchise. Now, I put it to the noble Lord's clear intellect—and impartial because clear—is this an argument which can have any weight with anybody who thinks the enlarged franchise an improvement — who thinks it calculated to give us a better Legislature? If the Legislature it gives us is a better one for all other purposes, will it not be a better one for this purpose? If it can be trusted to govern us, if it can be trusted to tax us, if it can be trusted to legislate for us, can it not be trusted to revise its own Constitution? Does experience teach us to expect that this of all things is a work in which legislative bodies in general, and British Parliaments in particular, are likely to be rash, headstrong, precipitate, subversive, revolutionary? I think, Sir, that a Parliament which was cautious in nothing else might be depended on for caution in meddling with the conditions of its own power. Sir, this formidable one chance in a thousand with which the noble Lord threatens us, is only terrific to those in whose eyes the Bill is a rash and portentous transfer of power to the working classes. To those who think that the enfranchising provisions are good in themselves, even if there were no redistribution of seats, and still better if there is, this phantom of evil has no terrors. And that I believe to be the opinion of the great body of Reformers, both in and out of the House. We are, I dare say, as sincerely desirous as the noble Mover of the Amendment, that family and pocket boroughs should be extinguished, and the inordinate political influence of a few noble and opulent families abridged. We are, I believe, as anxious to curtail the power which wealth possesses, of buying its way into the House of Commons, and shutting the door upon other people, as the wealthiest gentleman present. But though we are quite orthodox on these great points of Conservative Parliamentary Reform—and look forward with delight to our expected co-operation with gentlemen on the opposite benches in the congenial occupation of converting them from theories into facts—we yet think that a measure of enfranchisement like this Bill—moderate, indeed, far more moderate than is desired by the majority of Reformers, but which does make the working classes a substantial power in this House—is not only a valuable part of a scheme of Parliamentary Reform, but highly valuable even if nothing else were to follow. And as this is the only question among those raised on the present occasion which seems to me in the smallest degree worth discussing, I shall make no further apology for confining myself to it.—Sir, measures may be recommended either by their principle, or by their practical consequences; and if they have either of these recommendations, they usually have both. As far as regards the principle of this measure, there is but little to disagree about; for a measure which goes no farther than this, does not raise any of the questions of principle on which the House is divided; and I cannot but think that the right hon. Baronet, in introducing those questions, has caused the debate to deviate somewhat from its proper course. If it were necessary to take into consideration even all the reasonable things which can be said pro and con about democracy, the House would have a very different task before it. But this is not a democratic measure. It neither deserves that praise, nor, if hon. Members will have it so, that reproach. It is not a corollary from what may be called the numerical theory of representation. It is required by the class theory, which we all know is the Conservative view of the Constitution—the favourite doctrine, not only of what are called Conservative Reformers, but of Conservative non-Reformers as well. The opponents of Reform are accustomed to say that the Constitution knows nothing of individuals, but only of classes. Individuals, they tell us, cannot complain of not being represented, so long as the class they belong to is represented. But if any class is unrepresented, or has not its proper share of representation relatively to others, that is a grievance. Now, all that need be asked at present is that this theory be applied to practice. There is a class which has not yet had the benefit of the theory. While so many classes, comparatively insignificant in numbers, and not supposed to be freer from class partialities or interests than their neighbours, are represented, some of them, I venture to say, greatly over-represented in this House, there is a class, more numerous than all the others, and therefore, as a mere matter of human feeling, entitled to more consideration—weak as yet, and therefore needing representation the more, but daily becoming stronger, and more capable of making its claims good—and this class is not represented. We claim, then, a large and liberal representation of the working classes, on the Conservative theory of the Constitution. We demand that they be represented as a class, if represented they cannot be as human beings; and we call on hon. Gentlemen to prove the sincerity of their convictions by extending the benefit of them to the great majority of their countrymen. But hon. Gentlemen say, the working classes are already represented. It has just come to light, to the astonishment of everybody, that these classes actually form 26 per cent of the borough constituencies. They kept the secret so well—it required so much research to detect their presence on the register—their votes were so devoid of any traceable consequences—they had all this power of shaking the foundations of our institutions, and so obstinately persisted in not doing it—that hon. Gentlemen are quite alarmed, and recoil in terror from the abyss into which they have not fallen. Well, Sir, it certainly seems that this amount of enfranchisement of the working classes has done no harm. But if it has not done harm, perhaps it has not done much good either; at least, not the kind of good which we are talking about. A class may have a great number of votes in every constituency in the kingdom, and not obtain a single representative in this House. Their right of voting may be only the right of being everywhere outvoted. If, indeed, the mechanism of our electoral system admitted representation of minorities; if those who are outvoted in one place could join their votes with those who are outvoted in another; then, indeed, a fourth part, even if only of the borough electors, would be a substantial power, for it would mean a fourth of the borough representatives. 26 per cent concentrated would be a considerable representation; but 26 per cent diffused may be almost the same as none at all. The right hon. Baronet has said that a class, though but a minority, may, by cleverly managing its votes, be master of the situation, and that the tenant-farmers in Hertfordshire can carry an election. They may be able to decide whether a Tory or a Whig shall be elected; they may be masters of so small a situation as that. But what you are afraid of is, lest they should carry points on which their interest as a class is opposed to that of all other classes—on which if they were only a third of the constituency, the other two-thirds would be against them. Do you think they would be masters of such a situation as that? Sir, there is no known contrivance by which in the long run a minority can outnumber a majority—by which one-third of the electors can out-vote the other two-thirds. The real share of the working classes in the representation is measured by the number of Members they can return—in other words, the number of constituencies in which they are the majority: and even that only marks the extreme limit of the influence which they can exercise, but by no means that which they will. Why, Sir, among the recent discoveries, one is, that there are some half-dozen constituencies in which working men are even now a majority; and I put it to hon. Gentlemen, would anybody ever have suspected it? At the head of these constituencies is Coventry. Are the Members for Coventry generally great sticklers for working-class notions? It has, I believe, been observed that these Gentlemen usually vote quite correctly on the subject of French ribbons; and as that kind of virtue comes most natural to Conservatives—the Members for Coventry often are Conservative. But probably that would happen much the same if the master manufacturers had all the votes. If, indeed, a tax on power-looms were proposed, and the Members for Coventry voted for it, that might be some indication of working class influences; though I believe that the working men, even at Coventry, have far outgrown that kind of absurdities. Even if the franchise were so much enlarged that the working men, by polling their whole strength, could return by small majorities 200 of the 658 Members of this House, there would not be fifty of that number who would represent the distinctive feelings and opinions of working men, or would be, in any class sense, their representatives. And what if they had the whole 200? Even then, on any subject in which they were concerned as a class, there would be more than two to one against them when they were in the wrong. They could not succeed in anything, even when unanimous, unless they carried with them nearly a third of the representatives of the other classes; and if they did that, there would be, I think, a very strong presumption of their being in the right. As a matter of principle, then, and not only on liberal principles, but on those of the Conservative party, the case in favour of the Bill seems irresistible. But it is asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, what practical good do we expect? What particular measures do we hope to see carried in a reformed House which cannot be carried in the present? If I understand my right hon. Friend correctly, he thinks we ought to come to the House with a Bill of indictment against itself—an inventory of wrong things which the House does, and right things which it cannot be induced to do—and when, convinced by our arguments, the House pleads guilty, and cries "Peccavi," we have his permission to bring in a Reform Bill. Sir, my right hon. Friend says we should not proceed on *à priori* reasoning, but should be practical. I want to know whether this is his idea of being practical. For my part, I am only sorry it is not possible that in the discussion of this question special applications should be kept entirely out of view: for if we descend to particulars, and point out this and that in the conduct of the House which we should like to see altered, but which the House, by the very fact that it does not alter them, does not think require alteration, how can we expect the House to take this as a proof that its Constitution needs Reform? We should not at all advance our cause, while we should stir up all the most irritating topics in the domain of politics. Suppose, now—and I purposely choose a small instance to give the less offence—suppose we were to say that if the working classes had been represented it would not have been found so easy for hon. Gentlemen whose cattle were slaughtered by Act of Parliament, to get compensated twice over—once by a rate, and again by a rise of price. I use the case only for illustration; I lay no stress on it; but I ask, ought the debate on a Reform Bill to consist of a series of discussions on points similar to this, and a hundred times more irritating than this? Is it desirable to drag into this discussion all the points in which any one may think that the rights or interests of labour are not sufficiently regarded by the House? I will ask another question. If the authors of the Reform Bill of 1832 had foretold (which they scarcely could have done, since they did not themselves know it), if they had predicted that through it we should abolish the Corn Laws—that we should abolish the Navigation Laws—that we should grant free trade to all foreigners without reciprocity—that we should reduce inland postage to a penny—that we should renounce the exercise of any authority over our colonies—all which things have really happened—does the House think that these announcements would have greatly inclined the Parliament of that day towards passing the Bill? Whether the practical improvements that will follow a further Parliamentary Reform will be equal to these, the future must disclose; but whatever they may be, it is already certain that they are not at the present time regarded as improvements by the House, for if the House thought so, there is nothing to hinder it from adopting them. Sir, there is a better way of persuading possessors of power to give up a part of it; not by telling them that they make a bad use of their power—which, if it were true, they could not be expected to be aware of—but by reminding them of what they are aware of—their own fallibility. Sir, we all of us know that we hold many erroneous opinions, but we do not know which of our opinions these are, for if we did they would not be our opinions. Therefore, reflecting men take precautions beforehand against their own errors, without waiting till they and all other people are agreed about the particular instances; and if there are things which, from their mental habits or their position in life, are in danger of escaping their notice, they are glad to associate themselves with others of different habits and positions, which very fact peculiarly qualifies them to see the precise things which they themselves do not see. Believing the House to be composed of reasonable men, this is what we ask them to do. Every class knows some things not so well known to other people, and every class has interests which are more or less special to itself, and for which no protection is so effectual as its own. These may be *à priori* doctrines—but so is the doctrine that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; they are as much truths of common sense and common observation as that is, and persons of common sense act upon them with the same perfect confidence. I claim the benefit of these principles for the working classes. They require it more than any other class. The class of lawyers, or the class of merchants, is amply represented, though there are no constituencies in which lawyers or merchants form the majority. But a successful lawyer or merchant easily gets into Parliament by his wealth or social position, and once there, is as good a representative of lawyers or merchants as if he had been elected on purpose; but no constituency elects a working man, or a man who looks at questions with working men's eyes. Is there, I wonder, a single Member of this House who thoroughly knows the working men's view of trades unions, or of strikes, and could bring it before the House in a manner satisfactory to working men? My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, if any one; perhaps not even he. Are there many of us who so perfectly understand the subject of apprenticeships, let us say, or of the hours of labour, as to have nothing to learn on the subject from intelligent operatives? I grant that, along with many just ideas and much valuable knowledge, you would sometimes find pressed upon you erroneous opinions—mistaken views of what is for the interest of labour; and I am not prepared to say that if the labouring classes were predominant in the House, attempts might not be made to carry some of these wrong notions into practice. But there is no question at present about making the working classes predominant. What is asked is a sufficient representation to ensure that their opinions are fairly placed before the House, and are met by real arguments, addressed to their own reason, by people who can enter into their way of looking at the subjects in which they are concerned. In general, those who attempt to correct the errors of the working classes do it as if they were talking to babies. They think any trivialities sufficient; if they condescend to argue, it is from premises which hardly any working man would admit; they expect that the things which appear self-evident to them will appear self-evident to the working classes: their arguments never reach the mark, never come near what a working man has in his mind, because they do not know what is in his mind. Consequently, when the questions which are near the hearts of the working men are talked about in this House—there is no want of good will to them, that I cheerfully admit; but everything which is most necessary to prove to them is taken for granted. Do not suppose that working men would always be unconvincible by such arguments as ought to satisfy them. It is not one of the faults of democracy to be obstinate in error. An Englishman who had lived some years in the United States lately summed up his opinion of the Americans by saying, "they are the most teachable people on the face of the earth." Old countries are not as teachable as young countries, but I believe it will be found that the educated artizans, those especially who take interest in politics, are the most teachable of all our classes. They have much to make them so; they are, as a rule, more in earnest than any other class; their opinions are more genuine, less influenced by what so greatly influences some of the other classes — the desire of getting on; and their social position is not such as to breed self conceit. Above all, there is one thing to which, I believe, almost every one will testify who has had much to do with them, and of which even my own limited experience supplies striking examples; there is no class which so well bears to be told of its faults — to be told of them even in harsh terms, if they believe that the person so speaking to them says what he thinks, and has no ends of his own to serve by saying it. I can hardly conceive a nobler course of national education than the debates of this House would become, if the notions, right and wrong, which are fermenting in the minds of the working classes, many of which go down very deep into the foundations of society and government, were fairly stated and genuinely discussed within these walls. It has often been noticed how readily in a free country people resign themselves even to the refusal of what they ask, when everything which they could have said for themselves has been said by somebody in the course of the discussion. The working classes have never yet had this tranquillising assurance. They have always felt that not they themselves, perhaps, but their opinions, were prejudged — were condemned without being listened to. But let them have the same equal opportunities which others have of pleading their own cause—let them feel that the contest is one of reason and not of power—and if they do not obtain what they desire, they will as readily acquiesce in defeat, or trust to the mere progress of reason for reversing the verdict, as any other portion of the community. And they will, much oftener than at present, obtain what they desire. Let me refer hon. Gentlemen to Tocqueville, who is so continually quoted when he says anything uncomplimentary to democracy, that those who have not read him might mistake him for an enemy of it, instead of its discriminating but sincere friend. Tocqueville says that, though the various American Legislatures are perpetually making mistakes, they are perpetually correcting them too; and that the evil, such as it is, is far outweighed by the salutary effects of the general tendency of their legislation, which is maintained, in a degree unknown elsewhere, in the direction of the interest of the people. Not that vague abstraction, the good of the country, but the actual, positive well-being of the living human creatures who compose the population. But we are told that our own legislation has made great progress in this direction—that the House has repealed the Corn Laws, removed religious disabilities, and got rid of I know not how many more abominations. Sir, it has; and I am far from disparaging these great reforms, which have probably saved the country from a violent convulsion. As little would I undervalue the good sense and good feeling which have made the governing classes of this country capable of thus far advancing with the times. But they have their recompense —*habes pretium, cruci non figeris.* Their reward is that they are not hated, as other privileged classes have been. And that is the fitting reward for ceasing to do harm —for merely repealing bad laws which Parliament itself had made. But is this all that the Legislature of a country like ours can offer to its people? Is there nothing for us to do, but only to undo the mischief that we or our predecessors have done? Are there not all the miseries of an old and crowded society waiting to be dealt with—the curse of ignorance, the curse of pauperism, the curse of disease, the curse of a whole population born and nurtured in crime? All these things we are just beginning to look at—just touching with the tips of our fingers: and by the time two or three more generations are dead and gone, we may perhaps have discovered how to keep them alive, and how to make their lives worth having. I must needs think that we should get on much faster with all this, the most important part of the business of Government in our days, if those who are the chief sufferers by the great chronic evils of our civilization had representatives among us to stimulate our zeal, as well as to inform us by their experience. Of all great public objects, the one which would be most forwarded by the presence of working people's representatives in this House is the one in which we flatter ourselves we have done most—popular education. And let me here offer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, who demands practical arguments, a practical argument which I think ought to come home to him. If those whose children we vote money to instruct had been properly represented in this House, he would not have lost office on the Revised Code. The working classes would have seen in him an administrator of a public fund, honestly determined that the work for which the public paid should be good, honest work. They are not the people to prefer a greater quantity of sham teaching to a smaller quantity of real teaching at a less expense. Real education is the thing they want, and as it is what he wanted, they would have understood him and upheld him. I have myself seen these services remembered to his honour, even at this moment of exasperation, by one of the leaders of the working classes. And, unless I am mistaken—it is not my opinion alone—very few years of a real working class representation would have passed over our heads before there would be in every parish a school rate, and the school doors freely open to all the world; and in one generation from that time England would be an educated nation. Will it ever become so by your present plan, which gives to him that hath, and only to him that hath? Never. If there were no reason for extending the franchise to the working classes except the stimulus it would give to this one alone of the Imperial works which the present state of society urgently demands from Parliament, the reason would be more than sufficient. These, Sir, are a few of the benefits which I expect from a further Parliamentary Reform; and as they depend altogether upon one feature of it, the effective representation of the working classes, their whole weight is in favour of passing the present Bill, without regard to any Bills that may follow. I look upon a liberal enfranchisement of the working classes as incomparably the greatest improvement in our representative institutions which we at present have it in our power to make; and as I should be glad to receive this greatest improvement along with others, so I am perfectly willing to accept it by itself. Such others as we need, we shall, no doubt, end by obtaining, and a person must be very simple who imagines that we should have obtained them a day sooner if Ministers had incumbered the subject by binding up any of them with the present Bill.

Mr. LIDDELL said it might appear something like presumption in him to attempt any reply to the subtle speech of the able logician who had just sat down; but he desired with all respect to ask him this question, viz. Whether he had not laid it down as an axiom, that whenever Parliament should proceed to consider the question of Reform, it should do so upon principles which it would be safe to follow on all future occasions? He desired further to ask, whether a bare rule of thumb reduction of the franchise was a principle it would be safe to follow on all future occasions, when further improvements in the representation of the people might become necessary? for if the hon. Member asserted that he spoke in direct variance to all his well-known written opinions—those opinions showed that his premises were unsound; and if so, what became of the elaborate argument he had built upon them? He would only say for himself that he was one of those who anxiously wished to see a settlement of the question of Reform arrived at, provided that settlement was based upon sound and safe principles. There would, of course, be some difference of opinion as to what were safe and sound principles of settlement; and it was because he could not find any principle of settlement in the Bill brought forward by Her Majesty's Government, and did see something like a principle of settlement in the Amendment of the noble Lord (Earl Grosvenor), that he preferred the Amendment to the Bill. He thought that the question stood in a position which could not be shirked or evaded, and which would force itself upon the attention of Parliament unless it was approached with a view to a final settlement. The question of Reform had been too long treated as a mere pass-word to office, and a bait to constituencies of which three-fourths were heartily sick, and refused any longer to be the dupes; though he readily admitted that there were some large constituencies in the country that really desired Reform. But what was the history of that? They were stimulated and guided by a number of enthusiastic Politicians, whose notions were derived rather from the platforms of the New world than the sober counsels of the Old world. These Gentlemen were continually saying that "something must be done;" they did not care how much or little was done, or whether it was done well or ill; but they were determined that something should be done, and the result was that a great number were willing to accept this Reform Bill. Now he had great respect for those large places which these hon. Gentlemen were in the habit of visiting and exciting, because they were great centres of industry, occupied by an intelligent, active, and independent class of men. They were for the most part situated in the North of England, and he was proud to stand there as the representative of some of them. But he respected those places for other reasons. He respected them because they had a grievance in the fact, that many of them were not represented in that House; and those that were in that position had the further grievance of hearing of discreditable transactions which were periodically performed in other places which had privileges that were denied to them, till the sense of local discontent became merged in the larger feeling of national dishonour. It was thought that those sources of national discontent were about to be legally removed by the Government Bill. Now, he wished to know in what respect the Bill would remedy any of these wants and requirements of the people. This was purely a franchise Bill, and did not in any way attempt to deal with the other matters which in the aggregate constituted a complete scheme of Reform. He did not wish to use exaggerated expressions in reference to this measure; he would not call it a revolutionary measure because he must admit that, as Reform Bills went, it was a moderate measure; but of all the epithets which had been applied to the Bill, the most inappropriate was that which had fallen from its own friends. They had called it "an honest Bill;" whereas he considered it an insidious Bill; and he had great difficulty in reconciling those terms. His reason for coming to that conclusion was, because while it professed to do one thing it asked the House to form a machinery to do another. He considered it an insidious Bill also because of its unfair action upon the county constituencies. He was now about to speak of the landed interest. There was a great deal—he would not say of misconception, but of misrepresentation on that point. They had heard a great deal about "selfish landlords" and the "domination of broad-acred squires;" but happily not in that House, where such calumnies could be so easily confuted. He thought that the character of those men and their usefulness to society was too well appreciated by their fellow-countrymen, that he should defend them against any such charge. When he spoke of the "landed interest," he did not refer to the great landowners, but to that great aggregate of individuals whose capital and industry were embarked in the cultivation of the soil. Surely the man who held a lease of twenty-one years was during the period of that lease essentially the owner of the soil. The land was a commercial interest, and on the whole the most important interest in the country; and it astonished him to hear hon. Gentlemen opposite, who represented another class of commercial interests, using every effort to sap and undermine the legitimate influence of the landed interest. He now wished to show that the effect of this Bill would be to diminish this legitimate influence. The Bill proposed to add considerably to the county constituencies, but in the greater number of counties that addition would be obtained from the towns, which would entirely swamp the votes of the real county voters. He remembered in the Reform Bill of Lord Derby, that an attempt was made to modify that apparent anomaly, but that was a portion of that measure of which he had not approved. He thought it was unjust to deprive men of a privilege which they had exercised honourably, and in their opinion advantageously, for the country; and therefore he had disapproved of that portion of the Bill; but that was no reason why he should now favour a proposal to increase that anomaly. He therefore thought that this was an insidious attempt to diminish what he called the legitimate influence of the land. He had spoken of leases and of the capital invested in them, and he would venture to remind the great commercial class that these arrangements had been entered into and these contracts made upon the distinct understanding of what was the amount of local and imperial burdens which the land had at that time to bear. It was a question which affected the whole farming interest of the country, and he warned the highest class of farmers—those of Scotland—how they allowed the legitimate influence of the land to be lessened. It was sometimes said that the landed interest was dominant in the House; but he wanted to know what was the test they intended to apply to the representation? Was it the number of the population or the number of the electors, or was it the growth of wealth? Because, whichever test was applied, he could show that the claim of the counties for increased representation largely prevailed over that of the boroughs. It was a remarkable circumstance, owing no doubt to the Government having the interest of the boroughs more at heart than they had that of the counties, that they had to attribute the accidental omission of any return of the population of the counties later than 1861. In that year the population of the counties was 11,500,000 and the number of electors 542,633. The gross estimated rental of the counties in 1861 was £54,758,000. The population of the counties in 1831 was 8,689,000. The population of the boroughs in 1831 was 5,207,000 and it was now computed at 9,326,000: this showed an increase in the counties of 2,736,000, and in the boroughs of 4,119,000. It would be a fair estimate to take the increase in the counties at the present time at 3,000,000; so that at the present time there was undoubtedly a clear increase in the boroughs of over 1,000,000 of population. There were 542,633 electors in the counties, and 488,920 electors in the boroughs. But what was to be said with reference to the growth of wealth if that was a fair claim for additional representation? The gross estimated rental of the boroughs at Lady-day, 1856, was £31,315,000, and at the present time it was £41,680,000; being an increase in ten years, in round numbers, of £9,500,000. The gross estimated rental of the counties in 1860 was £54,758,000, and in 1865 it was £69,000,000, being an increase in five years of £14,250,000; and if they took the same ratio of increase for the next ten years the increase in the wealth of the counties would be £28,000,000, or three times that of the boroughs. He considered he was justified in using those figures in answer to any statement with reference to the dominant power of the counties in this House. Now that being the relative proportion in respect of population and wealth of the boroughs and counties, how stood the representation? There were 162 county Members in the House, and 334 borough Members; that was to say, the former had considerably more than double the representation of the latter. But this Bill did not propose to do anything to regulate this anomaly, neither had the Government held out a single hope that this anomaly would be attacked. He would now refer to the position of the future £14 county voter in little more detail than it had been done by the Government; and in doing so his desire was to speak of them with the greatest possible respect: he had no doubt they were pure, independent men, and worthy of possessing the franchise; but he must remind the House that they were small ratepayers, and, from their numbers, they would greatly outweigh the influence of the larger ratepayers; and in that respect again he thought he had a right to characterise the measure as an insidious Bill. He next came to the proposal with respect to the borough franchise, the object of which was to give additional power to the working classes. Now in speaking to this point he must again remind the House that he wished to speak of them as a body with admiration, and with that respect to which they were entitled; and it grieved him when he heard and read words used with reference to them which could be construed into a reproach to them or an insult to their feelings. He did not consider that they deserved it, and therefore he should scrupulously avoid any insinuations of the kind. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in referring to the statistics that had been laid on the table with reference to the borough franchise, had expressed his surprise that the number of electors belonging to the working class should be so numerous; but he (Mr. Liddell) was by no means surprised at it, because he had ventured on former occasions to assure the House that there was a larger number of working men on the register than they were aware of. He made that statement on the authority of witnesses before Earl Grey's Committee in 1860. The evidence given before that Committee was fully substantiated by the statistics which had been laid on the table by the Government. By those statistics it would appear that the working classes possessed already 26 per cent of the representation, and he had no doubt that their infusion into it was an improvement. He did not grudge them an iota of the power which they were thus enabled to exercise. He should, however, like to have an answer to the question—What was a fair share of the representation; was it one-fourth or one-half? Under the Bill as it stood the working classes would have a majority of the representation in a vast number of boroughs. Such, for instance, would be the case in Newcastle, Gateshead, South Shields, Sunderland — all boroughs in his own neighbourhood? Was that a fair share? Believing the working classes to be valuable accessories to the representative system, he would ask, whether the House was yet prepared to do them something more than justice? and, in so doing, to act unjustly by other classes above them. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer Lytton) had truly said that this question ought not to be argued on the existing state of things, but on a state of things that might arise in a very few years, because under this Bill the working classes would in the end obtain the majority of the representation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last night furnished an unhappy illustration when he referred to the Municipal Act, and went back as far as 1835. Now he need not have gone further back than 1850, because in that year was passed the Small Tenements Act for the better facilitating the collection of the rates. Under this Act the smaller class of occupiers obtained votes in municipal elections. The right hon. Gentleman appealed triumphantly to the House, whether in reference to municipal voting there had been any explosion or revolution, or any attacks on property. He (Mr. Liddell) was not aware that there had been; but there had been a great amount of disorder and of improper practices. The other House of Parliament accordingly appointed a Committee to inquire into the working of the municipal franchise. A Committee of the House of Lords was a judicial tribunal, and it was presided over by one of the ablest statesmen in the country—Earl Grey. What was their report? They stated that the result had been in too many instances to transfer the power of electing those who were to administer the borough funds from those who paid the rates to those who paid little or nothing. In some cases the effect of the Act of 1850 had been to cause the prevalence of drinking and treating among the class of small tenement holders. Another evil was stated by the Committee to be the employment of hired canvassers, who, serving as a cloak for bribery, tended to throw the control of affairs in these boroughs into the hands of interested intriguers and agitators. Now he had no wish to insinuate such a reproach on the class of electors this Bill was intended to include, as to suppose that they would be influenced by treating and other such insignificant matters which were practised as modes of corruption. He had no fear of the working classes, but he had great fears of their leaders; and he did foresee that the creation of these gigantic constituencies would lead to an enormous use of hired canvassers, and throw the conduct of large borough elections into the hands of interested intriguers and agitators. As for certain boroughs in his own neighbourhood, they were suffering materially from this change in the municipal law of franchise. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill) had argued as if they were going to admit into the House for the first time the consideration of the class of questions affecting working men. He would admit that it was desirable working men should be represented in that House; and, if necessary, he would support the creation of pure working class constituencies in certain towns; but he maintained that they were represented now. Foremost in the rank of those representatives was the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton); and this was the more creditable to him, because the working men only constituted one-fourth of the number of his constituency. There were other hon. Members also who paid especial attention to the interests of the working class. He (Mr. Liddell) was now sitting upon a Committee appointed, on the motion of the hon. and learned Member, to inquire purely and simply into the grievances of the working men; and there was every prospect that, whenever any serious grievance was shown to exist, it would receive a fair and generous consideration from the committee. He therefore dedenied that the interests of the working men ever had been, or were likely to be, neglected by that House. This belief was, however, quite consistent with the opinion that to introduce a very large body of the working men, and to give them absolute control in an unknown number of constituencies, was a step neither wise nor necessary. It was said that the statistics which had been supplied to the House were exaggerated from their including numbers who were not strictly artizans. Now, he thought there was a fallacy at the bottom of it which underlaid the argument about the working classes. He maintained that there was an affinity between the upper stratum of one class and the lower stratum of the other which connected the two, by which their feelings and interests were bound together. He was afraid that the only part of the Government Bill which he could approve was that which was scouted by hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House—namely, the savings-bank clause. The tendency of that clause was to raise the working classes to the level of the franchise, instead of depressing the franchise to their level. And that was the principle on which he wished to see enfranchisement carried out, because the process of elevation gave you the cream, the other as certainly would land you in the sediment. He remembered the Chancellor of the Exchequer's witty description of the two systems of direct and indirect taxation, wherein he described them as two coy damsels and himself an anxious suitor, wooing both ; but he did not remember him to have said,

> " How happy could I be with either,
> Were t'other dear charmer away."

He was very much amused with the simile at the time ; but he could not help fearing, from something that fell last night from the right hon. Gentleman, that he had been of late rather more than usual in the company of the indirect damsel, and that she had obtained a rather larger share of his affection. He wished, therefore, to ask the right hon. Gentleman — though he was sorry to say he was not then in the House—how long he thought he would maintain that equilibrium upon which he prided himself if he threw the majority of the voting power of the country into the hands of the working classes. He did not apprehend any revolution as one of the results, but he feared serious attacks upon our present system of raising the revenue of the country. Moreover, they might depend upon it that as soon as the working classes were enfranchised, they would find out their power, and Parliament must be prepared for questions being brought into that House which hitherto had been kept beyond its pale. They would have the wages question brought into Parliament, and he should be perfectly prepared to listen to any arguments on that question. It would be an advantage to have that question transferred from the heated atmosphere of the workmen's meetings to the cooler atmosphere of that House. The object of all the combinations of which they had heard was to raise the rate of wages, or, in other words, to give less work for more money. Was it supposed that that cry would be confined to the working classes, and that it would not extend to the army — the navy — and to every branch of the civil service? They might chance to find that a popular Government was not so economical as some of its advocates wished the country to believe. They might find that Retrenchment would be rudely separated from its old associate, Reform. He repeated that he wished to see a settlement of this question, and he wished to see it done on the safe principles once laid down by the hon. Member for Westminster. He wished to see the abuses of our representative system reformed, and the anomalies in the unequal representation of counties, as compared with boroughs, redressed. The Government had had every opportunity of dealing with the question, and the responsibility of missing it must rest on their shoulders. He should vote for the Amendment, because he saw the principle of a settlement more clearly shadowed forth in it than in the Bill. He should vote for it, because he would be no party to giving to constituencies with one hand that which they would probably have to take away from them with the other ; he would be no party to a measure which said one thing and meant another thing ; and because he would be no party to dealing with a great question of this kind on a principle which had been condemned by the highest authorities, namely, the principle of the degradation of the franchise. He should support the Amendment in the hope that the good sense of the people of England would support their representatives in Parliament in that view. He could not conclude without asking whether they ought to be held up as fools and blind, because they saw through the designs of those who advocated this measure, and because they were patriotic enough to oppose them.

Mr. HANBURY said he thought the Government had acted wisely, honestly, and justly in bringing forward this Bill, and he should support it, because he believed it to be a liberal and honest measure. It met the wants and requirements of the country at large, and afforded substantial justice to the county he had the honour to represent (Middlesex). He did not complain of the opposition to the Bill, for it was not to be expected that the noble Lord, the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), would support the measure; nor was it surprising that the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) should not be in its favour, because the noble Lord, in a manifesto to his constituents, declared himself in very emphatic terms opposed to all lowering of the franchise. Under these circumstances it would, perhaps, have been better for the noble Lord to have recorded a simple "No" against the Bill than to have moved an Amendment declaring that the House was ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Reform; for without a lowering and extension of the franchise, how could there be a settlement of the matter? The great offence the Government had committed seemed to be that they had not included in the Bill their proposal for the redistribution of seats. They naturally waited to see who were to be the electors before they fixed on the places. It was said that determining the franchise before redistributing the seats was like putting the cart before the horse; but it was necessary to know the size of the cart and the weight to be carried before the proper number of horses to draw it could be determined on. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the people were at all apathetic on the subject of Reform. It had been so often mentioned in the Queen's Speech, that they felt perfectly certain a Bill would be brought forward this year by the Liberal Government. But a challenge had been thrown out, and the events of the last fortnight, he thought, must convince every one that the people were in favour of the Bill. Many meetings on the subject had been held in various parts of the country. He knew of none in opposition to the Bill; but unanimous resolutions were passed in its favour. It was said the measure was incomplete, and the Cabinet had been indifferent. But the Government were now pledged heartily and firmly to the Bill—they would stand or fall by it; and that was the only proper and honest course they could take in this matter. The country, he repeated, was not indifferent, and he hoped the Liberal party would not be so. The Bill professed to deal with the simple object of lowering and extending the franchise. It was calculated to add 400,000 to the electoral roll—200,000 in boroughs and 200,000 in counties. There would be a large and important accession of electors in Middlesex, and these, he believed, would be as competent duly to exercise the franchise as those who now possessed it. He appealed to the House, whether the conduct of the working men under trying circumstances had not shown that they were fit to exercise the franchise? When Europe was convulsed, when constitutions were overthrown and thrones were tottering, and more recently during the cotton famine, the admirable bearing of the working classes showed them to be worthy of some increase of political power. They had fairly earned the right to share in the representation. If this Bill were rejected, a peaceful and satisfactory settlement of the question would be more difficult than ever, and the majority of that House would probably come back pledged to a more nauseous measure. If they only passed this Bill now, they would be enabled to see the number of electors in each borough and county, and the question of redistribution would become much less difficult. He would not now enter into details; these would be discussed in Committee. He would only say, in conclusion, that he considered the Bill thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of the times, and he should give it his hearty and strenuous support.

Mr. SELWIN said, he thought that if they looked back to the Bill of 1832, and to the history of the question of Reform, they would find little encouragement to support such an ill-considered and fragmentary measure as the present. No decided blot had been proved to exist in our present system of representation; no great grievance had been discovered: but to justify such a Bill both these ought to be patent to every class of the community; and then the remedy would not be a Bill framed to meet the grievance of one class or one section of the body politic only, sacrificing all others to it, but one which from its justice and fairness would appeal at once to the support of all impartial men. He believed there were few persons who did not think that our present constitutional form of Government was the happiest that could be devised for this country, and that by altering its form they would imperil its existence; but he ventured to say that should this Bill become law, it would be the first step to revolutionize our constitutional form of Government. In dealing with a question like the present, they should seek to establish some basis on which men, irrespective of party, should, as far as possible, be able to act together. That basis could only be founded on the idea that Members should represent different sections of the body politic, and that the different sections should have as nearly as possible equal electoral powers, so that the one should not overwhelm the other. If they took that view the question arose, were those classes properly represented now; and if they were not, where did the blot lie? Before the Reform Bill of 1832 the landed interest had so completely the command of the representation that commerce and labour were without their share in it. Since that time commerce had exercised its proper share in the representation; and the only question now was, Whether the labour of the country was properly represented? The statistics laid on the table showed most conclusively that labour had at least a fourth of the representation. There was no evidence to show that the class of intelligent artizans considered their case as one of injustice, or that they required such an alteration of the franchise as that proposed; and till now there had been no objection and no petitions in favour of it. Occasionally spasmodic efforts were made to introduce Reform, but they fell to the ground from their inherent weakness; and they were revived only through a sort of dread that some political Statute of Limitations might be pleaded against them, or they might run the risk of the question passing into the hands of a rival. Throughout these years there has been no cry for Reform, and the letters which appeared in the public press from working men showed that they wanted not State Reform but individual Reform, and that they had no desire for the untried nostrums of political experimentalists. But they were told that advantage ought to be taken of the absence of agitation to pass a Reform Bill; and yet this was the very reason for dealing with the question in its entirety, and having a Bill laid upon the table after long and careful investigation, and not one placed as this Bill had been placed on the table of the House, almost in the same moment as the statistics upon which it professed to be founded; not one dealing with a mere fragment, and leaving the rest to follow in some far distant day, in ignorance when they did so follow, whether they would harmonize at all. But did the present Bill, this fragment, this abortion, this child of the great Reformer's old age, hardly to be called a child of promise, carry out the opinions of the great champion of Reform? Did not the Bill show traces that Earl Russell had yielded to the great democrat of Birmingham? In the discussions of 1832 Lord Russell laid it down as a rule, that representation and property should go hand in hand; and he justified the admission of half a million of town electors by assuring the House that they claimed the franchise not as their birthright, but because they had a great stake in the country, and were deeply interested in its institutions. He further argued that it was not intended that the towns should interfere with the county representation, but that if a large addition was made to the manufacturing interests in towns, a counterpoise must be found to preserve the balance on the side of agriculture. But if this Bill were to pass, where would such a balance be found, or who would guarantee that the agricultural interest would continue to exist as part of our representation at all. What would be the effect in the county with which he was most intimately acquainted? In one division there would be an addition of 1,273 votes to a constituency of 4,904, and in his own division (South Essex), an addition of 4,838 to a constituency of 7,338. In both cases more than two-thirds of these additions were voters in towns unconnected with the landed interest. The result as far as his own division was concerned would be, to hand over at once and for ever the county representation to the large mass of town voters in the north-east district of London. Nor could he derive any argument in support of the Bill from the way in which the three boroughs in his county would be affected. In Colchester there were 560 artizans out of 1,424 electors; 563 voters would be added by the Bill, the greater part working men, and for the future there would be 51 per cent of this class of voters in the borough. In Maldon there were 479 of one class out of 859 electors; 222 new voters would be added, which would give 57 per cent of working men to the constituency. In Harwich the result would be a proportion of working-class voters amounting to 40 per cent. These figures showed that in Essex, at least, the franchise would be handed over to those who were lowest in the scale, and who he could not believe were proper recipients of the entire electoral power. If such was the case in one county, it might be reasonable to infer that the boroughs in many other counties would be similarly affected; and power being thus transferred from the wealth of the country to those who had the least interest in its institutions, he should like to know how many steps there were thence to universal suffrage and democracy. In the course of their discussions on this question reference had been made at various times to the cave to which fled the man who was to be the future ruler of the destinies of his country. To that place came those who were discontented with the misgovernment of the land, and he fancied in the last words of the verse he saw a happy augury for the success of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud; for they ran thus—"and there were with him about 400 men." He begged to thank the House for having listened to him so kindly. Representing as he did a constituency which would be most seriously affected by the Bill, he could not give even a partial consent to a measure which he believed would be so detrimental to the interests of his constituents, and so disastrous to the well-being of the country.

SIR FRANCIS GOLDSMID said, that the question appeared to divide itself into two parts: Is the Bill before the House a good bill as far as it goes; and if it be, ought it to be rejected on account of what it does not contain? As to the Bill being a good Bill in its main feature—the reduction of the borough franchise—the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his opening statement and in his speech of last night, fully made out his case for the admission, into the constituent body, of those who would be reached by the proposed reduction; and in the course of the debate there had been hardly anything like serious argument against the political capacity of the working men who would be admitted by the Bill. The hon. Member who last spoke (Mr. Selwin) had indeed treated the preponderance of the working class, though only in a single borough, as an evil; but it was generally admitted that that class should have representatives; and, even on the somewhat wide calculation of the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne), this Bill would give them the majority of voters as to no more than 133 seats. Why, upon the whole number of seats in England and Wales, this would allot to the labouring class a proportion scarcely exceeding one out of four. Surely that was no very alarming prospect even to those who were most afraid of the property and intelligence of the constituencies being swamped by the humbler voters to be now admitted. But that fear was not only not borne out by experience, it was refuted by all experience; and men who called themselves practical men ought to be the last to entertain it. Where would the landowners and the great employers of labour now be, if their influence in elections were merely proportionate to their numbers in the constituencies? But it was not so. Their legitimate influence depended upon causes entirely different: upon the efforts which they made for the welfare of, upon the confidence which they were able to inspire in, those beneath them; and he could not see why the same principles were not to operate after the passing of this Bill. He then came to the objections made to the fragmentary nature of the measure; and here he must advert to the arguments used by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), whose fairness and candour and love of truth induced him to make concessions that were all important in the discussion. The noble Lord admitted that the Ministers were not to blame for not having introduced their Bill sooner, that there was not time in the present Session to discuss a complete measure, and that the effect of the Amendment which he supported would be to throw the whole question over to another Session; and he argued that this postponement to the next Session was the right course for them to pursue. But if the Government had not time this Session to get a complete measure discussed, what other course was really open to them than that which they had followed? To have done nothing during the present Session would have been, as the noble Lord the Secretary of State for War had shown, to damage their credit, not in the eyes of their supporters only, but in the face of the whole country. He observed that, when the Secretary for War used that argument last night, there was great mirth on the other side; but he also observed, that when the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) followed, he never, in the whole course of his amusing speech, attempted to grapple with that part of the Secretary of State's argument. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn saw nothing unreasonable in putting the measure off, and he referred to its having already been put off from 1860 as a reason for putting it off still longer. He (Sir F. Goldsmid) drew an opposite inference: he saw in this an instance how delay was used to excuse delay; and he would therefore say, the time we have already lost is the strongest possible reason why we should lose no more. Then it was alleged that this division of the Bill into two parts was a stratagem to catch votes, because it was thought that some would vote for a lowering of the franchise who would be alienated by a redistribution of seats; and the Government was warned that this was only a putting off of the evil day, because, when the redistribution came, the opposition to the Ministerial plans would be brought out. Well, if this were so, why did not the supporters of the Amendment wait for that additional support which they would be sure to obtain hereafter from those who were opposed to a redistribution of seats? The noble Lord had also argued that there might be a suspicion of hon. Members being rewarded for supporting this Bill by being favourably dealt with by Ministers in the scheme of redistribution. But, in the first place, while the noble Lord properly claimed for himself and those who were acting with him the most favourable construction of their motives, it was most unfair that he should, at the same time, cast such injurious imputations upon the Government. And, secondly, it was singular that so acute a mind as that of the noble Lord did not perceive that, if there was a determination to suspect, the same suspicion might arise in the case of a complete measure; and that it would be just as easy, should the Franchise and Redistribution Bills be united, as it was whilst they remained separate, to suppose (if you were inclined to suppose anything wrong of your opponents) that Members would be rewarded for supporting the Government by having their boroughs tenderly dealt with in the arrangements for redistribution. Again; an objection was made, that if a dissolution took place between the lowering of the franchise and the redistribution of seats, the appeal would be made to a kind of provisional constituencies; but no harm would come of this, and it was not an inconvenience entitled to any weight, since in all probability the provisional constituencies, though somewhat more extended than the present, would be somewhat less so than those which would exist when both measures should have passed. It was likewise contended, that if the reduction of the franchise and redistribution were to be taken separately, yet Ministers had begun at the wrong end. What were the reasons given for that opinion? It was said that the distribution of seats was fixed and rigid, while the franchise had a tendency to adjust itself, through the rise in rentals and the increased value of labour; so that thirty years hence a £10 qualification would be considerably lower than at present. That might be true to a certain extent; but after making all due allowance for the change in the value of money and the rise of wages in consequence of emigration, he believed that the self-adjusting tendency of the franchise was extremely slow; and surely the supporters of the Amendment (which spoke of their being prepared to consider the question) could not mean that we were to wait thirty years for this self-adjustment. The other reason urged for attributing unfairness to the course taken by the Government was that the new voters in the old constituencies would be grateful to the authors of their political existence; and that therefore, if a difference were to arise between the Ministers and the House of Commons, and an appeal were made to the country, these new voters would give the Government a majority. Now, it was an odd circumstance that this objection would apply with equal force in the case of a redistribution of seats; for the new constituencies created by the measure would be just as grateful to the authors of their existence as the new voters in the old constituencies. It was clear, therefore, that the attempt to show that Ministers had begun at the wrong end was a complete failure. Another argument had been brought forward, under the guise of an illustration. It had been said, that it would be absurd to begin constructing a building, room by room, without an estimate and a general plan, and on the simple assurance of the architect that he understood his business. No doubt, if this were a correct simile, it would have great force; but he (Sir Francis Goldsmid) denied that it was by any means an accurate illustration, because it was not until the Committee on the Bill that any of its details would have to be considered; and then the required modifications might be made without undoing what had already been done. He thought he could suggest a more appropriate simile. Suppose they had a building to finish, and the architect were to warn them, "Let us begin at once, and proceed as far as we can; else the winter will be here, and the rains will be upon us before the roof is on, the workmen will be dispersed, and the work will be spoiled;" and suppose that a man were to resist this reasoning and say, "No; let us begin in all places at once, or not at all,"—surely they would not think that person was very anxious for the completion of the building. And especially would the architect's advice, and the confidence asked by him, appear reasonable if it happened that he was one who, thirty years ago, had ensured his fame by erecting a similar building, of which his opponents had then predicted that it was sure to tumble in and to crush all who might seek shelter within it, but which had, on the contrary, proved so commodious and healthful that its very commodiousness and salubrity were now used as arguments against its further extension. The noble Lord Stanley had warned certain hon. Members not to fly into the snare set for them. He (Sir Francis Goldsmid) believed the noble Lord referred to those who were afraid of their seats being affected by re-distribution. He (Sir Francis) would venture to adopt that warning, but he would apply it to a different class of Members. He would ask hon. Gentlemen who desired Reform, and who were exhorted to vote for the Amendment, to consider who were its supporters. Were they the persons who wished to have an extension of the suffrage only on condition of its being associated with a redistribution of seats? No; the bulk of those who supported the Amendment formed the party opposite, who in 1859 declined to extend the borough suffrage; and who, though they subsequently in some degree retracted their resolution, yet eventually retracted their retractation. The remaining Gentlemen who had declared an intention to vote with the noble Member for Chester were men who, like the right hon. Members for Calne and Stroud (Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman), avowed their dislike of a lower franchise, or who, like the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh), believed that to increase voters was to increase bribery. Surely it could not be supposed that persons such as these would vote for an extension of the suffrage, even if it were associated with redistribution. It was hon. Members really desiring an extension of the franchise, therefore, who would deserve the appellation of "innocent birds," if, by following the noble Lord the Member for Chester, they flew into the snare which was set before their very eyes by the fowler. For his part he should decline to accompany those winged creatures in their flight, and should support the Bill, and vote against the Amendment.

Lord **ROBERT MONTAGU** said he had no fear for the result; he felt sure that this Reform Bill would not become law, and he was still more certain that the Government had no intention that it should. If the Liberal Ministry had been sincere Reformers, there would have been a Reform Bill passed, not now, but seven years ago. They had, however, so often broken their pledges, that the country now felt certain that they would by some means or other again wriggle out of the difficulty. The Æthiopian had not changed his skin:—

"Men faithless once are ever faithless men;
Give them but scope, they soon will turn again."
All the Talents.

In the year 1859 the Ministry had had a chance of settling this great question. A real genuine Reform Bill was put before them, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer warned his present colleagues, that if they did not permit that Bill to go into Committee they might never have a like chance again. He said, that if they allowed it to go into Committee, Lord John Russell would be master of the situation, and could introduce such amendments as would make the Reform Bill meet his views. But the present Government defeat the Bill and the Ministry which proposed it, and came in themselves on the Reform cry. Then they broke faith with a deceived people, while the cant of "gradual progress" covered their desertion of principle. Nevertheless, they found, that Reform was a good cry. It drew a good house, and was a dramatic performance which paid; therefore they thought it prudent to shelve it, and keep it carefully for future use. They had not yet arrived at "positively the last night." The Government would still advertise the unprecedented run of the Reform burlesque, and the *claquers* and touters of the Liverpool Amphitheatre would continue to cry up this dull and immoral farce. The Government having before abandoned their character in order to gain their power, would not now part with their power in order to regain their character. A great change was never lightly undertaken, because at the best it created a baneful disturbance of existing things; but in this case the greatest change had been rashly undertaken, and agitation had been purposely increased. Other changes, if experience showed them to be unsuccessful, might at any time be modified; but from a reduction of the franchise it would be impossible to retrace our steps. He felt certain, therefore, that the House would not accept the scheme until it was submitted to them in its entirety and the good object which would be attained was very clearly defined. Indeed, why should they do so? Was it because the House had for thirty-four years been so unwise and so careless of the interests of the people that it was to be summarily dismissed to the realms of chaos and dark night? Was it because the existing constituencies had shown themselves so lax, and had so abused their power, that they were to be rudely thrust from their power and position? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in asking leave to introduce the Bill, had failed to make out a case for Reform. He did not advance a single argument, nor lay his finger on one solitary abuse. And why was that? The reason was that the scheme had not been framed after a due investigation of the facts, but had been elaborated from the exuberant, if, perchance, disordered imagination of the right hon. Gentleman. It had been drawn like German philosophy, or like the right hon. Gentleman's book on Church and State, from the depths of his own consciousness. Hence, when the statistics appeared they destroyed the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, and cut away from under his feet the ground upon which he relied. And what was the standing-ground upon which he had relied? It was this: an empty, rhetorical declamation, uttered without consideration, and stated without exactitude, concerning the injustice of excluding the working man from electoral power. He had, forsooth, but a fraction, between a tenth and a twentieth, of the franchise. It had been said that this was the notion of the Government six years ago; but had it not been their opinion since that time? It was scarcely eighteen months ago that they were discussing the Borough Franchise Bill. On the 11th of May, 1864, the right hon. Gentleman, speaking on that Bill, said:—

> "At present we have, speaking generally, a constituency of which between one-tenth and one-twentieth—certainly less than one-tenth—consists of working men. . . . . As a general rule, the lower stratum of the middle class is admitted to the exercise of the franchise, while the upper stratum of the working class is excluded."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxv. 315.]

That was the poetical notion of the right hon. Gentleman eighteen months ago; but now statistics prove, in most prosaic numbers, that the working classes possess more than one-fourth, or, to be exact, 26 per cent of the representation; and that in some boroughs they excluded the wealthy and educated classes from electoral power. What, then, did the right hon. Gentleman do in introducing the present Bill? He spent his oratory in describing the great scope and range of Parliamentary Reform, and left the country under the impression that he was initiating a vast scheme of revolution; he let out that he was commencing a democracy in detail, and that the change which he proposed would be not only great but reiterated; and that the agitation, always injurious, would be indefinitely prolonged. His first step, therefore, was to give to the working men 47 per cent, or nearly one-half, of the franchise; so that, at the present rate of augmentation, before his series of proposed changes had come to an end, and the concomitant agitation had reached its climax, the working men would have a clear majority in the representation over all the other classes together. Was that a statesmanlike plan to propose to any House of Commons? Would not the effect of such a scheme be this: any demagogue, by seducing the working men with his oratory, and putting himself at their head, could rule the House with irresistible power, and carry his democracy to any issue he might desire. When charming the multitude—or the few, he knew not which—as he stood upon the boards and trod the scenes at the Liverpool Amphitheatre, the right hon. Gentleman instanced the United States as an example worthy of imitation; and what did he say on that point? His words were:—

> "The point I ask you to look at is this—not the comparative merits of American institutions, but the one single and important point of the effect that has been produced in America by a largely-extended population franchise, by a

widely-spread participation on the part of the people in the choice of their governors—the wonderful, the unexampled, the almost incredible effect that has been produced by that system of giving force of expression to the national will, and enabling the Government to develope the energies and give effect to the will, such as probably have never been developed in an equal time and among an equal number of men since the race of mankind sprang into existence."

Yes; the extension of the franchise had given an overwhelming power to the Government. And how had that power been used? In suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, in violating the liberty of the subject, and in enabling the Government to set at nought both the law and the Legislative Assembly. Congress offered an idle opposition to the will of the President. How was it that President Lincoln was able to give up the *Trent* prisoners against the express direction of the House of Representatives? How was it that Mr. Seward was able to disavow the resolution of the House of Representatives concerning French intervention in Mexico? Was it not the power acquired by the population franchise that enabled the Government to develope the energies and give effect to the will, not of the people, but of an irresponsible Government? And how did the right hon. Gentleman continue? He said,—

"Well, Gentlemen, what I would say is, let us learn lessons where we can, and, among others, let us learn them where we can learn them from our brethren—the children of our loins in America."

There was the "flesh and blood" again. The right hon. Gentleman must have an enormous progeny scattered over the face of the globe. He continued:—

"Recent events which have taken place on the other side of the Atlantic have demonstrated to us how, by enlarging the franchise, augmented power can be marshalled on behalf of the Government."

That was the very point—it was the lust of power which lay at the bottom of this Reform mania. If the House would permit him to make use of a far-fetched metaphor, he might say that the right hon. Gentleman was seeking to prevent the stream of Niagara from flowing in its wonted course in order to utilize that body of waters in turning his own mill. Let them pass to the second reading. The right hon. Gentleman's speech, in moving the second reading of the Bill, was not an attempt to convince them of the necessity for Reform, but to compel his followers to support the Government on a mere question of confidence in the Cabinet; nay, not so much in the Cabinet, as in the leader of the House. One among the very few arguments which might be discovered amid the desert of words was, that as the working classes had saved so much money, and had put it into the Post Office savings-banks, therefore they were entitled to a larger share in the franchise. He said:—

"We called upon them to be provident; we instituted for them Post-office savings-banks, which may now be said to have been in full operation for four years, and what has been the result? During these four years there have been 650,000 depositors in those savings-banks."

But what proof had they that those depositors belonged to the working classes? Upon that question he knew of no better authority than the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. In 1864 the right hon. Gentleman said at Buckley in Flintshire:—

"That £40,000,000 or £50,000,000 of accumulated money belonged to different classes of persons (including the labouring classes, the charitable institutions, to minors, and in some instances to persons not poor at all); a great deal of it belonged to domestic servants; and, in fact, there was a very miscellaneous denomination of persons to take up that large amount of property; but if they took the artizans, mechanics, operatives, and peasants of this country—he meant the fathers of families of the labouring classes—he very much doubted whether one in ten of those families throughout the country had any deposits in a savings-bank. He might say, perhaps not one in twenty, and he was not sure whether the figures might not be placed lower."

Then what became of the argument when it turned out, that of the immense amount in the savings-banks for which the working classes were credited, nearly all belonged to domestic servants, and not to the working classes at all? Were hon. Gentlemen inclined to put confidence in the Chancellor of 1864 or in the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1866, for as they contradicted each other so directly, it was impossible to put confidence in both? His next argument had been in answer to an objection which he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) supposed might be urged on that (the Opposition) side of the House. He had fear of the mischief that might be done by trades unions, and of the great power which they gave to the working classes, because they not only had the weight of numbers, but the advantage of organization; and he anticipated the objection that the working men might unite their forces to exercise the electoral power which would be given them under the Bill? He said:—

> "Again it is said—at least I believe it has been so said—that where the working classes have a majority they vote together as a class. Now, is there any shade or shadow or rag of proof that such is the fact."

He (Lord R. Montagu) would have thought that the existence of trades unions was a sufficient proof of the fact; but if additional evidence were required, the right hon. Gentleman himself would furnish it. In a speech to the working classes which the right hon. Gentleman made in November, 1865 — not so very long ago—he said:—

> "If there be an apprehension that you cherish separate interests, disarm that jealousy by your conduct. Undoubtedly, some portions of the proceedings of the working classes are still open to criticism—namely, the attempts on the part of majorities to interfere with minorities."

What was this but an attempt to force minorities to coincide in the opinion of the majority? It was an attempt to force all to vote as a class. The right hon. Gentleman, when addressing the working men themselves—when he made a most admirable speech to them, and gave them much good advice—did not forget to give them this important counsel, that they were no longer to join together as a class. Within six months of that time, however, he appeared before the British House of Commons and said, there was not a rag nor a shade nor a shadow of truth in that which he himself had stated six months before. The right hon. Gentleman then alluded to a matter for which he had no statistics, and instituted a comparison between the number of the working classes on the register in 1832, and the number on the register in 1866. There were no statistics to prove his assertion; yet the right hon. Gentleman said, on the second reading of the Bill:—

> "It is said, however, that there is a rapid growth of the working classes among the £10 householders. But where is the proof of this assertion? I believe it to be undeniable, that the rate of progress in the aggregate number of £10 householders has been very much less of late years than in the first few years after the passing of the Reform Bill. From 1832 to 1851, while the population increased at the rate of 43 per cent, the £10 householders grew more than twice as fast; but from 1851 to 1866 the constituency grew only 50 per cent faster than the aggregate population, thus showing a great slackening as compared with the earlier period."

Now, in 1832, some of the freemen and potwallopers were and some were not £10 householders; if all were, then the increase in £10 householders would only be 102 per cent; but if none were, then the increase would be 170 per cent, and the percentage of increase must be sought between those numbers. The right hon. Gentleman evidently had a hankering after the municipal franchise as a basis for the Parliamentary franchise, although he described the former as amounting almost to universal suffrage; and what had been the condition of municipal elections? The right hon. Gentleman stated that the municipal franchises were almost exclusively working men's franchises, and, after showing that the number of working men in the municipal constituency was 240,000 as against 122,000 non-working men, he exclaimed:—

> "What a dreadful state of things! Yet there has been no explosion, no revolution; no question has been raised about property, nor, indeed, has any attempt been made to give a political character to municipal institutions."

If the right hon. Gentleman, however, had gone to the fountain head for his information, and had consulted the Report of the Committee which sat in 1859 upon the Municipal Franchise Act, he would have discovered the true character of the system which he so lauded. The Committee said:—

> "Where the Act of 1850 has been carried into effect in such manner as to admit large numbers of small tenement holders to the franchise, it has caused a great increase of corrupt practices at municipal elections, which prevail much more widely and take much deeper root than was formerly the case. . . . Wherever the Act of 1850 has been carried into full operation, the lowest class of the population have acquired a predominant influence over municipal elections; treating, bribery, and hired canvassing have greatly increased; the character and dignity of the corporation is said to be lowered by the intrusion of unworthy members."

After the declared desire on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to assimilate the two systems, it could not be expected that hon. Members should place any confidence in him. The Report of this Committee also corroborated the charges of venality, violence, drunkenness, and ignorance brought against the lower class of electors by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), which the right hon. Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had criticized so severely. The Report said:—

> "Those wards in which the small tenement voters are the most numerous are the most noted for the prevalence of malpractices. . . . You will not get a vote unless you give drink. . . . Publichouses are kept open for ten days or a fortnight before the election takes place."

Again, they allude to :—

> "Disorder and demoralization, fraud and impersonation, and the frequency of disgraceful drunkenness, and gross ignorance and venality of a large class of electors."

The right hon. Gentleman said, "Hear, hear!" appearing, indeed, to take pleasure in continually varying his character, contradicting one day that which he had stated a few days before. How then could they place confidence in the right hon. Gentleman? One clause of the Bill proposed to enfranchise occupiers who had compounded for their rates. With reference to this class the Committee said :—

> "The evils produced by the operation of the clause which enfranchises occupiers whose rates are paid by the landlord are so serious, that the Committee recommend that it be repealed. . . . The Committee are of opinion that as a test of fitness to take part in municipal affairs, as well as a security against corrupt and fraudulent practices, actual, direct, and continuous payment of rates should be the indispensable condition of the municipal suffrage."

And yet the right hon. Gentleman proposed to insert into the Bill a clause similar to that, the repeal of which had been so strongly recommended by the Committee. In another part of his speech the right hon. Gentleman read a quotation from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, and a saving clause which occurred in that speech was received with cheers by the Members on the Opposition side of the House, because it was felt that that passage governed the whole sense of the quotation, and gave to it an entirely different purport from that which was intended by the right hon. Gentleman. The Chancellor of the Exchequer immediately retorted :—

> "You hail with satisfaction the saving clause of 'maintaining the institutions of the country.' But we do not ask you to sacrifice the institutions of the country."

But what said the hon. Member for Birmingham, who had been called in as the adviser to the advisers of the Crown? In a speech delivered some seven years since the hon. Member said :—

> "I have no object in making these observations but to show to the people that they have been deluded by the idea that they have a glorious—that is, an excellent—Constitution. The Constitution of this country, said to be of a King or Crown, Lords, and Commons, is, in fact, an imposture,—an imposture which I take it to be a part of my duty to expose. John Foster, speaking of the British Constitution, speaks of it as 'that canted and extolled humbug.'"

Ministers did not wish to sacrifice the institutions of the country, and yet they took for their friend and counsellor a man who called the Constitution of his country a "canted and extolled humbug." Now it might be well to refer to what the right hon. Gentleman said on the subject of pledges. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in the course of his speech made use of the following words :—

> "But let not the right hon. Gentleman suppose, and let not any member of his party suppose, that the retractation of pledges once given by a Minister of the Crown causes those pledges to be as though they had never been made. . . . A constitutional Government cannot go before the representatives of a free people to-day and say, 'I promise you this, that, and the other,' and to-morrow say to them, 'I have changed my mind and retract my promise.'"

He (Lord R. Montagu) had, until lately, been possessed with an unfortunate admiration for the right hon. Gentleman, which had led him to collect the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman, and study them in his leisure moments for instruction. The result of that admiration was unfortunate, for it led him to discover the constant contradictions into which the right hon. Gentleman had fallen. And he had seen that what the right hon. Gentleman said one year, he would utterly, totally, and entirely contradict the next. When he heard the sentence he had last quoted, his moribund admiration began to revive, and he had no doubt that it would have been altogether reanimated, had he not remembered that the right hon. Gentleman had pledged himself some years to extinguish the income tax in 1860; but when the year 1860 came he simply trebled it. In 1858 the right hon. Gentleman expelled his colleagues for truckling to France; and in 1860 he concluded the French Treaty. He (Lord R. Montagu) was not going to argue against the French Treaty, but he was simply showing that an implicit confidence was not to be placed in the right hon. Gentleman. In 1857 he denounced the China war, and called it a "crime against heaven;" in 1860 he reviewed the war, and called it a "righteous retribution." ["Question."] That was the question which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had definitely put before them—whether any confidence was to be placed in the right hon. Gentleman? He would make one other quotation from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the previous evening said :—

> "I sought for a description of it, and could find no other so applicable—with the exception of one monosyllable which I wish entirely to omit—as the retort of Prince Henry to Falstaff:—
>
> 'These lies are, like the father that begot them,
> Gross as a mountain, open, and palpable.'"

[The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: "There is no 'and.'"] No "and!" If the right hon. Gentleman could interrupt him, and exhibit so much accuracy when a conjunction only was in question, it was much to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman had not been more careful when he misled the House upon savings-banks, the municipal franchise, and other important matters. There might possibly be below the gangway, on the Ministerial side of the House, some hon. Members who, while professing to follow the hon. Member for Birmingham, still retained some small confidence in the right hon. Gentleman; but would they continue to do so? In his speech on the previous evening the Chancellor of the Exchequer said:—

> "I find that, in the present town constituencies, there are eight boroughs where the working classes are in a majority on the registers. . . . I find that these eight towns return five Liberals and nine Conservatives. This then is the result of the working classes being in the majority."

He moreover added the words (although they do not appear in the report), "Where the working class is the narrowest majority, there it is their (the Conservatives') seat." He would ask what confidence the hon. Member for Birmingham could place in a Gentleman who proposed a Bill which would avowedly hand over political power to the Conservative party. It might be well, perhaps, to refer to the opinions of the hon. Member for Birmingham upon this point. On the 4th of January in the present year, speaking at Rochdale, the hon. Gentleman said:—

> "I believe I have been told, but I do not attach much value to it, that there are persons who advise Earl Russell to have a £12 or a £15 franchise for the counties. . . . I believe that there are persons who think that there is something dreadful in a £6 franchise, and that a £7 or £8 would be enough. . . . I venture to think that if the Government yield to these propositions, they will be guilty not only of weakness, but they will show that they do not comprehend the position which this question occupies in the minds of their countrymen, and will prove that they are pedlars in politics, and not statesmen."

If that were a correct quotation from the hon. Gentleman's observations, must he not be of opinion, that the right hon. Gentleman who introduced this Bill should be classed with those who are not statesmen but pedlars? Then at Birmingham, on December 14, 1865, the hon. Member said:—

> "If of the five millions who are now shut out one million were admitted—you will mark the extreme, or, as some will say, the blameable moderation of that suggestion—but if only one million were admitted, would not the cry of the toil-laden and the suffering, which even now ascends to heaven, reach further and be heard even on the floor of Parliament."

But to how many of these millions would the Bill of the Government extend the franchise? Why, not to 500,000 out of the whole number; and under those circumstances could the hon. Gentleman place confidence in her Majesty's Ministers? Upon the subject of the redistribution of seats the hon. Member stated at Bradford, in the year 1859:—

> "Repudiate without mercy any Bill of any Government, whatever its franchise, whatever its seeming concession may be, if it does not distribute the seats which are obtained from the extinction of small boroughs mainly among the great city and town populations of the kingdom. The question of distribution is the very soul of the question of Reform, and unless you watch that you will be deceived."

Reform is not a mere lowering of the franchise. The constitution of a kingdom is not a problem in arithmetic. He trusted they would hear no more of the votes of 50,000 being thought more valuable than the votes of 5,000, or of the representative of the smallest borough, or the largest city, being anything but a member of Parliament for the kingdom. It had been asserted that the proposed Bill would remove anomalies in the representation. If so, what greater anomalies could be found than those exhibited by a comparison between the borough and county constituencies? The population of the counties was 11,427,655, and the population of the boroughs only 8,500,000; the counties had 2,290,000 inhabited houses, and the boroughs 1,450,000. Then the rateable value of the property in the counties was nearly £56,500,000, and in the boroughs nearly £33,000,000. Yet 501,979 county electors returned 162 Members, and 499,668 borough electors returned as many as 338. Was not that an anomaly? he asked; and did the Bill propose to deal with that? Nay, the anomaly appeared still greater, when it was remembered that 25,000 of the borough electors voted for the county Members; and that some boroughs, such as Manchester and Brighton, turned the scale in the county election. But the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the franchise was a right and not a trust. If that were the case, it was clear that the suffrage should be extended not only to all householders, but to criminals, and paupers, and women, and children. The right hon. Gentleman had threatened them with the unhappy consequences which would follow, in the shape of popular distrust and discontent, if they were to reject the present measure; but the right hon. Gentleman had made similar predictions in the years 1861 and 1864, and as they had not been in any way realized, he (Lord R. Montagu) could no longer be terrified by the forebodings of the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir GEORGE GREY: Sir, I think the course of this debate has thrown great light, upon the character of the Amendment which has been moved by my noble Friend the Member for Chester. The Government has been censured in some quarters for attaching importance to that Amendment, for treating it in fact as raising a vital question, instead of accepting it merely as a friendly hint as to the course which they should take—a course recommended by hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House with a sincere desire to facilitate the settlement of this question of the representation of the people. But I appeal to hon. Gentlemen who have listened to the debate as far as it is gone, whether we did not take a proper view of that Amendment when we read it as designed to effect the rejection of the Bill?—and to ensure its rejection, not by direct means—not by the assertion of a principle opposed to that contained in the Bill—but by a Resolution couched in such terms as to admit of its being supported, as it has been and will be supported, by many hon. Gentlemen who, like him who has just sat down, are opposed to Reform altogether, by hon. Gentlemen also who are opposed to any redistribution of seats, and which might be supported at the same time by those who advocate universal suffrage and electoral districts. This, I say, is not a fair way of meeting the Bill. There are, indeed, in this Resolution, a few words which intimate a willingness on the part of the House to entertain the question of Reform; but these words to me look very much as if they had been interpolated after the Amendment was drafted. I refer to the words, "the House, while ready to consider the question of Parliamentary Reform." My noble Friend (Earl Grosvenor) says that the House has already shown itself ready to consider this question by the time and attention which it has devoted to the several Bills which have been proposed during the last thirteen or fourteen years. Does he introduce those words, then, for the purpose of pledging the House to consider this question of Reform in the same manner only in which it has before done so? And is this House in the future to be turned into a debating society, to discuss matters connected with the representation of the people, with the determination that no practical result shall follow, and that no final opinion shall be expressed on the principle of any Bill? The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) stated last night very truly, that a marked distinction existed between the Amendment now proposed and that which was proposed by my noble Friend, now at the head of the Government, to the motion of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli), for the second reading of the Reform Bill of 1859. I thank the noble Lord for calling the attention of the House to the material difference between the two Amendments. The Amendment proposed by Lord Russell asserted a principle, and it asked the House to express its opinion as between the principle of the Bill introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite and that contained in his own proposition. The Bill did not contain any provision for the extension of the borough franchise by the reduction of the qualification necessary to give the right of voting in boroughs. The Government having said they had determined not to propose any such reduction, the Amendment proposed by the noble Lord was addressed directly to that point, and asked the House to decide between the principle which it asserted and that of the Bill of the Government. That was a fair and open proceeding; it raised an issue upon which the House could decide, and the House did decide upon it. But what is the case now? The Amendment tendered for our acceptance leaves us entirely in the dark as to any principle advocated by those who support it. They might have asserted their adoption of the principle of a reduction of the borough franchise, and they might have announced that they were prepared to agree to a redistribution of seats. But, as we stand at present, this Amendment may be agreed to, and the House would still be at liberty to reject the second reading of our Bill, even if it were offered to hon. Gentlemen in connection with clauses amply providing for the redistribution of seats. Indeed, the only effect of this Amendment if passed would be to add one more to the obstructions in the way of any Government proposing to settle this question of the representation of the people—a state of things which, I understood, every one who had regard to the true interest of the country deprecated.

Sir, on the Motion for leave to introduce this Bill a debate took place which was marked by the total silence of right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the front benches of the Opposition. In the course of that debate, which lasted two nights, they abstained from expressing any opinion upon the principle of the Bill, and abstained from giving the least intimation of the course which they felt disposed to take. The same course, however, was not pursued by other Members: speeches of great force and ability were made, directly impugning the principle of the Bill; and we thought, therefore, that on the second reading at least we should be met with some direct issue; and that, instead of the scene which was enacted in 1860, we should be met fairly, openly, and unambiguously, with some proposal that would enable us to take the opinion of the House. That course has not been adopted; those who have made speeches against the principle of the Bill shrink from asking the House to agree with their opinions, and, endeavouring to avoid any assertion of principle, strive indirectly to get rid of the Bill and to stop its further progress. We have now arrived at a point of this debate when the Amendment seems almost to have been forgotten. The noble Lord who spoke last (Lord R. Montagu) scarcely alluded to it; and in two remarkable speeches made this evening, to which the House must have listened with interest, one by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer Lytton), and the other by my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill), the Amendment was passed over in a very few words, as if not worthy of real and serious debate. Both those speeches were directed to the main principle of the Bill, one being in direct opposition to the measure, and the other a most able, interesting, and admirable argument in favour of its principle. To the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire the House, I am sure, must have listened with admiration, from the great ability which it displayed; an ability which must make us regret that he so seldom favours us with an opportunity of listening to his eloquence. But I deeply regret that the kind and generous sentiments expressed in part of that speech were marred by a thorough distrust of the working classes—["No, no!" *and Cheers*]—political distrust of them ["No!" *and Cheers*]; and that while speaking of them individually with respect, kindness, and generosity, his whole speech was marked by distrust of them as a body. ["No, no!" *and Cheering.*] That speech, I assert, showed an honest determination, according to the views entertained by the right hon. Gentleman, to exclude those classes, as far as he had any influence ["No, no!"], from any additional admission to the franchise. ["No, no!"] Well, I am glad to hear those denials from hon. Gentlemen. I presume they are expressing their own opinions, and that they are willing to admit the working classes of this country to an increased share in the representation. Let us hope that, before this debate closes, we shall hear from those who oppose this Bill how far and in what manner they are prepared to carry out that policy. My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill) took altogether a different tone. He did not flatter the working classes by ascribing to them virtues which, perhaps, are not to be found in any class of society, high or low. He told the truth with regard to them; and he demonstrated, I think, that the advantages to be derived from an extension of the franchise will not be confined to the working classes alone; that we shall not—according to the light in which it is sometimes falsely put—be conferring a boon upon them alone, but that we shall be conferring a benefit on all classes of society by bringing into more direct intercourse the representatives of different classes. It is by treating the working classes with distrust and as a separate class, that you drive them into the combinations which we deplore and regret. However some of us may differ from the perhaps too sanguine estimate formed by the hon. Member for Westminster as to the probable results of the Bill, its principle I believe to be sound, and its proposals such not only as enlightened policy would recommend, but calculated to prove beneficial to every class of society. Now, how do we stand? I do not want to go over again the ground which has been so well occupied before by others, but having alluded to the Resolution of 1859, which stands recorded upon our Journals, by which the House at that time declared that no settlement of the Reform question could be satisfactory which did not include a reduction of the borough franchise, let us see what took place afterwards. The right hon. Gentleman has been often reminded of the declaration which he made on the occasion when the vote of want of confidence was moved after the general election. In asking for a continuance of the confidence of the House and the country towards the Government of which he was the leader, he declared in clear and unambiguous terms, that he was prepared to give effect to what was admitted to be the verdict of the country, and to bring in a Bill conferring with no sparing hand, and in no illusory manner, the franchise upon the working classes. The Government was changed; and the Government of Lord Palmerston which succeeded, in fulfilment of the pledge given, did lay before the House a measure calculated to give effect to the principle which the House had approved, and to which the right hon. Gentleman had signified his adhesion. That Bill was read a second time unanimously,—not a single Member ventured to invite the House to dissent from its principle. There were, however, most protracted debates on the subject. [*Much Laughter, and Cheering from the Opposition Benches.*] Hon. Gentlemen may laugh, but none of them ventured to raise a direct issue on the Bill. [*Renewed Laughter.*] That sneer, I suppose, insinuates that the House objected to the principle of the Bill. Will any Gentleman, then a Member of the House, say that he opposed the principle of the measure? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside), whom I see opposite and who cheers, who takes a prominent share in our discussions, was present—why did he not, as is his course on most occasions, fairly and openly ask the House for their opinion on the second reading, whether the principle of the Bill should be affirmed or not? I presume we shall hear his opinions by and by, declared openly and manfully according to his habit. On that occasion he affirmed by his silence the principle of the Bill. I should like to ask him now to what extent he is prepared to admit the principle, that the working classes ought to be admitted to the exercise of the franchise? That Bill was read a second time so late in the year, and so many Amendments were proposed on going into Committee —[*Laughter and Cheers.*] Hon. Members may triumph, if they please, in the success of their tactics. [*Loud Cheers.*] They were not open or manly tactics [*Cheers, and Cries of* "Oh, oh!"],—that the Government found that although the House had conceded the principle of the Bill, they were not disposed to allow it to become law. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn wants to know why we are in such haste to bring in a Bill now? I will tell him why, though I do not admit that we are in any haste. Looking back on the proceedings of the House in the year 1860, the Government, after full deliberation, came to the conclusion that it would be useless in the same House of Commons again to propose a Bill founded on the same principle as the Bill of 1860, and accordingly they did not think it their duty to introduce a measure which might have been met in a similar manner, and the discussion of which could only tend to obstruct other business, without leading to any practical result. The subject, however, was brought under the notice of Parliament in various forms by independent Members, and it became my duty at the close of the Session, in the absence of Lord Palmerston and at the request of my colleagues, to state the views of the Government with regard to Reform. I then stated, in the name and on the part of the Government, and by desire of Lord Palmerston, that the Government adhered to the principle that any Bill for the Amendment of the representation of the people must be founded on the reduction of the borough franchise. I therefore voted in favour of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, stating at the same time, that we were not bound by any vote we might give as to the particular amount to which the qualification ought to be reduced. And I stated also that in our future conduct we should be governed by considerations which must guide every Government in dealing with this question — namely, by the prospect of a satisfactory settlement of this question. Then came the Elections. We have been told by the right hon. the gallant Gentleman opposite (General Peel), that the cry was "Lord Palmerston and no Reform!" I do not know whether I read the address of the hon. and gallant General to his constituents at Huntingdon; but this I know, that I did read many addresses of hon. Gentlemen — and not on this side of the House merely—and I must say that the majority of those returned to Parliament pledged themselves in their addresses to consider the question of Reform with a view to its final and satisfactory settlement. Well, then, we are asked why we are in such haste to bring in a Reform Bill? I may say, for myself, that before we suffered the irreparable loss of Lord Palmerston, I entertained and expressed the opinion in the month of August last that, taking into view the addresses of Members to their constituents, and looking to the tone and temper of the country, which, though opposed to any extreme measure, was favourable to a moderate scheme for the settlement of this question, it would be the duty of the Government in the present Session no longer to allow this question to be trifled with, to be kept dangling before the eyes of the country, and to be bandied from one side of the House to the other; but that it would be our duty to attempt a settlement of the question. We did, during the recess, consider the principle on which we ought to propose a settlement of it, and bearing in mind what had taken place before—the repeated and what may be considered the unanimous declarations of this House on the subject—we had no hesitation in framing our Bill on the principle of a reduction of the qualifications for the exercise of the franchise in counties and boroughs. The extent to which that reduction should go of course engaged the attention of the Government. We took pains to acquire information on all particulars bearing on this question before we came to a final decision, and having given the subject the most mature consideration, we determined to bring forward the Bill, which is now submitted to the House. Our object in framing the Bill was to comprise in the number of those admitted to the exercise of the franchise as many as possible of those who are now excluded, regard being had to the general interests of the country, and to the necessity of guarding against any one class acquiring an overwhelming power in returning Members to that House. I believe the admission to the franchise of those who will obtain votes under this Bill will tend to strengthen the Constitution and to give increased stability to our institutions. We cannot overlook the general improvement which has taken place during the last thirty years in the character, the knowledge, the information, of the working classes, and all that has been done by Parliament to promote their education; and when I speak of education, I refer not only to that education which is acquired by children in schools, but to that self-education, that self-improvement in after life, through those means which have been placed within the reach of the working classes, and of which they have so largely availed themselves. Neither can we fail to take into account the conduct of the working classes, presenting such a gratifying contrast to what their conduct was thirty years ago. Every one knows what their behaviour was in Lancashire during the severe trial inflicted on them when, at the time of the war in America, they were subjected to the most severe deprivations. Their conduct on that occasion has been spoken of by both sides of the House with respect and admiration. But is this to be confined to words only, and is the advance in the character and intelligence of the working classes during the last thirty years to have no practical effect in leading us to enlarge the basis of the franchise? No doubt we had to consider, and did consider, whether we ought to introduce, in one and the same Bill, the extension of the franchise and the redistribution of seats, or whether we ought to deal with these subjects separately. We came to the deliberate decision that, in adopting the course we have adopted, we should best secure the accomplishment of the object we had in view—namely, the satisfactory settlement of the question. We believe that we have taken a course best calculated to lead to a settlement which, in our opinion, is essential to the best interests of the country. [*Laughter from the Opposition.*] It is very well to laugh at the idea of a settlement of this question; but I submit, Sir, that this is a matter which deserves our serious attention. A good deal has been said about physical force; but there has not been the slightest evidence of a disposition on the part of the working classes to resort to physical force in reference to this question. And the reason is this—they know what this House has done for them; they have confidence in this House; they trust to our justice; and, therefore, they feel they would only be disgracing themselves and injuring their cause by resorting to anything like physical force. But are you, therefore, to reject their claims because they are not enforced in a way which every one would condemn and regret? Ought you not rather by conceding those claims to encourage the working classes to continue their confidence in Parliament? Well, I have said that we thought the course we took in separating the subjects of an extension of the franchise and a redistribution of seats would best conduce to the settlement of the question. [" No!"] The hon. Gentleman may say " No." That may be his opinion; but I am stating in answer to the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, the reasons we had for the course which we adopted. The noble Lord said that the obvious course would be to take the redistribution of seats first and to take the extension of the franchise afterwards. But I think if we had done so we should only have exposed ourselves to ridicule. We should have been told, and told justly, that we were trifling with the question. The noble Lord says, that the proposed extension of the franchise will most affect the largest constituencies; and he rather indicated that a division of the constituency in some of the large towns would become necessary. I say, that if such be the case, it is necessary for us to determine what our constituencies are to be before we determine the allotment and number of representatives. Though there is no necessary connexion between the two branches of the question, I admit that a complete measure for the representation of the people requires that a redistribution of the seats should be dealt with to a certain extent, as well as the franchise. At the same time I agree with the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill), that an extension of the franchise would be a great benefit to the country, and would improve the constitution of the House, even though there were to be no redistribution of seats. But I also agree that the complete question of Reform cannot be satisfactorily settled unless the whole subject is dealt with as well as the franchise.

Coming to the course taken by the Government since the Bill was laid on the table, when it appeared that it was the desire of many Members who were anxious to see a measure of Reform carried, that the opinion of the Government with respect to the redistribution of seats should be known to the House, we felt bound to defer to that desire: we have promised that before we go into committee on this Bill, the Bill for the Redistribution of Seats shall be laid on the table; but we say we have a right to ask for the opinion of the House on the principle of the Bill now before them for the reduction of the franchise. I think every Member of the House who has spoken in favour of the Amendment, with the exception of the noble lord, the Member for King's Lynn, has expressed in unmistakable language his opposition to the principle of this Bill. [*Cries of* " No!" *from the Opposition.*] I am glad to hear that " No;" and I hope that, in the course of the debate, we shall learn that the opinion of those who utter it is not in accordance with that of the hon. Members who have supported the Amendment up to the present time. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) in his able speech referred to a speech which he delivered at King's Lynn in the course of last summer, for the purpose of showing that his opinion about the redistribution of seats had not been taken up for party purposes. No one would suspect the noble Lord of taking the question up for party purposes; but he will correct me if I am wrong in stating, that in his speech at King's Lynn he did express himself as being opposed to any reduction of the borough franchise. If that be true, I fear, notwithstanding the reticence of the noble Lord in this House, he too is opposed to the principle of the Bill, though he now shrinks from the express avowal that he is so. I perceive that the noble Lord does not dissent from what I have said as to the opinion he expressed at King's Lynn. I only hope, from the speech of the noble Lord on this occasion, that he is reconsidering the opinion he formerly expressed; in which case we may hereafter number him among those supporting the principle of the Bill. I think, then, we have a right to ask the House to express a clear opinion on this Bill. The Bill is regarded by numbers throughout the country as one which affords evidence of a sincere and honest desire on the part of the Government to settle this question. And it is a dangerous thing—I am far from using the words by way of threat, but I think it must stand to reason that it is dangerous —to trifle with such a question, and that it would be very undesirable to postpone, for an indefinite time, the settlement of it; and I submit that the adoption of my noble Friend's (Earl Grosvenor's) Amendment could have no other effect than such an indefinite postponement. He himself declared his opposition to a reduction of the franchise; but he used these remarkable words, "that there was no possibility of a Reform Bill being passed till the question was taken out of the domain of party." He said also, that it would be impossible to pass a Reform Bill till the Government fully met the feelings and opinions of the Gentlemen sitting behind them, and also the feelings and opinions of the Gentlemen who sit on the opposite side of the House. Now, Sir, I think this debate shows there is an irreconcilable difference between one side and the other on this subject; and that if we wait till we can all agree on a measure, we shall have to remain for an indefinite time without a Reform Bill. I therefore think I am justified in saying, that the Resolution of the noble Lord leads to an indefinite postponement of the settlement of the question.

The noble Lord referred to a môde of dealing with this question which has been suggested by one for whose talents and devotion to the interests of his countrymen I have the highest respect and admiration (Earl Grey); but I must say it appears to me that his proposal is utterly inconsistent with the practice of our Constitution, and that it would be impossible for any Government to adopt it which had any regard to the position which it occupies. According to that plan, the authorship of which we all know, we are asked to invite right hon. Gentlemen opposite, the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire for instance, and the right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon, to sit with us as Privy Councillors in a private room, to consider together what should be the basis and provisions of a Reform Bill. All the rest of the world is to be shut out. The Government are not to act on their own responsibility, but the responsibility is to be divided with the leading members of the Opposition, who are to consult with them as to the principles of some measure, which it is supposed may then be passed with the general concurrence of all parties. Sir, I have always thought that it was the office of the Opposition to criticize publicly the acts of the Government; and I do not think that, with any regard to our own character and position, we could invite right hon. Gentlemen opposite to meet and discuss in that manner, the principles upon which any such Bill should be framed. And with whom are we to do this? I mentioned the right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) just now; and I ask, what prospect is there that, with his avowed views on this question, if he were to discuss the matter in a private room with Lord Russell and Gentlemen on this side, they would be able to come to an agreement as to the principles on which a measure of Reform should be founded? That right hon. and gallant Gentleman made a very remarkable speech last night; and here I must observe that there does not appear to be much unanimity among hon. Gentlemen opposite. The noble Lord shakes his head, and I do not know whether he means to contradict me; but the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn said yesterday—and I heard it with pleasure, though not with surprise—that he regarded the Reform Act of 1832 as a great and wise measure. But when it came to the turn of his right hon. and gallant colleague who sits beside him to speak, he said he was against the Bill altogether; that he did not want any Reform; and he asked, "Why, what did the Reform Act of 1832 do for the country?" The Act of 1832, he told us, had added twenty millions to our taxation and expenditure. He appeared to wish us to retrace our steps; and how, therefore, could we expect him to join with us in taking a single step in what he regards as entirely a wrong direction? Sir, I deny altogether that that increase of twenty millions to the national expenditure was the result of the Reform Act of 1832; and, when the right hon. and gallant Gentleman implies that it was, I should like to ask him whether he has ever given his vote in this

House in any case for a reduction of our establishments, and whether he and his colleagues have ever hesitated to support when out of office, or to propose when in office, even at an increased cost to the public, armaments which they must have deemed essential to the interests, the honour, and the safety of the country? Well, then, was it not unjust and ungenerous in him to insinuate that that increase in the Estimates to which he and his friends have been willing, and I am bound to believe, from a sense of duty, willing parties, was the result of the Reform Act of 1832? Although that Act widened very greatly the basis of the representation, and placed much power in the hands of the middle classes, that power has been exercised in a manner which cannot be regarded as having in any degree impaired the welfare, the honour, or the safety of the country. Without entering into the particular items of that increased expenditure, but looking at it generally, and assuming, as I have a right to assume, that it has been essential to the interests and the security of the country, I say it would be more reasonable and consistent in us, from the experience of the past, to go a step further in widening the basis of the representation, when what was done in 1832 has so much promoted the prosperity and well-being of the nation. But the right hon. and gallant Gentleman forgot to mention the great reductions of taxation which have taken place since the Act of 1832 was passed. He forgot all that financial and commercial policy the benefits of which the people are reaping every day of their lives, and which they are more and more appreciating, owing to the wise system of legislation adopted by successive Reformed Parliaments. Well; but the right hon. and gallant Gentleman is one of those counsellors whom we are to invite to join us round a table to discuss and agree upon the principles of another Reform Bill. Sir, I can hardly think that anybody believes such a scheme as that to be practical; and with every respect to its author, I must repeat what my noble Friend referred to as having been said by me on a former occasion, that it is not only an Utopian scheme, but one which, if attempted to be adopted, would lead to the indefinite postponement of a great and grave question, the settlement of which is necessary to the best interests of the country. I do not mean to say that no compromise on mere minor details could be arrived at by free and fair discussion with those who may differ from us; but all such compromises, if they take place, whether upon principles or upon details, should take place in the face of day, and should be the legitimate result of full and open discussion, in which case only could they offer a reasonable prospect of such a settlement as would be satisfactory to the country. You may condemn our course if you like; but if you choose to do so, do it openly. Do not, without even saying that you wish for a redistribution of seats, propose a Motion which only shows that you wish to embarrass the Government and to frustrate the settlement of this great question. By such a Motion you can only add to the difficulty of carrying the Bill, while you cautiously abstain from pledging yourselves to or indicating any definite opinions as to the principles on which this question should be dealt with. I say, "Clearly avow the principles on which you wish to proceed; and let the House choose between those principles and ours." I have no complaint against a Resolution if it distinctly expresses the opinions and intentions of those who propose and those who support it. Let such a resolution be proposed, and then let the House fairly pronounce between the principles of such a Resolution and the principles embodied in the Bill of the Government. We are quite ready to bow to its decision; and if that decision should be against us, let those who may adopt that Resolution take such means as may seem to them most conducive to the proper settlement of this question in accordance with their avowed principles.

Mr. LAING said, that the speakers from the Treasury Bench appeared to him to find it much easier to assume that the Resolution of the noble Lord (Earl Grosvenor) meant something different from what it said, than to meet it according to the plain, ordinary English of its words, and confute by fair reasoning the proposition which it laid down. Surely the proposition that the great Reform Settlement of 1832 should be reopened only by a measure as complete and as comprehensive, and which should afford an equal chance of a permanent and lasting adjustment, was not so entirely unreasonable as that those who advocated it should be subjected to the insinuation that they were putting forward something which they did not care to avow openly, and something different from their real meaning. Those who had listened to the able and argumentative speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) must feel that it was easier to attempt to turn the flank of such a Resolution by imputing improper motives to its supporters, than to combat the powerful reasons by which it could be defended with fair and open argument. As to the assertion that those who on that (the Ministerial) side conscientiously advocated the view that for a settlement of the question the measure ought to be complete and comprehensive, were acting with other Gentlemen who entertained opinions and sentiments not entirely in accordance with their own — surely that was an argument which applied equally to those who were supporting the second reading of that Bill. In what respect did the former differ more from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State on the merits of the Reform Act of 1832, than the right hon. Gentleman himself differed from the hon. Member for Birmingham, who said that the Reformed Parliament was "never hearty in any good work." However, as the meaning of the Amendment had been disputed, he must begin by endeavouring to make it as clear as it was possible to do. What it meant was, not that there should be no Reform Bill at all, but it did mean that the question of Reform should be treated in a complete and comprehensive manner. He (Mr. Laing) said it did not mean that there should be no Reform Bill at all, because he was sure there was no Member on either side of the House, having the slightest acquaintance with the political situation, who could feel the remotest doubt that the question of Reform having been raised in the way it had been, must now be dealt with and settled. The meaning of the Amendment had been disputed, but he understood the questions before the House to be,—Could Reform be taken up piecemeal? Should it be dealt with by a partial measure to be passed during the present Session in the prospect of a continued agitation throughout the recess with respect to a more important portion of it standing over till another year? Or, should it be dealt with once for all in a complete and comprehensive measure, which would afford a fair ground for hope that a final settlement of the matter would be effected by it? The question was not, should there be Reform or no Reform; but, that question being raised, should it be settled in a democratic or a constitutional sense? If the Government would embody clauses in the present Bill containing their scheme for the redistribution of seats — which they had pledged themselves to bring forward within a very few days—and give a pledge that the two should proceed *pari passu,* he could venture with some confidence to assert for every hon. Member on that side of the House, that they would be ready to vote for the second reading. But why did he say that a settlement of the question of Reform had now become inevitable? He did not say so on account of the pledges which had been referred to, of which in his opinion a great deal too much had been made. The right hon. Baronet himself (Sir G. Grey), in his statement at the close of the last Session, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, said distinctly, "We are not pledged, and we do not intend to ask the support of the country as the advocates of a great measure of Parliamentary Reform." There could be no question that, where pledges had been given with a definite object, such as the possession of power, and circumstances remained unchanged, it would have been dishonourable to have taken that power and avoided the pledges. But where pledges were the expression of an opinion upon a great public question given some years ago, under circumstances which had since materially changed, and where the country itself had been indifferent to the fulfilment of them, then he thought it was evident that the public good, and not apparent consistency, was the rule which ought to guide the statesmen who controlled the destinies of the country. What higher authority on this point could there be than the noble Lord who was now at the head of Her Majesty's Government? Earl Russell, in 1861, after the Reform Bill of the Government had been brought forward, said:—

> "I confess that, as the movement has gone on, as the matter has been discussed, there has been less and less a favour shown to any further amendment of the Constitution. I am bound to say, also, that the opposition has not been such as that which was offered to the Bill of 1832. The opposition which we had to contend with was the opposition of a particular class of persons interested in the class monopoly which then

> existed; whereas the opposition which manifested itself so sensibly last year was an opposition which came more particularly from the middle-class of society."—[3 *Hansard*, clxi. 1922.]

That was a declaration made five years ago by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, of the failure of the last attempt to effect a measure of Reform. That was a declaration too, it should be observed, made in ignorance of the fact disclosed by the very remarkable Returns which had been laid on the table during the Session, that the proportion of the working classes possessing the franchise was larger than anybody had ever contemplated. He only referred to this subject for the purpose of showing that in his judgment the pledges which had been spoken of had been vastly overrated. His own opinion was, looking at the condition of the country, and the great growth of intelligence among the working classes, that, with or without the pledges, the question was one which was sure to arise; and the question having been raised, the true wisdom was to grapple with it and settle it in a satisfactory manner. He did not by any means contend that there should be no settlement of Reform in the sense of a considerable extension of the franchise to the working classes; but he contended that that settlement should be made in a conservative and constitutional sense, and that it should not be made in a manner which involved the inevitable preponderance of numbers over property and intelligence, and paved the way to a system of democracy. In this respect it was impossible to overrate the importance of the crisis at which we had arrived. He most entirely concurred with the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he told his hearers at Liverpool, that this would be the great turning-point in the destinies of the country for many years after we shall have been laid in our graves. The great problem we had to grapple with was that of extending the suffrage among the working classes without establishing a preponderance of numbers over property and intelligence. The difficulty did not arise from any moral defect in the working classes, nor from any want of intelligence on their part; he would be the last person to assert that. All his life he had felt a warm sympathy with the working classes, and it would not be egotistical in him to state that he had perhaps done as much for them as some of those who talked so much about them. He had a very firm faith in the intelligence, morality, and good sense of the great mass of the British workmen. That, however, did not alter the fact, that there was this difficulty to be dealt with—that they numerically preponderated over all other classes. If there were two classes in the country, one of which consisted of 5,000,000 and the other of 500,000 persons, it was no imputation on the liberality, the intelligence, or the comparative loyalty of those two classes to say, that if the Legislature were to proceed on a system of uniform and equal reduction of the franchise, and give to every individual man a vote, that the 500,000 class would be swamped by the 5,000,000 class. It was not a question of sentiment or morality, but of arithmetic. When he spoke of the dangers of a democracy he wished the House clearly to understand what he meant. That was a point upon which some high authorities, even so high as the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, seemed to have most extraordinary and hazy notions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech at Liverpool observed:—

> "It is sometimes said that the measure we propose is a democratic measure. The word 'democracy' has very different senses. If by democracy be meant liberty—if by democracy be meant the extension to each man in his own sphere of every privilege and of every franchise that he can exercise with advantage to himself and with safety to the State,—then I must confess I don't see much to alarm us in the word democracy. But if by democracy be meant the enthroning of ignorance against knowledge, the setting up of vice in opposition to virtue, the disregard of rank, the forgetfulness of what our fathers have done for us, indifference or coldness with regard to the inheritance we enjoy, then, Gentlemen, I for one—and I believe for all I have the honour to address—am in that sense the enemy of democracy."

Surely the classical recollections of the Chancellor of the Exchequer must tell him that democracy was neither liberty on the one hand, nor was it vice or ignorance on the other; it was a very simple, definite thing—the supremacy of numbers. It was that political constitution under which all possessed votes of equal importance. He (Mr. Laing) asked whether this country was not in danger of a system of that sort from the proposed mode of dealing with the question of Reform. It the first place he held that it offered a democratic solution of it, for the reason that it unsettled the settlement of 1832, without proposing in its place anything which even professed to be a complete and final settlement upon which the House might take its stand. He contended that this was a point of the greatest and most vital importance. The British Constitution was a thing of that importance which ought not to be lightly meddled with, and brought into the arena of discussion. If from year to year we were to have annual Reform Bills as we had annual Budgets, it was quite clear that in the course of a very few years we should have advanced very much further than anybody would now care to go. That this was the opinion of all those who advocated the proposed system of Reform was perfectly apparent from the tone in which they had spoken. The hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) told them fairly at Rochdale, that it would give them what mechanics called additional lever power. Lever power for what? To go further in the same direction. Without troubling the House with many quotations he would refer to a speech made at Manchester by Mr. Alderman Heywood, who said he trusted that all Radical Reformers would, as a matter of policy, forego the fulfilment to the full extent of their views, and that when the £10 barrier was once broken through, it would be all the more easy to obtain a further reduction of the qualification for the franchise. This policy was so transparent that it was useless to argue upon it. Were he the Member for Birmingham and held his opinions, he would accept the present Bill by all manner of means; for although it did not go so far as he might have desired, it re-opened the whole question, broke down the £10 barrier of 1832, and gave additional leverage to a further advance in the same direction. Now, in order fully to realize the importance of that position, the House must bear in mind the wide gulf of distinction which not only in theory, but in practice, separated the moderate Liberals who had been accustomed to follow the banner of Lord Palmerston from the school represented by the hon. Member for Birmingham. In referring to that hon. Gentleman, he could assure him that he did not do so for the purpose of rounding a period or of eliciting a cheer, but simply because he was the most able and conspicuous representative of a class of opinions held by many persons in England, and from which he sincerely apprehended the greatest danger to the country. The school of democratic politicians to which he referred said very fairly that they wanted an extensive Reform of Parliament; that they were in favour of household suffrage, with vote by ballot, and equal or nearly equal electoral districts, partly as an end in themselves but still more as a means towards other ends. And what were those ends? They were best disclosed in a sentence which he had already quoted, in which it was stated that the Reformed Parliament of 1832 had shown itself to be incapable of any good work. His own conviction, however, was, that that Parliament had shown itself more fruitful in good works, and had carried out a greater amount of beneficial measures for all classes of the community, and especially for the working classes, than any other body by which political power had been enjoyed for the same period of time. The Reformed Parliament had been in existence for more than thirty years, and in the first half of that period it had carried out to the fullest extent measures of civil and religious liberty. It had given us Municipal Reform, perfect freedom of local government; it had dealt with the question of tithes and other matters, and had finally disposed of the question of negro emancipation; while in the second half it had firmly established the principles of free trade and of non-intervention. The Parliament which had done that work, and which represented so admirably the interests of the community, was one which, in his opinion, we ought rather to wish to see perpetuated than destroyed. The first condition in any settlement of the Reform question appeared to him to be, that we should not swamp and overwhelm the constitution of the House of Commons as it had existed since 1832, but that we should preserve the same spirit, and simply reinforce and reinvigorate it by some infusion of the working classes. Such were not, however, the views entertained by the advanced school of political economists. Their political economy was different from his and those who concurred in his opinions. They believed that much of the crime and poverty which unfortunately prevailed, and which he attributed to the operation of inevitable laws, was owing to bad legislation, and that a remedy might be provided for that state of things by a more advanced and democratic Parliament. The men of that school also advocated, in matters of finance, measures to which he and those who thought with him were opposed. Putting their views in a tangible form, in dealing with a Budget they would substitute for the present system of taxation an income tax of half-a-crown in the pound on the income derived from the property of the country. Now, that was a system of financial operation which would, he conscientiously maintained, be most prejudicial to the interests of the people at large, including the working classes themselves. There was no country in which more had during the last fifteen years been done for those classes. Industry had been made as free as the wind. All the trammels upon it had been removed: the food, clothing, and shelter of the people were all untaxed. There was no part of the world in which the pressure of taxation on the working classes was so light. It was, therefore, a serious matter to call upon the House to alter the present state of things with the avowed object of bringing about a change in a system which had proved so beneficial, and inaugurating, perhaps, in its stead, something like that which had followed some of the revolutions of the past century with such lamentable and prejudicial results. With respect to the postponement of the Bill for the redistribution of seats they had a precedent for the manner in which they ought to proceed: and he would simply ask, if the redistribution was not to be regarded as a necessary part of a complete settlement of the Reform question, how was it that in 1852, in 1854, and 1859 the redistribution of seats was always included as an essential part of the Reform schemes then brought forward? Indeed, it stood to reason that the course adopted on these occasions was the proper one to pursue. How were hon. Members to know that a Bill for the reduction of the franchise was proposed in a moderate or in a democratic sense, unless they were made acquainted with that which was an important portion of any scheme of Reform—the mode of dealing with the redistribution of seats? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had the previous evening attempted to reduce the question before the House to a practical test by estimating how many Conservatives or Liberals might be returned on a given alteration of the borough franchise. That, no doubt, was a practical test, because it would be a great misfortune to this country that a measure should be passed which should unduly diminish the influence of either of the great parties in the State, thus leaving one powerless to succeed the other in the case of any great national emergency. But how, he would ask, were hon. Members to know what effect the present Bill would have; how it would affect the one political party or the other, unless they were in a position to deal with the important question of the redistribution of seats? It was quite possible, for instance, to put forward a scheme of redistribution under which forty or fifty seats would be almost certainly gained by one side or the other, according to the principle adopted. If, for instance, the House were to proceed upon the plan which had been formerly advocated by the hon. Member for Birmingham, and to take away a large number of Members from small boroughs and give them almost exclusively to very large and populous cities, the effect would clearly be to unduly strengthen the democratic and weaken the Conservative interest. If, upon the other hand, the great proportion of Members taken away from the boroughs were given to certain counties, the effect might be just the reverse. Then, again, how was the House to know unless they had the scheme for the redistribution of seats before them, whether they would be called upon to assent to a measure which was Conservative in the sense indicated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer a few years ago, of preserving small boroughs, or to a swamping measure such as that which was proposed in 1854? Those were surely most material elements for consideration in dealing with the amount at which the borough franchise should be fixed. There was, he might add, a certain catch-word used in reference to the Bill under discussion—it was said that it was an "honest" measure; but when the meaning of that word "honest" came to be analyzed, it was perfectly evident that it simply implied that the Bill was all in one direction—that it met to a great extent the views of those who wished to see a great change in a democratic sense. Whatever the Bill proposed to effect, indeed, went in that direction, without anything in the nature of those balances or compensations which were essential to every good measure. There was an extension downwards of the borough franchise in all boroughs indiscriminately; there was a reduction in the county franchise, and there was the giving of a vote for counties to copyholders and leaseholders in boroughs. All those proposals tended in the same direction, and therefore the Bill was characterized as an honest one by some because it did not take away with one hand that which it gave with the other. Let him, upon the other hand, take the view held by those constitutional Reformers who wished to admit the largest number of the working classes to the franchise without giving them an overwhelming power over other classes in the State, and then it would be seen that the question assumed an entirely different aspect. What they wanted was some check and compensation, some safeguard and balance, which would enable the House to proceed with safety in the direction of enfranchising the working classes. One great complaint he had to make against the Government was that they had brought forward their measure in such a hasty manner as to have left altogether out of view the consideration of these matters. There was a great variety of points in connection with the subject discussed by thinking men throughout the country and in the press which were deserving of very careful consideration. There was, for instance, the question as to whether the reduction of the borough franchise should be uniform over all boroughs, or whether certain boroughs might not be selected in which the franchise might be safely lowered without reducing it in all. Hon. Members must, he thought, feel that the great danger of the Bill of 1832 was that it was too uniform, and that it went too far in the way of abolishing those local distinctions which prevailed under the suffrage which previously existed. What, he would ask, was the object of dealing with the question of Reform at all in quiet times like the present? If any of those accidents which had been referred to happened, and if a great pressure were put upon the House of Commons to lower the franchise, they could but introduce a Bill such as that under discussion and the difficulty would be met. But surely the great object of dealing with the question in quiet times was, that it should receive mature consideration, and that any scheme of Reform which might be passed should be surrounded with proper safe-guards; so that they might, in the absence of agitation, introduce some of those counterbalances of which he had spoken, looking forward as he did to a great extension of the franchise to the working classes in the future. If they lowered it uniformly, it must be apparent to every one who knew what was going on, that they would be simply deteriorating the existing constituency. He would give one practical instance. He had lately sat upon a Committee to inquire into the election for Great Yarmouth, and it was proved that bribery and corruption had been extensively practised for a series of years. The consequence was that, a few years ago, a measure was passed disfranchising the whole of the freemen, and confining the representation to the £10 householders. That measure had unfortunately only partially succeeded in eradicating corruption from the borough; but what would a £7 franchise do for Yarmouth? It would simply undo all that the Legislature had done by the disfranchisement of the freemen a few years ago. Let them apply the same rule to other boroughs. They must recollect that the working classes formed a very large and complex class. They were not a uniform body. The working man in a small agricultural borough was very different from the skilled artizan of large towns; and it was the latter whom the House wished to enfranchise. It would be easy to take boroughs of a certain scale of population which had got a large number of voters already, and to admit a large number of the intelligent artizans without altering the character of the representation; and for this it was not necessary to apply a uniform reduction of the franchise in all boroughs. Then there were certain classes of constituencies, such as certain Scotch boroughs, where intelligence was very high and the rents were very low, and where a £6 or £7 franchise would practically be no higher than a £10 franchise in England. There were other safe guards that might be employed; but he would only trouble the House with one, for which he had a high authority—no less an authority than the noble Earl now at the head of the Government. When, in 1854, the noble Earl brought in his Reform Bill he introduced a most important principle in the representation of minorities; of the seats then proposed to be distributed, some were to go to large towns or counties returning three Members, with a provision that where there was a large minority it would return one Member out of the three. That was a most valuable provision, and it might be worthy of consideration, whether the working classes should not be enabled to return one Member of their own for large cities, or whether a large minority might not be represented by one Member. It seemed to him that the Government had never attempted to solve one of the real difficulties of the problem now before them, namely, how to introduce checks and counterpoises to secure the country against the effect of the large extension of the franchise which they proposed to give. In introducing the Bill the Chancellor of the Exchequer had set these questions aside by what he (Mr. Laing) might call the twelve-day argument. The right hon. Gentleman said, there were only twelve nights available for the discussion of the Bill, and there was no time to deal with these questions. But, in a matter of such extreme importance as a fresh settlement of the British Constitution that was to last for many years, it seemed to him that this argument about the twelve days was not worthy of consideration at all. After laying upon the table the full and valuable Returns which threw a great deal of light upon the question, the course which the Government ought to have taken was, if the period of the Session did not allow them to bring in a full and complete measure, including the redistribution of the seats, to have postponed the Question until next Session, pledging themselves, as a Ministry, to deal with it on the first day of the next Session. If that had been done, the credit of the Government was sufficiently high to have satisfied the country that they were not trifling with the measure; the Government would have kept their party together, and many Liberal Members would not have had the painful alternative placed before them of choosing between their party allegiance and their conscientious convictions. For himself, he might say, that he never had greater difficulty in deciding what course it was proper to take. When, however, he looked at the important issues involved, he must say that the path of duty was perfectly clear before him. By voting for this Resolution, he believed he should forward the practical object of requiring that a complete and practical measure should be laid upon the table, and dealt with as one great whole. If, on the other hand, they dealt with it piecemeal in the manner now proposed, it would sweep all before it, and land them in a measure of extreme democracy. He had been more allied to the doctrines of free-trade and non-intervention than the questions of pure politics; and he confessed he could not feel at ease as to the maintenance of those principles in a Parliament elected by a numerical majority of working men. As they approached universal suffrage and manhood suffrage, the working classes were found to become Protectionists in feeling and practice. That was the case in the United States of America and in our Australian colonies. The origin of the dispute between the Colonial Legislature and the Governor of Victoria was the Protectionist tendency of the Parliament elected by a low and wide suffrage. This was natural enough, for it required foresight, knowledge, and education to induce a community to sacrifice Protection to higher and wider interests. Next with regard to intervention. Under the Reformed Parliament how many great wars were witnessed by this country, and in how few of them had she been involved? If they had a Parliament elected by a numerical majority of the working class, it was probable that their generous sympathies would have led them to take part in a war for Hungary, for Italy, for Poland, and for Denmark. The hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) had told the House that the working men would have gone to war for Poland.

Mr. FAWCETT wished to be allowed to explain that he had never said anything of the kind. What he had said was, not that the working men throughout the country were in favour of going to war for Poland, but that a great number of working men were not in favour of the policy of non-intervention, and that a considerable minority were in favour of a war on behalf of Poland.

Mr. LAING said, that the hon. Gentleman's explanation left his position exactly the same. It was admitted that a majority of the working men were opposed to the policy of non-intervention. That was a question not of opinion, but of fact, and one which everyone might judge for himself. Could the hon. Member—could anyone—feel confident that if we had had a Parliament elected by a numerical majority of working men we should have traversed the great crisis of the wars of Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Denmark without becoming involved in a great European struggle? The United States of America had been referred to, and there could be no doubt that democratic institutions gave great energy to the action of the people in any cause in which their sympathies were heartily engaged. That, however, was not the question at issue. There was no lack of energy under our own unreformed institutions in the war against Napoleon. But this was a question of avoiding war by prudence, forbearance, and self-restraint. If this country stood alone, like the United States, with no nearer or more powerful neighbour than a state like Mexico, they might without much danger allow democratic institutions to have their full swing, and the sound sense of the country might bear it through the ordeal unharmed. But let the House consider how complicated were our relations with the great Foreign Powers, and how great the necessity for manifesting the qualities of self-restraint, prudence, and forbearance! In this country, the centre of a vast colonial empire, and depending on a vast system of commerce ramifying over the whole world, the necessity must be taken into consideration of a prudent and consistent policy, not swayed by the enthusiastic and impassioned influence of democracy. With regard to the working classes, it was not their moral qualities that he was afraid of, for he believed them to be sound in heart and generous in their impulses; but what he was afraid of was, that if great political power were thrown into their hands, their impulsiveness might lead them to act without due reflection, as had been the case in other countries. It seemed to him that the Government had overlooked the most important and difficult conditions of this problem; and they would have done better if, instead of introducing a measure, called "honest," which meant one-sided, they had brought forward another measure providing safeguards; and while enlarging the franchise to the working classes, leaving the main preponderance in the hands of the intelligence and property of the country. The most cursory investigation of the figures showed that the Government Bill did not effect that result. The only argument he had heard from the Treasury Bench to the effect that the Bill was consistent with the preservation of the influence of the property and intelligence of the country was the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the income of the working classes was five-twelfths, their taxation three-sevenths, while their representation was only one-seventh. In the first place, he must observe that the amount of their taxation was not three-sevenths, but materially less, if, as ought to be done, the local taxation of the country, which formed a necessary element in the taxation of the country, was taken into account. But that was of minor importance, in reference to the question of representation, compared with the proportions paid in direct and in indirect taxation. Every one must acknowledge that direct taxation was an excellent test as a measure of representation. It showed the possession of a certain stake in the country, of a certain amount of self-respect which enabled persons to submit to the unpopular burden of direct taxation. But with respect to indirect taxation the case was different. Even admitting the taxation of the working classes to be three-sevenths, by far the greater portion of that was paid on the articles of spirits, beer, and tobacco. Certainly it was most extraordinary, in estimating the fitness of persons for the franchise, to maintain that a class is entitled to a larger share in the representation in exact proportion to the larger quantity of beer and spirits which they consume. Instead of instituting the competitive examination in literature, which the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Clay) had proposed as a test for the possession of the franchise, this would be instituting a competition with regard to the comparative power of people to make deep potations. Then, with regard to the income of the working classes as compared with that of the other classes, could any serious argument be founded on a comparison of the two incomes? Was not a wide line of distinction drawn between them by the income tax? On the income of the upper and middle classes the income tax was placed, but there was no income tax on the income of the working classes. But coming down from these vague arguments to the actual provisions of the present Bill, he begged the House to observe that the measure departed from the principle of founding the representation on property and established it on numbers. If they took the result of the £7 franchise in the boroughs, to which it was proposed to extend it, they would find that the proportion of estimated rental paid by the classes to be introduced was not one-fifteenth of the whole, while the total number of voters to be introduced was two-fifths. His great object in rising was to protest, as strongly as possible, against the assertion, that the Amendment proposed by the noble Lord the Member for Chester meant anything beyond that which it professed to say. Let the Government show the House a complete and comprehensive measure, and it would soon be seen whether or not its principle would be affirmed by those who had brought forward the Amendment. For his own part, he should never regret taking the part he intended to take on the present occasion. It had often been noticed in the history of different nations, that the moderate majority had been led away by an advanced minority to acts ruinous to their country. In France the constitutional party succumbed to the party of the Gironde, and the Gironde, in their turn, succumbed to the Mountain. Let it not be said, then, that the Members of that House, supported by a large majority of the intelligence of the country at a crisis like the present, from want of moral courage to act up to their convictions, deserted their duty, and that the consequence was that the time-honoured institutions of the British Constitution were swept away by the tide of democratic violence.

On the Motion of Mr. Maguire, Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

House adjourned at half after
Twelve o'clock, till
Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, April 16, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Several Lords took the Oath.
Public Bills—*First Reading*—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases* (70) (*The Lord President*); Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland)* (71).
Second Reading—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment (54).
Committee—County Courts (55).
Report—County Courts (55).

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 54.)

(*Earl Russell.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Earl **RUSSELL**: My Lords, I rise for the purpose of moving the second reading of a Bill the object of which is to amend the law relating to Parliamentary Oaths. My Lords, the amendment of the law which it proposes to effect is of so important a character, that I think it my duty to explain to your Lordships the grounds on which the Bill is based, and reasons by which it is supported. My Lords, a Bill was brought up from the other House of Parliament last Session by which it was proposed to alter the terms of the Roman Catholic oath. I think it was unwise to reject that Bill, more especially on the grounds then urged against it. But there was one opinion then expressed, in which I cordially concur—that inasmuch as the Bill proposed to make a considerable change in the settlement made by the Government of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel in 1829, it was the duty of the Government of the day to propose that change on their responsibility. I think that the Government ought to give their authority to that change, and that the Houses of Parliament ought to consider any such proposition upon the responsibility of the Government. In considering this question, I think it is desirable to refer not only to the oath that is proposed—an uniform oath to be taken by all persons—but also to the latter part of the Bill, by which a considerable number of ancient enactments are repealed, either wholly or in part, and also to the spirit in which those enactments were originally made—a spirit which I trust has passed away, and I trust we are entering upon a new era of moderation and mutual charity. In the year 1675, in the reign of Charles II., an attempt was made to impose an oath upon the Members of this and the other House of Parliament. It was an oath framed for the purpose of disqualifying that party to whom were attributed the civil war of the former reign and the execution of Charles I. It proposed that every Member of the two Houses of Parliament should swear to the doctrine that arms might be taken up by a Protestant king under certain circumstances, and that he was ready to maintain the constitution of this country in Church and State.

That oath was afterwards, in order to conciliate the Protestant feeling, altered into a declaration that every Member of the two Houses should maintain the Protestant religion and the Protestant Government of this realm. But that Bill was vehemently opposed, and the oath then intended to be imposed was the subject of debate during sixteen days. It is recorded that the Earl of Salisbury was one of those who made the most vigorous opposition to that Bill. One noble Lord who took a prominent part in the debate — the Earl of Halifax— maintained that where the duty was plain and simple—such as that of allegiance to the Sovereign, or of speaking the truth in a court of justice—the taking of an oath added to the solemnity of the occasion, and gave some additional security; and he asked what additional security it would afford the community if every thief and burglar were required to make an oath that he would not commit theft or burglary. At length the measure was assented to by this House and sent down to the House of Commons, but owing to a quarrel between the two Houses, it never went through, and it soon became entirely forgotten. That oath was, as I have said, framed against the Puritans, who were supposed to be the principal authors of the civil war of the former reign. But there was at this time the most intense excitement against the Roman Catholics. It is well known now, and it is, in fact, a matter of history, that Charles II. and his brother, the Duke of York, had entered into an agreement with the King of France, the object of which was, in the first place, to make the King absolute; in the second place to change the religion of the State from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism; and in the third place, to make the king a pensioner on the King of France, so as to enable him to maintain his army and navy without the support of his subjects or the control of Parliament. These were the objects of the Treaty of Dover. There being a suspicion in Parliament of the monarch's designs, a prejudice was created against the Roman Catholics, and it was proposed to exclude them from Parliament. It was the custom in those days, when religious animosity ran high, for those who were in the majority and had the power of passing Bills through Parliament to impose upon religious communities who differed from themselves, tests most repugnant to their feelings and consciences, and which they were bound to take under penalty of exclusion from Parliament. In this manner the Protestant Dissenters were required to take the Sacrament according to the form of the Church of England, it being supposed that such a condition would be contrary to their conscience, and would thereby secure their exclusion from Parliament. With regard to Roman Catholics, it was required that they should make a declaration against transubstantiation. A noble Lord a Member of this House (the Marquess of Westmeath) referred the other day to a Bill now passing through the other House, which proposes to do away with that declaration. The author of that Bill informed me that in proposing to abrogate a declaration which is very offensive to Roman Catholics—

THE EARL OF DERBY: If I am not mistaken the noble Marquess was called to order for referring to this Bill.

EARL RUSSELL: I shall not enter into the merits of that Bill, but I shall read to your Lordships the declaration to which I have referred. That declaration ran in these words—

> "I, A B, do solemnly and sincerely, and in the presence of God, declare my belief that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is no transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; and that what are called the sacrifices of the mass in the Church of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous."

And by 30 *Charles* II. st. 2, and 1 *Geo.* I. c. 13, it is enacted—

> "That no Member shall vote or sit in either House till he hath, in the presence of the House, taken the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration, and subscribed and repeated the declaration against Transubstantiation and Invocation of Saints and the sacrifice of the Mass."

Now, I need not say that it was a very offensive thing to the Roman Catholics to pass an Act which would require them to make a declaration so opposed to their conscientious opinions. However, that Act was passed, and up to 1829 the Roman Catholics were excluded from Parliament. When William III. succeeded to the throne, though nothing could be more tolerant than his spirit and disposition, he found it was necessary for him to consent to the maintenance of the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from all situations and offices of responsibility. I am sorry to say that both Whigs and Tories of that day united in carrying to the greatest extreme the Acts which imposed disabilities upon Roman Catholics, depriving them equally of the rights of property and of all political power. Some of the Acts which imposed these disabilities were detailed in a speech which I had the pleasure of reading again the other day, having often read it before —I mean the speech of Mr. Burke at the election of Bristol. In that speech Mr. Burke described in detail the manner in which the two parties vied with each other in imposing unjust restrictions on the Roman Catholics, and said that it was provided by 30 *Charles* II., and 1 *Geo.* I. c. 13, that no Member shall take his seat in either House of Parliament until he shall have taken the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration, and subscribed the declaration against transubstantiation. I have heard more than once in this House speeches by Lord Eldon, marked by the utmost ingenuity, talent, and learning, in which he argued that those laws of Charles II. had preserved the religious freedom of this country up to the time at which he was speaking, and he warned your Lordships against the danger, by admitting Roman Catholics to Parliament, of raising again those lamentable dissensions which had taken place in the time of Charles II. But in the year 1829 (the Dissenters having in the meantime been relieved from their disabilities) the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, on grounds of political expediency — or rather, as the Duke of Wellington himself, speaking in this House, said, in order to avoid a civil war — proposed to give relief to the Roman Catholics by their admission to Parliament on taking an oath framed to afford security to the Protestant succession and religion. But, my Lords, though that measure was proposed as a measure of political necessity, it was one which the Government of the day knew would be opposed by many conscientious persons, Members of both Houses of Parliament, who professed the opinion which the Ministers up to that time had themselves professed, and it was also distasteful to the Sovereign then upon the throne. I remember perfectly well that proposals were laid before Sir Francis Burdett, who was then a leading Member of the Opposition, with a view of ascertaining whether he and those who acted with him would concur in the plan of relief as then proposed, and that there was some difference of opinion with respect to the abolition of the 40*s*. freeholders. After a time, however, we all concurred in the proposal for the abolition of the 40*s*. freeholders. With respect to one part of the Bill—I will not be sure what part—it was wished that some change should take place; and a deputation waited upon Sir Robert Peel to state the objections that were entertained and the modification that was desired; but Sir Robert Peel informed them that the Government had at length been able to induce the King to give his assent to the Bill as it then stood, and that it would be hopeless to attempt to make any change. I mention this circumstance because it shows that in the opinion of Sir Robert Peel himself it was a matter of necessity to agree to the measure as it then stood, but that it was not to be concluded that the measure was then in a state of perfection, and that if everything had been perfectly tranquil, and Ministers had framed a measure according to their own views, they would have framed it in different terms. The measure was passed, and an essential part of it was the present oath, which does undoubtedly contain some passages which are obnoxious to Roman Catholics, as imputing to them the possibility of their entertaining opinions which are dangerous to the State; and the oath is, moreover, objectionable, because it goes beyond any necessity. In order to enable your Lordships to judge of the passages to which I refer, I will read some of the engagements into which Roman Catholics are obliged to enter—

> "I do further declare that it is not an article of my faith, and that I do renounce, reject, and abjure the opinion that Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope or any other authority of the See of Rome may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or by any person whatsoever."

Nothing can be more offensive to a Roman Catholic than to require him to say that this is not an article of his faith. The oath goes on to say—

> "And I do declare that I do not believe that the Pope of Rome or any other foreign Prince, Prelate, Person, State, or Potentate hath or ought to have any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm. I do swear that I will defend to the utmost of my power the settlement of property within this realm as established by the laws; and I do hereby disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present Church Establishment as settled by law within this realm; and I do solemnly swear that I never will exercise any privilege to which I am or may become entitled to disturb or weaken the Protestant Religion or Protestant Government in this Kingdom."

It seems to me that we may very reasonably ask a person taking his seat in Parliament to declare that he will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Queen, and maintain and support the succession to the Crown as the same stands limited and settled by the Act of *Will.* III.; and it is to be supposed that all loyal subjects of Her

Majesty will be ready, without any difficulty or hesitation, to take that form of oath. But when you advance further, as you do in the present oath, you introduce subjects upon which Roman Catholics have the same feelings as other classes of Her Majesty's subjects have. There is this further disadvantage. It becomes a question how far Members of Parliament are bound by anything in the oath which goes beyond the declaration of allegiance to the Sovereign. When you do that, you might as well ask a man to declare that he will not disturb trial by jury, or the House of Lords, or the House of Commons. It is not unnatural that an Irish Roman Catholic who wishes to see the Irish Church Establishment subverted should shrink from the dilemma in which this oath places him. As a Member of Parliament, he ought to be free to vote according to his views and opinions; but if he is fettered by the oath, he is not on an equality with other Members of Parliament. On the other hand, if he votes according to his principles, he is taunted with having perjured himself and violated a solemn oath. It is a very great pity that any Member of either House of Parliament should be put in such a position, either that they must not act or vote according to their opinions—not religious opinions—but political opinions—with regard to a political institution, or that they should be subjected to the charge of having perjured themselves, and of having violated a solemn oath which they had taken. For this reason I think it is very desirable that, thirty-seven years having elapsed, and there being now an absence of that commotion which prevailed in 1829, we should endeavour to fix upon a sound principle for an oath which is to be taken by Members of Parliament, and that we should put an end to the discussions to which the present form of the oath gives rise. If you think it right that Roman Catholics, Protestants, Dissenters, and Jews should be allowed to take their seats in Parliament, you ought to put them on an equality with other Members, leave them to their own sense of duty, and not imply that they will not vote for what they, in their consciences, think most useful. At one time there was on this question much more feeling than now exists. It was then not a matter of doubt whether a Roman Catholic would act according to his opinion, and he was disqualified from sitting in Parliament. It was then that Mr. Burke pronounced this opinion—

> "Whenever I shall be convinced, which will be late and reluctantly, that the safety of the Church is utterly inconsistent with all the civil rights whatsoever of the far larger part of the inhabitants of our country, I shall be extremely sorry for it, because I shall think the Church to be truly in danger. It is putting things into the position of an ugly alternative, into which I hope to God they never will be put."

I cannot but think you ought not to require a Member of Parliament to swear more than allegiance to the Crown, and that you ought not to make any distinction on the ground of religion. I think the time has arrived when it is possible to frame such a form of oath as will permit Members of the Church of England, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Dissenters, and Jews, to take their seats by subscribing the same uniform oath. If the House concurs in the principle laid down by Burke, it will assent to the second reading of the Bill, which I now move, trusting that no Amendment will be made in Committee which will impair the spirit of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a}."—(*Earl Russell.*)

THE EARL OF DERBY: My Lords, the noble Earl (Earl Russell) has entered into an historical sketch of the various obligations and restrictions imposed from the time of King Charles II. downwards upon a certain portion of Her Majesty's subjects; I shall not follow the example of the noble Earl by alluding to the doctrine of transubstantiation, and I shall not refer to the 40*s.* freeholders of 1829, nor to the opinion of Blackstone as to the state of things which existed 100 years ago. Neither shall I go back to the time of William III. in order to consider what motives influenced the Government of that day. I shall be content to deal with the matter that we have in hand, without going back further than the period of 1829, when the oath which it is now proposed to repeal was imposed upon Roman Catholics for the purpose of inducing Parliament to allow them to become Members of the Legislature. It will be in the recollection of your Lordships that last year a Bill, already referred to by the noble Earl, was passed by the other House of Parliament. That Bill dealt with the conditions of the Roman Catholic oath, and sought to relieve Roman Catholics from any conditions in that oath which might be deemed by them injurious and offensive. My Lords, that Bill was introduced by a right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Monsell) who not very long ago abandoned the Church of England and embraced the Roman Catholic religion, and who had all the zeal in favour of his new faith which characterizes converts. That right hon. Gentleman brought forward his measure, it appears to me, as one of a series of attacks whereby it is sought, not openly to attack, but to weaken the barriers which Parliament has thought fit to interpose for the protection of the Protestant religion and the Protestant Government of this country. Now, I am of opinion—and I am happy to learn that the noble Earl concurs with me—that a Bill of such great importance, dealing with a subject of such magnitude, ought not to be introduced by a private Member of Parliament, but that the question ought to be taken up by the Government itself, on their own authority and responsibility. The noble Earl has referred to various portions of the oath taken by Roman Catholics. One is as follows:—

> "And I do further declare that it is not an article of my faith, and that I do renounce, reject, and abjure the opinion that Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any other authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or by any person whatsoever. And I do declare that I do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign Prince, Prelate, Person, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm. I do swear that I will defend to the utmost of my power the settlement of property within this realm as established by the laws; and I do hereby disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present Church Establishment, as settled by law within this realm. And I do solemnly swear that I never will exercise any privilege to which I am or may become entitled to disturb or weaken the Protestant Religion or Protestant Government in this Kingdom; and I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do make this declaration and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of this oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever."

Both in the other House and in your Lordships' House it was distinctly admitted on all sides that those portions of the oath which imputed to the Roman Catholics doctrines so offensive and injurious as those which they were called upon to abjure might properly and legitimately be struck out; but I did feel, and I feel now, that without the most serious consideration and discussion a measure ought not to be passed which had for its object the relief of Roman Catholics from the obligations which a little more than thirty years ago they voluntarily took upon themselves, and in consequence of which Parliament was induced to admit Roman Catholics to the Legislature. Such a measure Parliament ought not to consent to on the Motion of a simple Member unsupported by the authority of Her Majesty's Government, and just previous to a general election. I felt, therefore, that it was my duty to propose the retention of that portion of the oath which was designed—whatever protection it might afford—to protect the Established Church of England and Ireland. The Government refused to assent to an Amendment that was moved in the House of Commons whereby that portion of the oath would be retained, while all portions obnoxious to Roman Catholics would have been struck out. In opposing that Bill I have been charged with having borrowed from a Member of the other House an expression not very complimentary to those affected by the oath. The expression was not mine—it was borrowed, and it was borrowed from a Member of the other House—and I regret that I used an expression capable of a construction which I never intended it to bear. But I must be permitted to say that the noble Earl, in seeking to relieve the Roman Catholics from the obligations of this oath has used a comparison or simile hardly more complimentary than that attributed to me. When arguing in favour of the remission of this oath the noble Earl referred to an expression of Lord Halifax to the effect that it would be no additional security to society if every thief and burglar were required to swear that he would not commit a robbery or a burglary.

Earl RUSSELL interposed, and was understood to say that he did not intend the remark to apply to this particular question.

The Earl of DERBY: I certainly understood the noble Earl to apply it as an argument against the imposition of oaths. If, however, it did not refer to this oath, it may be interesting as a matter of history, but I do not see how it bears upon the debate in your Lordships' House. Well, I stated last year the grounds which made me feel reluctant to agree to the total abolition of the oath; but I cannot conceal from your Lordships that last year a strong desire was expressed in Parliament, not more on one side than the other, that all distinctions with regard to oaths should be done away with, and one uniform oath, to be taken by all Members without distinction to religious persuasion, adopted.

That put the question on a very different footing. It was thus based on a broad and intelligible principle, and was brought forward with the authority and on the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, instead of being left in the hands of a single independent Member. In taking that course the Government, I think, acted wisely and prudently. They showed that they did not intend to deal with the question by piecemeal legislation; and when any great political question arises it is much more statesmanlike to introduce a full and comprehensive measure, instead of dealing with it by piecemeal legislation, directed to single and subordinate branches. The intended change is of a most complete and decisive kind, because for all the obligations imposed upon Protestants as well as Roman Catholics the noble Earl proposes to substitute a single oath of personal allegiance to the reigning Sovereign. The Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, and the principle of a uniform oath was adopted by a majority of 380 to 5 or 6. Indeed, that majority spoke even more strongly in favour of the principle than if no division had taken place, and the Bill had passed *sub silentio.* Well, that principle having been adopted, it of course became requisite to consider what oath could be taken safely by all Members without excluding from it anything that was fundamentally necessary as a portion of the Constitution. Now, it is obvious that if we have a uniform oath it would be impossible to call upon Members to take the one imposed on Roman Catholics by the Act of 1839; and in saying this I do not at all mean to say that there are not in Parliament Protestants against whom no precautions are taken, but from whom the Church has far more to apprehend than from the Roman Catholics. However, if a uniform oath is to be framed, it is clear that that portion of the present oath which is specially directed against Roman Catholics must be omitted. Then comes the question, what are the portions which ought to be retained as essential parts of the Constitution, and to which the solemn assent of every Member of Parliament ought to be required? For my part, I do not look upon the oath taken at the opening of Parliament as a means—though, perhaps, it was used for the purpose in former times—of excluding any person from Parliament; but I regard it as a solemn affirmation, on the occasion of the first meeting of the Legislature, of fundamental principles to which Parliament is pledged, and to which every individual Member pledges himself. It is of very great importance that Members of both Houses should be called upon to declare, and should have no scruple in declaring, allegiance to the Crown; and not only to the reigning Sovereign, but to the succession to the Crown, as regulated by the Act of Settlement—namely, to the descendants of the Electress Sophia of Hanover, being Protestants. That portion of the oath, however, was altogether omitted from the proposition of Her Majesty's Government, as the oath was originally drawn. No reference whatever is made to the Protestant succession. It was simply proposed that there should be an oath of allegiance to the reigning Sovereign, which might under some circumstances be contrary to the law of the land; for, though it is hardly reasonable to entertain the probability of the reigning Sovereign or her successors renouncing the Protestant religion and embracing the Roman Catholic faith, it is clear that were such an event to occur the law of the land would absolve the subjects of the Sovereign from their allegiance. Yet the oath as originally drawn was one of allegiance to the person of the Sovereign, and would be wholly inconsistent with the law. But, my Lords, an Amendment was proposed, and I am happy to say acquiesced in by the House of Commons, which makes the oath stand thus—

> "I, A B, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria; and I do faithfully promise to maintain and support the Succession to the Crown, as the same stands limited and settled by an Act passed in the reign of King William III., intituled 'An Act for the further Limitation of the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject,' so help me God."

Now, my Lords, it is right to mention this, because many of those who have presented petitions against this Bill, seeing that the words "being Protestants" were omitted from the new oath, thought that no security had been taken for the Protestant succession. They were right in that impression as regards the oath as it stood when introduced by Her Majesty's Government; but by the Amendment introduced in the House of Commons, and to which Her Majesty's Government agreed, the Protestant succession is as well secured as it was by the original oath. My Lords, there was a third difficulty in framing a uniform oath—one which was not by any means the least difficulty in the matter—namely, the supremacy of the Crown. There is no question on which the people of this country set a higher value. They would feel regret, and make heard their indignant denunciation, if the absolute supremacy of the Crown in all matters ecclesiastical and civil in this country were not affirmed by Parliament. But it is quite true that the construction which has been put on the terms of the Oath of Supremacy has not only been a stumbling-block to Roman Catholics, but a great scruple—though I think an unnecessary and unfounded scruple—with some Protestant Members of your Lordships' House. The words to which I allude are —

> "And I do declare that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm."

In order to meet the objection of Roman Catholics, the words "ecclesiastical or spiritual" were left out of the oath required to be taken by Roman Catholics, and the words "temporal or civil" inserted in their stead; but many Protestants have felt scruples in swearing to the words contained in the Protestant oath, because, as a matter of fact, though not of law or right, it is indisputable that *in foro conscientiæ* a foreign Prince or Potentate does exercise spiritual pre-eminence and authority over a large number of Her Majesty's subjects. As I said before, I think those scruples are not well founded; but, at the same time, as we recognize the status of Roman Catholics, and of the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy performing religious offices and invested with religious authority within this country, no doubt there has existed a certain ambiguity with respect to the true meaning of this declaration. And, my Lords, the difficulty remains as to what we really do mean by the assertion of the supremacy of the Crown. In attempting to frame a uniform oath, you had the declaration of the Protestant against all foreign authority, "ecclesiastical or spiritual," on the one hand; and you had that of the Roman Catholic, which was limited to "temporal or civil" authority, on the other. Now, how was this difficulty to be got over if you were to have a uniform oath, and still retain words relating to foreign jurisdiction or authority? Either you must call on the Roman Catholics to do that which they could not do, and which they have not been called upon to do for several years; or you must call on the Protestants to limit their declaration to "temporal or civil" authority. No doubt this was a difficulty; but it appeared to me that words might be framed, such as were framed to meet the scruples of the Roman Catholics in the time of Queen Elizabeth, in which the true meaning of the supremacy of the Crown might be explained, and to which Roman Catholics and Protestants might adhere. I had some reason to believe, from private communications which I received, that if some such declaration were framed it would receive the support of the English Roman Catholic laity; but from some causes to which I need not refer, I found that the Members of the House of Commons who had favoured me with their views on the subject were not prepared to give a deliberate judgment on the matter of the declaration. An Amendment was proposed in the House of Commons with the view of inserting in the oath a declaration of the supremacy of the Crown, but that Amendment was rejected by a majority of eleven. I am bound to admit that some of those who voted against the Amendment did so on the ground that the restraining words which it was proposed to insert would have the effect of diminishing, as far as the declaration by oath, the scope of the authority of the Sovereign of this country. That view was urged on the high authority of Her Majesty's Attorney General, and I believe it was felt by others sincerely desirous of maintaining the supremacy of the Crown. That being so, I bow, though with considerable reluctance, to the decision at which the House of Commons arrived on the point. I do not propose on the present occasion to offer any opposition to the proposition of Her Majesty's Government on the present occasion; but I hope Her Majesty's Government will not object to incorporate in Committee in the Bill, though not in the oath, a declaration re-affirming and re-asserting the absolute and entire supremacy of the Crown. But passing from the declaration of supremacy, I must observe it is rather singular that the word "defend," contained in the oath as introduced originally, should have been struck out in the House of Commons. Now, my Lords, I do not attach any great importance to this omission. The words "maintain, support, and uphold" certainly to my mind involve defence, but still there was something singular in the omission of the word "defend." My Lords, it did so occur—I must not say in the House of Commons, but in an assembly where the Bill was under discussion—that there happened to be present a member of the Society of Friends—a gentleman of a peculiarly meek and mild disposition—one who has nothing in his character approaching to pugnacity—one of those humble and meek Christians who if you smote them on one cheek would most certainly turn the other—one to whom, above all things, is utterly abhorent and repugnant to impart into political discussions anything like an exhibition or a demonstration of physical force. That hon. Gentleman, as I understand, having for twenty years very calmly acquiesced in the word "defend," was suddenly seized with a qualm of conscience lest, in consequence of the affirmation, he should be called on to take up arms and defend the Crown. Accordingly, he suggested that there should be no room left for doubt, and that the word should be omitted. Of course, it was impossible the Home Secretary could refuse to accede to such a suggestion, coming as it did from a gentleman to whom Her Majesty's Government are under such obligations for his large confidence and his enthusiastic support. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department said there was not the slightest difficulty in complying in with so reasonable a request; the House of Commons laughed, and the offensive, or I should rather call it the "defensive" word was struck out. My Lords, I do not ask you to put yourselves at issue with the House of Commons on this point. I do not attach much importance to the word "defend." I should be sorry to think the security of the Crown depended in any degree for support on the defence it might receive from the hon. Gentleman; and I should be extremely sorry to call on that hon. Gentleman, or any other person who takes the same views, to so far violate his fixed principles and his fixed determination, as to promise under any circumstances to defend the person of his Sovereign or the Constitution of this country. I do not, then, propose to ask your Lordships to reintroduce the word "defend" which has been struck out. Indeed, I do not intend to ask you myself to make any alterations in the provisions of the Bill. The proposal may be regarded as somewhat hazardous, and not altogether free from objection, and to portions of the measure, if they could be separated from the rest, I retain the same objections which I felt it my duty to press upon your Lordships on a former occasion. But I will not for the sake of maintaining those objections, run the risk of making a serious question of discussion and difference between your Lordships' House and the House of Commons. The measure has been introduced on the authority of the Government; it was supported, in principle, at least, by an overwhelming and preponderating majority of the House of Commons; and, therefore, for my own part, as I have already informed the noble Earl at the head of Her Majesty's Government privately, I have no opposition to offer to the second reading; nor is it my intention to propose any Amendment in Committee that may have the effect of altering the conditions on which this Bill is framed, or of making any substantial difference in its provisions. I can only say, I earnestly hope and pray that these alterations and simplifications of the oath may lead to a better understanding and more harmony among all portions of Her Majesty's subjects, and with that hope—I will say earnest and confident hope—I willingly give my assent to the second reading of the Bill.

Lord RAVENSWORTH said, he doubtless owed an apology to their Lordships for rising after his noble Friend; but, regarding the change proposed by this Bill as a deliberate violation of a solemn compact entered into, at the time of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, between Parliament and the Roman Catholic section of the population, he could not regard it as a light or frivolous matter. Had it been possible thirty years ago—at the time of the Emancipation Bill—for any one to have been so gifted with prophecy as to have been able to foretell that thirty years after every provision intended as a security and safeguard for the Protestant institutions of the country would have been abolished, his anticipations certainly would have shared the fate of those of the prophetess Cassandra; but had they been credited, he defied noble Lords to say that the Bill would ever have been passed. He had listened attentively to the arguments that had been brought forward by the noble Earl at the head of the Government in support of this Bill, but he confessed he had heard very little from him to vindicate the policy which he had adopted. The noble Earl had said that we had entered on a new era of mutual forbearance and mutual confidence; and in that he (Lord Ravensworth) was ready to agree with him. Great changes had taken place since these oaths were framed. The exiled family whose Members called forth such devoted loyalty in portions of the United Kingdom, and more particularly in Scotland and Ireland, had become extinct; and the strong affection felt for the House of Stuart was now transferred to the reigning family, those to whom their honours, titles, and estates, had been restored by the leniency of the Crown, now displayed an undoubted feeling of loyalty to the Queen, therefore, as regarded the English Roman Catholics, he had the fullest confidence in their loyalty to the Crown, whatever declaration they might be called upon to make. But he could not say that he entertained the same confidence in the Irish Roman Catholics. He blamed the Government for having brought forward this measure at the commencement of an untried Parliament, and he viewed it as a prelude to that assault which was about to be made upon the Protestant Established Church in Ireland. Whatever might be the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to the Irish Church, he apprehended that the boon they were about to confer on the Irish Roman Catholics would probably be repaid in their support of that attack that was about to be made on the Irish Church. But if that attack was made and carried by a majority of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, he felt certain it would cause a feeling of deep disgust, dissatisfaction, and dread in the minds of the Protestants in that country. He should be glad, however, to have these suspicions removed. The numerical support the measure had received in the other House induced him to agree with his noble Friend (the Earl of Derby) that it would be injudicious to provoke a conflict between the two Houses of Parliament by a decided opposition to this Bill; but, at the same time, he entered his decided protest against the measure. The noble Earl at the head of the Government had referred to history in support of the course he was now pursuing with regard to this measure. He (Lord Ravensworth) would, however, remind the noble Earl that although great changes had taken place in other matters the Church of the Vatican held the self-same position with regard to all its claims and authorities which it had occupied at any previous period. To abandon these would be to relinquish the attitude essential to its stability. In support of his argument he would draw their Lordships' attention to some extracts from the writings of Voltaire with reference to the important questions of divided allegiance, and make some observations thereupon. Voltaire said—

> "To swear allegiance to another than one's Sovereign is a crime of *lese-majesté* in the laity; in the cloister it is an act of religion. The difficulty of knowing to what point one should obey this foreign Sovereign, the facility of allowing oneself to be seduced, the pleasure of shaking off a natural yoke for one that is self-imposed, the spirit of turbulence, the misfortunes of the times have only too frequently induced whole orders of religionists to serve Rome against their native country."

Voltaire then proceeded to define the powers and authority of the Pope, and his jurisdiction in France, as independent of the monarch. Continuing, he said—

> "These advantages, regarded by many people as the *suites* of the greatest abuses, and by others as the relics of the most sacred rights, are always sustained with art. Rome manages her credit with as much policy as the Roman Republic employed to conquer half the world. No Court ever knew better how to conduct itself according to the character of the men and the spirit of the age. Most of our writers have argued with reason against the ambition of this Court, but I know of none who have rendered sufficient justice to its prudence. I doubt if any other nation could have preserved in Europe during so long a period so many prerogatives always contested. Every other Court would probably have lost them, either by its pride or by its feebleness, or by its indolence, or by its vivacity; but Rome by employing always *à propos* firmness and suppleness hath preserved all that, humanly speaking, she has been able to preserve. Some rights, many and great pretensions, policy and patience—these are what remain at this day to Rome of that ancient power which six centuries ago desired to submit the Empire and Europe to the triple Crown."

He asked whether these observations were not still applicable to the question under consideration, and worthy of attention. He would also quote one more passage as follows:—

> "His spiritual authority, always a little mixed with temporal, is destroyed and detested in half of Christendom, and if, in the other half, he is regarded as a father, he has children who resist him sometimes with reason and with success. The maxim of France is to regard him as a person sacred, but aggressive—of whom we kiss the feet, but sometimes tie the hands."

If these extracts were the expressed belief of a Roman Catholic in a Roman Catholic Empire reigned over by a Sovereign of the same faith, how much more necessary was it in this country, the whole of whose institutions were Protestants, that security should be taken against those secret dangers from the spiritual authority of Rome which may become apparent in time to come? He had always been in favour of affording relief to those who differed from him in religion, but he objected to their being called upon so suddenly and unexpectedly to agree to a measure of this importance. He would conclude by observing that, although he would not move the rejection of the Bill, yet he could not permit it to pass without his protest.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: My Lords, I had not intended to take part in the discussion upon the Roman Catholic oath; but, by way of preface to some few observations upon the matter, I would express my opinion that those who oppose the Bill before your Lordships are prompted much more by feeling than weighed by logical argument; and I am not ashamed to confess, my Lords, that as far as mere feeling is concerned, I had, and have now, a considerable amount of sympathy with the noble Lords opposite. But I cannot help pointing out to those who have the feeling without the convictions which I have upon the subject, that the speech of the noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) will hardly be satisfactory, because your Lordships will observe that he dealt entirely with the resistance which he made last Session, and with the concession which he makes this. Insisting entirely upon what may be called the accidents of the question, the noble Earl defended his resistance and justified his concession simply on the ground of the difference of form between the Bills of last year and this. The noble Earl must, however, be aware that the objections raised by those who have strong feelings upon the matter will not be met by this difference of form; nor will the objections of the noble Lord who last addressed us be met by it. Looking at the question, then, from a point of view somewhat different from that presented on this side the House, I do not deny, and I think it cannot be denied, that it is perfectly plain that the oath which we are now proposing to abolish was a part, and no insignificant part, of the settlement of the Roman Catholic question in 1829. This is still more apparent from a debate which took place some five years afterwards upon a Motion made by Mr. Daniel O'Connell in the House of Commons for the appointment of a Committee to consider the Roman Catholic Oath. That Motion was opposed by the Government of that time under Lord Althorp. It was vigorously opposed also by Sir Robert Peel; who, in the course of his speech on that occasion, said distinctly, that if it had not been for the oaths imposed by the Act of 1829 (which, after being carefully drawn up, was accepted by the heads of the Roman Catholic party) he did not believe he should have been able to carry the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill through the House of Commons, and certainly not through the House of Lords. Therefore, my Lords, I think we are giving up a part of what was then looked upon as the security of the Bill of 1829. Not that I think Sir Robert Peel felt this was any real security; he, no doubt, trusted to the same securities as the noble Earl at the head of the Government depends upon. He relied upon the abolition of the Catholic Association, and the disfranchisement of the 40*s*. freeholders in Ireland. We have therefore every right to hold the Roman Catholics to their bargain. But is it worth while to do so? In the first place, if it be thought worth while, in opposition to this Bill, to take the same ground as Sir Robert Peel, can we say that we represent the Parliament of 1829, in the sense of approaching this question, in the same principle and with the same spirit that they did. Clearly not. It is evident that the differences between this Parliament and the Parliament of 1829 utterly destroy that ground, for hardly a Member of the present House of Commons would need any security such as the oath we propose to abolish in order to grant emancipation to the Roman Catholics. I have heard some former Members of your Lordships' House, and especially the late Earl of Winchilsea, express their regret that these concessions were made, and there may possibly still survive some of your Lordships who regret that they were ever granted. But I apprehend the real question before us now is —are these so-called securities any securities in the real sense of the word, and whether they do not do harm rather than good? I have no doubt that the maintenance of an oath that is offensive to Roman Catholic feeling does a great deal of harm as regards the spirit and temper of the Roman Catholic community. Why is the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Derby) giving way as he is wisely doing on this occasion? Is it not because his speech of last year, and his reluctance to allow of the abolition or alteration of the oath, gave serious offence to many gentlemen who might otherwise have been friends and supporters of his policy? I am not imputing anything wrong in the motives of the noble Earl if I say he has been influenced by the course taken by the Roman Catholics who disliked the opposition which he formerly offered to a proposal to change the oath. As to the words used by the noble Earl last year which were said to have given offence, after all they described exactly what had been the very intention of Parliament in imposing this oath on the Roman Catholics. The noble Earl said they were intended to "muzzle" the Roman Catholics and prevent them from biting; and it is perfectly true that they were meant to prevent Roman Catholics from taking part in discussions affecting the Established Church. As a matter of fact, can any of us say that these oaths have the slightest effect in preventing Roman Catholics from exercising a free discretion on all subjects brought before them relating to ecclesiastical endowments? I greatly doubt whether the late Sir Robert Peel ever intended or desired that they should operate in that way, for when it was proposed that Roman Catholic Members should be disabled from voting on any question affecting the Church, he protested against it on the ground that all Members ought to be on an equal footing to speak or vote on any question that came before Parliament, and Mr. O'Connell, in the debate in 1834 to which I have referred, held himself to be perfectly free to deal, like any other Member of Parliament, with any question affecting the endowment of the Established Church. As to the construction which has been put upon these oaths I do not wish to defend it; and there can be no doubt—and, I believe, conscientious Roman Catholics will admit—that they constitute at least an impediment in their way, and that it is more or less by a process of sophistical reasoning which has been defended by no less an authority than Mr. Hallam that they are enabled to hold themselves free as legislators to vote against the very Establishment which they have professed themselves bound not to injure. These oaths, then, afford no practical security whatever as regards the Established Church in Ireland, or any other institution. The noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) also made a remark on a matter of more importance—namely, the oath of supremacy—he said that the new oath would amount to a total abrogation of the oath of supremacy. I entirely agree with him as to the immense importance of the Royal supremacy in connection with the Constitution of this country. It is the very foundation stone of the Reformation in England. I believe the noble Earl is perfectly correct in saying that there is no one principle to which the people of this country are more attached than to the Royal supremacy, and that the popular apprehension has perhaps been more directed against that part of this Bill than against any other portion of it. But the noble Earl has omitted to notice that the oath now taken does not affirm the supremacy of the Crown. As originally drawn up in the reign of Elizabeth, the oath of supremacy was both affirmative and negative; in the first place, it affirmatively claimed all civil and ecclesiastical authority for the Crown; and next, it negatived all such authority in the Pope. In the reign of William III., the first part of the oath was abolished in deference to the conscientious objections taken by the Presbyterians and the Dissenters; and the affirmative portion was entirely struck out; and up to 1829 nothing remained but the negative declaration that the Pope had no ecclesiastical or civil jurisdiction in this country. Still, as the oath stood from the reign of William III. down to 1829, the Roman Catholics were excluded from Parliament. But since 1829 the question of the Royal supremacy has been in utter and hopeless confusion. The Protestant is asked to abjure a tenet which he is not suspected of entertaining—he is asked to declare that the Pope has no ecclesiastical or civil authority in this realm, which he never asserted he had. Then there are the words affirming that the Pope "ought not to have" such authority; and the Roman Catholics need not take those words. The Protestant is thus asked to renounce a doctrine which he does not hold; and the Roman Catholic is allowed to come in, although he holds that very doctrine. Thus the matter is in utter confusion. Surely, then, the oath is no security whatever to the Protestant Church or Constitution. It appears to me that whatever danger there is in Roman Catholicism comes from a totally different direction. The noble Lord who spoke last (Lord Ravensworth) has referred to the pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church, and said that there is no difference in doctrines and pretensions of the Church of Rome from what they were in former times, and it may be that if we look to the writings of some living divines of that Church we shall find no change in those pretensions. In the interesting *Apologia* of Dr. Newman, a divine who had had an English training and had been a minister of the Church of England before he went over to the Church of Rome, this paragraph appears :—

> "It (the Church of Rome) could act in its own province, unless it had a right to act out of it. The Catholic Church claims, not only to judge infallibly on religious questions, but to animadvert on opinions in secular matters which bear upon religion, on matters of philosophy, of science, of literature, of history, and it demands our submission to her claim. It claims to censure books, to silence authors, and to forbid discussions. It must, of course, be obeyed without a word."

Again, a Roman Catholic Quarterly Review was published by a gentleman nearly connected with my noble Friend the President of the Council, and one of the most learned Roman Catholics in Europe, and also a man distinguished for his liberal opinions. Yet we know—for it is no secret—that on account of the disapprobation of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church that periodical has in some measure to be given up, and that eminent layman, acting on the principle laid down by Dr. Newman, thought it necessary to stop it. I certainly do not pretend to think that the pretensions of the Court of Rome are altered in any respect from what they were in former times, nor do I doubt that they are admitted by many men who might have been thought to be more independent in their views. But what has that to do with the question of these oaths? You cannot by Act of Parliament prevent men from holding these views ; you ought to trust these matters to free discussion absolutely. I am not quite sure that some distinguished divines and members of the Church of England would be willing to take the affirmative part of the Elizabethan oath of supremacy. I know that very lately Dr. Pusey, a man possessing high office in one of the principal seminaries of learning connected with the Church of England, and which is supposed to be endowed mainly to support the interests of that Church, has published a letter in which he avows, not only his wish to have communion with the Church of Rome in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters, but he has gone further, and said that he would be willing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope in these matters. That being the case, the danger arises not merely from the Church of Rome, but comes from within the Church of England itself. I conceive these oaths are of no effect whatever—absolutely none—in affording security to the Church of England against such views as I have mentioned. I believe these oaths are worse than useless, because they tend to lead men to think they have a real security when they have none ; and the resistance to these dangers, if it is to be successful, must be conducted in quite a different manner. I can well understand the reluctance with which many conscientious persons regard the rubbing out from the oath of those words which are the fruits of the great constitutional contests of the 17th century. It was impossible that those contests could be carried on without much harshness, and without a sense of injustice on the part of those upon whom these oaths were sought to be imposed ; but I believe we are now in the secure enjoyment of the fruits of those contests, and there can be no greater triumph of Protestant principle than for us to say that the time has come when we can give that freedom to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects for which we have contended for them, and which they never would have conquered for themselves.

Lord CHELMSFORD : My Lords, when the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) rose I expected to have heard some powerful arguments advanced in favour of the Bill ; but I am sure your Lordships will agree with me that what he said tended very strongly to prejudice the measure ; and I think the noble Duke's colleagues have reason to complain that when things were going on smoothly he should think proper to throw impediments in the way. Having on former occasions taken an active part in opposing alterations of the oaths taken by Members of Parliament, your Lordships will, I trust, bear with me while I explain the course which I intend to pursue with regard to the present question. I am not, my Lords, afraid of the risk of being charged with clinging to prejudices which it is the prevalent practice of the day to discard. I confess I should have preferred to retain the present distinction between the Protestant and the Catholic oath, removing from the latter everything which is felt to be offensive, and therefore may be reasonably objected to by Roman Catholics. But I am compelled to say that this ground of objection to the oath, that part of it is offensive, is of recent discovery. When the oath was framed as part of the settlement of 1829, it received the cordial assent of the Roman Catholic prelates, and was, indeed, framed on a prior oath contained in an Act passed in 1793. At the time when the settlement of 1829 was proposed Sir Robert Peel stated, and I agree with him, that no Roman Catholic could entertain any valid or conscientious objection to the oath. It is true that one noble Lord did then express his objections to those portions of the oath to which the attention of your Lordships has been directed; but he was immediately checked by the observation of Lord Lyndhurst, that the words against which he felt an objection were in the oath of 1793, and had been taken for forty years without any objection. Now, to this period of forty or, to speak more correctly, thirty-six years, thirty years must now be added, and during the whole of that time no one has heard the slightest whisper of objection to any part of the oath, or any suggestion that any part of it could be considered an insult by Roman Catholics. In 1849 the noble Earl, now at the head of the Government (Earl Russell), introduced the first of a series of Bills for the admission of Jews into Parliament; and for that purpose he proposed an alteration of the oath; but said that he did not think it expedient to propose any alteration of the Roman Catholic oath, which was settled in 1829, and for his forbearance on that occasion the noble Earl received the approbation of Sir Robert Peel. In 1852 the noble Earl introduced the first of a series of Reform Bills, and in that Bill he proposed an alteration of the Roman Catholic oath; but he only sought to omit the words "or murdered" after the word "deposed," because he said he considered these words to be offensive to the Roman Catholics; but he thereby proposed to retain the remainder of the oaths; and this showed that he could not have considered it insulting to the Roman Catholics to call upon them to renounce, as an article of their faith, the doctrine that excommunicated princes might be deposed by their subjects. In 1854, in the Bill for the admission of the Jews, the noble Earl for the first time tried his hand at one uniform oath; and this was the only occasion on which I had the good fortune to procure the rejection of a Bill brought in for this object by the noble Earl. But on that occasion the noble Earl stated that he had received no application from the Roman Catholics, nor had he consulted them, nor was he aware that they required any change in the oath. So that your Lordships will observe I have established the proposition that for thirty-six years during which the oath, or a similar one, has been taken, there has not been the slightest objection on the part of the Roman Catholics. These little details afford an interesting history of the advancing views of the noble Earl on this subject, as we have lately had an instance of his dissolving views upon another subject. It might be thought that the passages complained of were peculiar to the Roman Catholic oath; but this fact is too often lost sight of—that down to 1858 all these objectionable parts of the Roman Catholic oath were contained in the oath taken by Protestants. [Earl RUSSELL: It was then that I altered it.] Yes; but they were required to renounce and abjure as impious and heretical that damnable doctrine that princes excommunicated by the Pope or any authority of the See of Rome may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, and also to declare that they took the oath without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation. When the Act of 1858, changing the oath with regard to the Protestants, and converting the three oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration into one oath, and eliminating all that is now considered objectionable was under discussion, I thought it was not desirable to keep up an invidious distinction between the oaths taken by Roman Catholics and by Protestants, and I stated that I was willing to omit these portions of the Roman Catholic oath. Nor was that an idea which I took up for the day; for in 1854 I expressed a similar opinion that these portions of the oath might very well be dispensed with. But I confess that I regret the loss of that part of the Protestant oath by which the person taking it is called upon to deny that any foreign Prince, Person, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, supremacy, or authority, spiritual or ecclesiastical, within these realms; and also the portion of the oath taken by the Roman Catholics, which requires the person taking it to disclaim any intention to interfere with the Church Establishments. Some ridicule has been cast upon the notion that oaths can offer any security, or be any barrier against any inroad on our constitution. I admit that they were no barrier, except in regard to the words "on the true faith of a Christian" which, until they were indirectly repealed, barred the doors of the Legislature against the Jews. With regard to the question of security, I cannot see but that the part which requires the Roman Catholic Member to declare that he has no intention to weaken the Church Establishment must have some security in it; for the very argument is used on the other side, that conscientious Roman Catholics feel themselves in a difficulty owing to these words, which shows that the oath is considered binding as an obligation to debar conscientious Roman Catholics from any interference in any measure which affects the Church Establishment. It is perfectly idle to imagine that any case may arise in which an intelligent and conscientious Roman Catholic would have any difficulty in knowing whether a measure is or is not hostile to the Church Establishment. If there is any doubt in his mind on the subject, then, the rule of practical morality is, that he should abstain from action. The oath which is now proposed, my Lords, sweeps away those securities to which I have been adverting, and also the barrier which prevented the admission of any Jew to Parliament. It has been stated by my noble Friend behind me (the Earl of Derby) that the original proposal of the Government was that there should be merely an oath of personal allegiance to the Sovereign. I do not know whether the noble Earl at the head of the Government was influenced by an opinion which I have heard him cite with approbation on more than one occasion—the opinion of Lord Eldon, that the oath of supremacy was virtually contained in the oath of allegiance; but with all respect for the profound sagacity of that noble and learned Lord, I never did understand that proposition. If it be true that the oath of supremacy is involved in the oath of allegiance, the Roman Catholics have been caught in a snare; for while they have been innocently supposing, in subscribing to the oath of allegiance, that they were merely swearing fidelity and loyalty to the Crown, they have been entrapped into an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Crown in all its integrity, which includes the ecclesiastical as well as the civil jurisdiction. My Lords, the observations which were made when there was an attempt made to add to the oath certain portions which have been since introduced would go very far—as, indeed, the statement of the noble Earl opposite to-night has done—to prove the absolute inutility of all promissory oaths whatever. It may be asked—and this seemed to be almost the argument of the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll)—why should we be called upon to recognize the supremacy of the Crown when it is an essential and vital part of the Constitution? Why should we be called upon to acknowledge the Act of Settlement, as if it had not the internal strength necessary to maintain itself without the support of an oath? It may be asked, why should we have any oath of allegiance at all, inasmuch as allegiance is connate with every subject of this realm? It may also be asked, why should it be necessary at the coronation to propose any oath to the Sovereign since the coronation oath does not make the person crowned more Sovereign than the oath of allegiance makes the subject more loyal? The reciprocal obligations of the two necessarily arise out of the relation which exists between them. These arguments, which we have heard raised, go very far to abolish the necessity for any oaths of office whatever. I know there are many persons who entertain the notion that oaths are unnecessary. I do not know whether that is the opinion of the noble Earl (Earl Russell), but I almost gathered that it was from his quoting the opinion of Lord Halifax. Certainly the observation of Lord Halifax might be good as a ludicrous illustration, but as an argument it is worth nothing at all. I do not know whether the Government, or the noble Earl at the head of the Government, are of opinion that oaths of this description are unnecessary, but I can only say that if he is I am of an entirely different opinion, and a most distinguished Member—shall I say the most distinguished Member—of the present Government is, or rather was, in 1854, of a different opinion also. In the debate at that time to which I am referring the Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "I know there are some Gentlemen here who think we should come to the discharge of our duties without any oath. I do not happen to be one of that opinion. I revere the principle of the oath. I think it tends to maintain that serious and reverential temper with which men ought to address themselves to solemn duties."—[3 *Hansard,* cxxxiii. 900.]

My Lords, I entirely agree with that observation. I apprehend the real question is, to what extent we should recognize those principles—those essential principles—of the Constitution which are to be the limits within which our legislative functions are to be exercised. It appears that the original notion of the Government was that this matter might be performed by merely a personal oath of allegiance, though they agreed afterwards to the Amendment to which my noble Friend behind has alluded with regard to the settlement of the Crown. As to any acknowledgment, even a modified acknowledgment of supremacy, that was resisted by the Government, and their resistance was successful to the extent of their obtaining a majority. The oath is stripped of all acknowledgment of the supremacy which has been contained in every oath for more than 300 years, and the words "upon the true faith of a Christian," which have prevented any person not of the Christian religion from sitting in Parliament, are also omitted. My Lords, I entertain now precisely the same opinions which I always have entertained with regard to the importance of recognizing the supremacy in the oath, and also with regard to preventing any person who is not a Christian from sitting in our Christian Legislature. It might, therefore, be expected that retaining these sentiments I should pursue a consistent course by voting against the second reading of this Bill. But, my Lords, I feel myself compelled to take a different course, and I am most anxous to explain the reason of it, in order that it may not be supposed I have departed from any of those principles which I have always most strenuously upheld. With regard to the omission of the words "upon the true faith of a Christian," I have always contended against the admission of Jews to Parliament as a matter of principle. I have never thought that there was the slightest danger to the State in admitting a few Jews to the Legislature; but upon principle, and upon principle alone, I have maintained my opposition. Now, in the year 1858 an Act was passed which involved a compromise upon this long-vexed question; and it was enacted that either House of Parliament might by a Resolution dispense in the case of a Jew with those words of the oath which declares it to be taken "upon the true faith of a Christian." Now, my Lords, it appears to me that the principle is as much violated by admitting a Jew by the side door of a Resolution as it would be if you admitted him by throwing open the principal door, and giving him a seat in Parliament by the express word of the Act itself. Therefore, in my view, there really is on this subject nothing left worth contending for, and I am not at all disposed, having certainly failed in maintaining the principle which I defended, to take any further part in resisting the complete admission of the Jew to his seat in the Legislature. Then, with regard to the acknowledgment of the supremacy, for which I have always contended, the noble Earl may perfectly well recollect that when in 1854 he tried to establish a uniform oath, the principal ground of objection which I urged was that, as it was to be taken by Roman Catholics, there necessarily could be no recognition of supremacy, and it was principally upon that ground, as the noble Earl will also remember, that the House, by a small majority, rejected the Bill. I consider, however, that the current has now set so strongly in favour of a uniform oath that it is impossible any longer to struggle against it. The House of Commons, by an almost unanimous decision, has established that, in their opinion, there ought to be a uniform oath, and I think the division itself in that House was infinitely more striking than if there had been merely a silent unanimity upon the subject. Of course, there can be no uniform oath without the absence of all recognition of supremacy. If I were to vote against this Bill, and even if I could hope to obtain a majority of your Lordships' House — of which I entertain some doubt — though I might succeed in throwing out the Bill, I do not think it would be desirable or expedient that I should pursue that course; because I cannot believe that the House of Commons will ever consent to withdraw from the ground which they have occupied in such strength. And if I succeeded in throwing out the Bill, it would lead probably to other Bills of a similar nature being sent up from the House of Commons to this House year after year until we acquiesced, and then, I think, there would be a very unseemly dispute between the two Houses, in which ultimately we should have to yield. Therefore, my Lords, I must confess, though with reluctance, that I shall offer no opposition to the Bill—I submit to superior force. But, at the same time, I am particularly anxious, so far as I can, to preserve a proper recognition of the supremacy of the Crown. I therefore intend to propose an Amendment in Committee, which I cannot help thinking will be accepted without objection by the Government. I will just explain what it is, in order that your Lordships may be properly prepared for it. Your Lordships will observe that in the sixth section of the Act there is the repeal of various Acts, and parts of Acts, contained in the schedule. Many of those Acts in the schedule contain the forms of oaths in which the supremacy is recognized. Now, if we were to consent to the clauses of this Bill repealing those Acts without any reservation, it might be thought that the Legislature were of opinion that it is inexpedient and improper to recognize the supremacy at all; and therefore, for the purpose of preventing any such conclusion, I shall propose in Committee to add this proviso at the end of the sixth section—

> "Provided always that the repeal of these Acts, or any of them, or of any parts thereof, shall not be construed to weaken or in any manner to affect any laws or statutes now in force for preserving and upholding the supremacy of our Lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, in all matters, civil and ecclesiastical, within this realm and other Her Majesty's dominions."

That will not touch the oath in the slightest degree, but it will protect us against the conclusion that the supremacy is not recognized. I hope that when I move this Amendment in Committee it will receive the support of the House.

EARL RUSSELL: After what the noble and learned Baron has said, I may be permitted to explain that I never said, nor did I mean, that I objected to have such an oath as an oath of allegiance, or any other oath of that kind. What I stated was, that I thought it was very advisable to have an oath in cases where there was no doubt about the meaning, and where it was the duty of the person taking the oath to do what he then swore to do. I gave, as an instance, the case of a man swearing as a witness that he will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He merely swears that he will do what he would admit it to be his duty to do. So also with regard to the oath of allegiance. If a man swore allegiance to King William III., he merely swore to do that which it was his duty to do. In a case of this kind, where what is sworn is a plain matter of duty, I think it is quite right to have an oath; but I should not think it right to have an oath in cases where it might be a matter of opinion as to whether it was a man's duty to do that which he swore to do. With regard to the Amendment of the noble and learned Lord, the words of which, of course, I have not considered, I should really hope that there will be no objection to them.

LORD ARUNDELL OF WARDOUR said, he should have abstained from addressing the House, but that last year he was reproached, as a Catholic, with not having expressed the sentiments of the Catholics in regard to what fell from the noble Earl (the Earl of Derby), and it had been said that the Catholics did not care for the matter under discussion. Perhaps it was incumbent on him, as sitting on the Conservative side of the House, to have replied on that occasion, and no doubt he was in some measure responsible for the impression his silence produced. However, he did not feel greatly disturbed by the reproach; and his reply to it was, and always had been, that he did not feel hurt by the language of the noble Earl, which gave great, although unreasonable, offence, and that he could not help regarding the movement of last Session as part of the electioneering tactics of the noble Earl opposite (Earl Russell). However, as he had honourably redeemed his pledge, he was entitled to the acknowledgment of the honesty of his intentions. Now that the question came before their Lordships independently of electioneering complications, he had no hesitation in saying that he had always felt that this oath was a trammel from which the Catholic body had a full right to be relieved. He believed there was a very general impression that this was not a practical grievance. It had been said that the Catholics had taken the oath for thirty-seven years, and that they might continue to take it still. But the impression underlying the oath was that Catholics concealed nefarious designs, and this was a practical, and not a merely sentimental grievance. With regard to the Amendment of which the noble and learned Lord had given notice, he would put it to the noble and learned Lord whether the matter was of such importance that, in case the Amendment was not made, he would prefer the perpetuity of an anomaly which did not exist in any other Legislative Assembly in the world.

LORD CHELMSFORD: My Amendment will not touch the oath in the slightest degree. The oath will remain exactly as it stands in the Bill. My Amendment relates only to the repeal of those Acts in which there are recognitions of supremacy, and provides that the repeal of those Acts shall not affect the recognition.

LORD ARUNDELL OF WARDOUR said, that nothing could be clearer than the form of oath proposed; yet there was a point involved to which he would call attention. The proposed form simply mentioned allegiance, which, as defined in the statute, included ecclesiastical and spiritual as well as civil supremacy. He did not mean to raise any question provided the sense of the oath was understood; but he would prefer the *status in quo* to the substitution of any oath which was not perfectly unexceptionable. He thought there were other grievances, such as that with regard to workhouses, which affected Catholics more seriously than the oath imposed upon Members of Parliament. For his own part he did not in the slightest degree feel that oath as a grievance; but still, as others deemed it to be so, he thought it was one which Parliament might fairly be asked to redress.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH said, that having presented to their Lordships upwards of 400 petitions against this Bill, and not having seen one in its favour, he desired to say a few words respecting it, out of respect to the numerous persons who had confided their petitions to him. There could be no doubt that the petitions in question spoke the strong Protestant sense of the country upon this subject—which was so familiar to the people of England that it was useless to split straws or make explanation respecting it. The people regarded the Bill as a direct attack upon a principle which they considered to be a buttress of the Constitution, and which ought to be resisted by all means in their power. When he first heard of the intended measure he naturally, as a citizen and a man moving in society, was anxious to learn some valid cause for such a Bill being brought in by the Government; but he had heard nothing except an expression of opinion from the noble Lord who had just sat down, that some redress should be given for grievances which he saw. But, surely, that was not a statesmanlike reason for the Government taking up the matter. He wished to refer to a statement signed by Mr. F. R. Wegg Prosser, a Roman Catholic gentleman of great respectability, which contained a description of an interview which had taken place between the noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) and a Roman Catholic deputation. Mr. Prosser stated his belief that all the Catholic bishops had been consulted about the oath, and though not aware of the precise nature of their answers, he thought some of them drew a distinction between taking an oath already made and being a party to enacting one; that any one who reflected on the subject must see how important the distinction was. For instance, no good Catholic could take part in passing such an Act as the Act of Settlement, because it excluded Catholics from the succession, yet he might subscribe to the oath after it had been enacted by persons over whom he had no controol. If the Government had not meddled with the oath for the purpose of obtaining a spurious popularity with the Roman Catholic priests of Ireland, their Lordships would not be in the situation in which they were at present placed. What future could they look to when the Roman Catholics were getting more and more power every day? For his part, he was totally opposed to the Bill and should say "Not-Content" to the second reading.

Motion *agreed to*: Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

PROTEST AGAINST THE SECOND READING.

DISSENTIENT:

"1. Because in my View 'The Parliamentary Oaths Bill' has the Aspect in the Hands of Her Majesty's Ministers of being the Result of a Demand on the Part of some One or more of the *Irish* Roman Catholic Members of Parliament for a Concession to be made to them of One of the Bulwarks of the Protestant Constitution and to the Spirit of the Papacy.

"2. Because the Roman Catholic Body in and previous to 1829 were Parties, through their Sponsors, to the Contract involved in the present Oath, and the sacred Cause of Morality is now violated before the Country by the Conspiracy at work to overthrow it.

"3. Because no Reason whatever has been advanced by the Government for this extraordinary Step. The Suggestion that the Oath is offensive to Roman Catholic Ears is not worthy of Attention, in comparison with the Fact that this Bill removes the Security from the Crown, Government, and Constitution of the Country involved in the sworn Protest of One thousand Protestant Members of both Houses of Parliament against the Papal Supremacy, at a Time when it is boldly asserted and maintained by the Papal Party throughout the Kingdom. The entire Protestant Institutions of the Empire, including the Protestantism of the Throne itself, might be thus alleged as a Grievance, to be redressed on a similar Principle.

"4. Because, That in the new Oath there are very serious Omissions, such as that of binding all Members of Parliament to disclose traitorous Conspiracies against the Sovereign, and withdrawing the Protection from the Throne involved in the Words 'to defend' it; Omissions which at a Time when the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended in one Portion of Her Majesty's Dominions in consequence of a wide-spread Conspiracy are calculated to promote an Anti-Monarchical Spirit, and encourage a seditious Feeling, especially in that Country.

"5. Because my Objection to the present Bill is strengthened by the Intention it evidently indicates on the Part of Her Majesty's Government to make further Concessions to the Anti-*British* Spirit of the Papacy and its Aggressions.

"WESTMEATH.

"GRINSTEAD."

COUNTY COURTS BILL—(No. 55.)

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

COMMITTEE. REPORT.

House in Committee (according to Order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he wished to do an act of justice to a number of gentlemen of great respectability who felt themselves aggrieved by correcting a misapprehension of what he had said on a previous evening. He was reported to have said—but he certainly did not intend to say—that the Government had introduced the clauses in regard to the treasurers on account of many defalcations on the part of the treasurers having taken place. What he stated was, that defalcations had taken place, not on the part of treasurers, but of inferior officers to the treasurers; that the Treasury had thought fit to look into the matter, and that they had come to the conclusion that the whole machinery of the treasurers was unnecessary, and that the investigation of accounts could be carried on as well without the treasurer as with him. He was very anxious to put himself right, because nothing could be more unjust than to charge him with attributing blame to a class of persons not one of whom, he was informed, had been charged with defalcations during the twenty years in which the County Court system had been in existence.

LORD CHELMSFORD said, he had received a number of letters from County Court Judges and high bailiffs, many of whom were opposed to this measure.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he did not ask their Lordships to pass the Bill *sub silentio*, but he was of opinion it would be highly advantageous to have only one judicial and one executive officer in each court.

Bill *reported*, without Amendment; and to be read 3ª *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter past
Eight o'clock, till to-morrow,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, April 16, 1866.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRIT ISSUED—*For* Cambridge Borough, *v.* William Forsyth, esquire, void Election.
NEW MEMBER SWORN—Julian Goldsmid, esquire, *for* Honiton.
PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — Convicts' Property; Bankruptcy Law Amendment, &c.*; Local Government Supplemental*; London (City) Corporation Gas.*
First Reading — Convicts' Property* [105]; Bankruptcy Law Amendment, &c.* [106]; Local Government Supplemental* [107].
Second Reading—Representation of the People [68], adjourned debate *resumed*, and again *adjourned;* Writs Registration (Scotland) [63]; Trusts (Scotland)* [65]; Lunacy Acts (Scotland) Amendment* [85]; Commons (Metropolis) [84], *deferred;* Customs Duties (Isle of Man)* [91].
Referred to Select Committee—Writs Registration (Scotland)* [63].
Committee — Railways Clauses* [60]; Public Libraries Act Amendment* [44]; Postmaster General* [25].
Report—Railways Clauses* [60]; Public Libraries Act Amendment* [44]; Postmaster General* [25].

REIGATE ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Granville William Gresham Leveson Gower, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Reigate.

That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed that the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

1. That Granville William Gresham Leveson Gower, esquire, was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery and treating at the last Election:

2. That it has been proved to the Committee,

That George Charles Beale received a bribe from C. J. Smith, the authorised Agent of the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower, with a promise of further payment on account of having voted for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower:

That Josiah Ede was bribed by a promise of £5 made to him by Alexander Rose to vote for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower, and was subsequently paid £2 by Frederick Joyce on account of having so voted:

That John Farringdon was bribed by a promise of £5 made to him by Frederick Joyce to vote for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower, and was subsequently paid £3 by the said Frederick Joyce for having so voted:

That James Peters was bribed by a promise of £4 made to him by Job Apted to vote for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower, and was subsequently paid £2 by the said Job Apted for having so voted:

That James Bonny was bribed by a promise of £5 made to him by Alexander Rose to vote for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower:

That James Hall was bribed by a promise of money made to him by Job Apted to vote for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower, and received 30 shillings for having so voted:

That Alfred Latham was bribed by a promise of money made to him by Job Apted to vote for the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower, and was subsequently paid £3 by C. J. Smith for having so voted.

3. That William Johnson and other Witnesses proved that a system of treating prevailed at the last Election.

4. That the said bribery and treating were practised without the knowledge and consent of the said G. W. G. Leveson Gower.

5. That corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last Election for the said Borough.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee to be laid before this House.—(*Mr. Hussey Vivian.*)

CAMBRIDGE BOROUGH ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That William Forsyth, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Cambridge.

That the last Election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of the said William Forsyth, esquire, is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

RE-DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

QUESTION.

Mr. MARSH said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Government has come to any final determination with regard to the promised Bill for the re-distribution of seats; what boroughs, if any, are to be amalgamated with others; what, if any, are to be totally disfranchised; what are to be partially disfranchised; and how the seats taken from those boroughs are to be distributed; and whether it is the intention of the Government to keep its views on these subjects concealed from the Members of the House of Commons until after the division upon the present Bill?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: In reply, Sir, to the threefold question of my hon. Friend I have to state that it is not our practice—it is certainly not mine—to consider any determination of the Government absolutely final, that is to say irrevocable, until the proper time has arrived for acting upon it by the production of our measures. Until that time has come, I cannot give him any information. With respect to the second part of the question, I may say that I think it is quite plain it cannot be answered satisfactorily from this bench except by the production of the Bill itself; while as to the third part my hon. Friend, it seems to me, simply asks whether the Government intend to do that which they have said they would do. I may perhaps misunderstand him, but if he wishes me to explain any point over and above that as to which a declaration has already been made by the Government, and on which he desires to receive information, I shall be glad to do so. In any case I shall, to obviate all doubt about the matter, take the opportunity to restate the intentions of the Government when I address the House on the Amendment of my noble Friend the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor.)

THE MALT DUTY.—QUESTION.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he wished to ask the hon. and learned Member for East Suffolk (Sir FitzRoy Kelly), in whose name a Notice of Motion on the Malt Duty stood upon the Votes for to-morrow, Whether he will consent to the postponement of that Motion until after the Debate on the second reading of the Franchise Bill was concluded? That debate could hardly, he was afraid, be brought to a close that evening, and it would be for the convenience of the House that it should be proceeded with from day to day with as little interruption as possible.

Sir FITZROY KELLY said, he should on all occasions be exceedingly happy to meet the convenience of the House and the wishes of the right hon. Gentleman in any way in his power. He would, therefore, postpone his Motion if the Government would give him a night for its discussion before the Budget was introduced. If not, he could not accede to the request of his right hon. Friend consistently with his sense of duty to his constituents.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that while admitting that the subject of the Malt Duty was one well entitled to consideration, it would not be compatible with the view which the Government entertained of the convenience of the House or of the exigencies of the public business to set apart a night for its discussion before bringing forward the Budget, which he was already under an engagement to hon. Members to introduce on the first available Government night after the second reading of the Franchise Bill.

SIR FITZROY KELLY: Then, Sir, I shall be obliged to proceed with my Motion to-morrow night.

FACTORY ACTS.—QUESTION.

LORD JOHN MANNERS said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of the Government, acting on the recommendation of the Inspectors of Factories, to introduce a Bill this Session for the consolidation and amendment of the Law on the subject?

SIR GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that a Commission had been appointed to inquire into the condition of women and children employed in occupations not under the Factory Acts, and that they had made two or three Reports, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the first of which a Bill had been passed extending the operation of those Acts to certain other trades than those to which they previously applied. Their further Reports were under consideration, with the view to giving effect to their recommendations in reference to other trades, and it would, he thought, be inconvenient, until the inquiries of the Commission were concluded, to bring in such a general measure of consolidation as that which the noble Lord indicated.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE—OBSERVATIONS.

SIR GEORGE GREY said, that he had a few nights ago undertaken to answer a question which had been put to him by the hon. Member for North Essex (Mr. Du Cane), as to whether his attention had been called to a Report which had appeared in *The Times* of the 13th instant, with respect to some diseased cattle which were said to have been smuggled into two farms belonging to Earl Granville and Colonel P. Talbot—not Lord Talbot, as the Report stated. He had not seen the statement until a few minutes before the question was put to him, and was unable to say whether it was correct, but he had promised to inquire into the matter, and he had since done so. The statement was as follows:—

> "Mr. F. H. N. Glossop, in moving for a rate of 1*d.* in the pound to meet the compensation required under the Cattle Plague Act, said, he regretted to have to state that in this county the cattle plague was increasing, and that great ravages of the disease had occurred in consequence of the introduction of diseased Dutch cattle by the ship *Mars*. These cattle were landed at Blackwall, and driven through the metropolis to the extreme verge of the county of Middlesex. These cattle had been smuggled in by the agents of Lord Granville and Lord Talbot. A hole having been made in a hedge they made their way into other farms. These cattle had died, and the worst of the matter was that this loss would fall upon the ratepayers. The committee had ordered prosecutions, but it was feared that the only persons who would be convicted would be the drovers, and not the persons who employed them, who were morally responsible."

Now the magistrate whose statement the hon. Gentleman had adopted was mistaken in supposing that proceedings could be taken only against the drovers. Informations were, in fact, laid against both Earl Granville and Colonel Talbot, and he had been informed that the case against the former had that day been heard before the bench of magistrates at Edgware; that it was proved that Earl Granville had left the management of the farm to his bailiff, but that since the cattle plague had broken out he had frequently, by word of mouth and in writing, desired him to be careful in observing all the provisions of the law. The bailiff was informed by the cow dealer whom Earl Granville always employed that he could deliver him some cows, having obtained the necessary licences. The dealer obtained a licence from Sir Richard Mayne to take some cows which had been certified to be free from disease to his own farm, which was within the metropolitan district. The dealer drove them to Earl Granville's quarantine farm, which was just beyond the district, and put them in a shed, where the bailiff subsequently inspected them. The bench of magistrates, after hearing the evidence, unanimously dismissed the case as against Earl Granville, and with regard to the dealer and the bailiff they expressed an opinion that they had unwittingly broken the law. The beasts, though it was very doubtful whether they had the disease, were killed by order of the inspector, and he was informed that there was no ground whatever for supposing that there was any communication of the disease to any other animals. With regard to Colonel Talbot, the case had not been concluded at the time when the information he had received left Edgware; but Colonel Talbot had himself published a statement on the subject in the newspapers, and he believed there was no doubt that the animals taken to his farm were taken there without his knowledge or direction, and merely on speculation. As he could not legally remove them, they were all killed, and no other animals could have been infected by them. The licence given by Sir Richard Mayne in each case was upon a certificate by Professor Simonds, who had inspected the animals on the part of the Customs, that they were free from disease. In the first case the licence was valid, as the dealer's farm was within the metropolitan district. In Colonel Talbot's case the licence was waste paper so far as it included his farm, which was just beyond the district, but directions had been given with a view to prevent any mistake as to the boundary line in any future case. All these cattle were killed, and he was informed that it was impossible that any other animals could have caught the infection from them.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[BILL 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING.

DEBATE RESUMED. THIRD NIGHT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was—

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. MAGUIRE said that, being untrammelled by party ties, which too often biassed the judgment and fettered the free action of public men, he would advocate, not that which would promote the interests of one party or the other, but that which, in his conscience, he believed would most conduce to the honour and dignity of the House of Commons. In dealing with this question he wished to put the three following propositions to the House: first, was Parliament really pledged to the question of Reform; secondly, was there any reason of an overpowering nature why that pledge should not be redeemed; and thirdly, was the present the time when the pledge repeatedly and solemnly given should be redeemed? With regard to the first proposition he would not go further back than the year 1859, nor look for any other than the high authority of the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, who was at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer, leader of the House of Commons, and spokesman of the Cabinet of Lord Derby. The right hon. Gentleman in 1859 introduced a measure of Reform, and declared that the Bill was the result of the decision of that most strange and extraordinary of all political curiosities—an undivided Cabinet; and that the question of Reform should be dealt with in an earnest and sincere spirit. The Bill was brought forward in pursuance of a pledge of the then Government on accepting office, and the right hon. Gentleman took great pains to prove how Parliament was pledged to the question of Reform by declarations in the House of Commons and in Royal speeches. The right hon. Gentleman stated that for fifteen years Reform had been a Parliamentary question, and for ten years a Ministerial question. Since that time other pledges had been given, and Reform was now become a Parliamentary question for twenty-one years, and a Ministerial question for sixteen years. He asserted, then, that the honour of Parliament was pledged on this question. If an individual Member of that House sacrificed the confidence of his constituents by the abandonment of his principles, and if a party lost the confidence of the country by the open abandonment of its principles, was not, also, the House of Commons likely to be endangered in the estimation of the public if, after all its solemn and repeated pledges, it now trifled with a question frequently declared to be of the greatest gravity and importance? There was said to be great danger in advancing one step on the road to democracy; but he thought the danger would be greater if, through the blindness and folly of statesmen, both sides of the House so trifled with this question as to allow the conviction to sink in the mind of the masses, that no faith was to be placed in Parliament. Such a conviction would have a more dangerous influence on the minds of the masses than any reduction of the franchise to any extent that might ever be conceived. Both sides of the House being pledged on this question of Reform, the next point to consider was, whether there was any overpowering reason why an attempt should not then be made to settle it? Why should not the House accept the Government Bill? In his opinion, it was a fair, a comprehensive, and yet a moderate measure, and would be accepted by the working classes as a fair settlement of the question for many years to come. He would endeavour to prove that no one of the cherished institutions of the country would be weakened or endangered by the passing of the measure, which admitted a large infusion of the democratic element into the electoral system of this country. Within a few years a great change seemed to have taken place in the minds, and undoubtedly in the language, of certain Gentlemen in that House with regard to the working classes. A few years back Gentlemen vied with each other in praising the working classes for their intelligence and virtue, and the exercise of the noblest qualities; but now it seemed that the working classes were to be dreaded as an invading army, dangerous alike to liberty and good government. He would refer to one of the latest instances of the conduct of the working classes, as proving their fitness for the exercise of the electoral franchise. An hon. Gentleman the other night endeavoured to prove that the working classes did not exhibit such very great self-denial during the cotton famine, because the country at large assisted them by subscriptions. He, however, asserted that there never was a severer trial for the working classes in this country than during the Lancashire distress. When by a state of things over which they had no control, and beyond even the control of the Government, 500,000 men were reduced at one stroke from a position of decent independence and moderate comfort to one of dependence on public charity or the local rates,—when they could bear with heroism, dignity, and self-denial, a terrible reverse of that kind, they were justly entitled not only to the consideration of Parliament, but to the confidence of their fellow countrymen. But then it was said, this Bill was too democratic in character, and too sweeping in its changes. He would ask those who brought in the Bill of 1859, could they object to a county franchise of £14, after bringing in a county franchise of £10? But the real cause of anger felt by some Gentlemen in that House was the proposed borough franchise of £7. During the fourteen years he had sat in that House several Reform Bills had been brought in. One of these offered a borough franchise of £6, and another offered one so low as £5; and were they now to be told that though no great alarm was expressed at that time, they should now be in a panic of apprehension because the moderate franchise of £7 was proposed to Parliament and the country? He asked Gentlemen to deal with this question in a practical spirit, and to take a common-sense view of the matter. He assumed for a moment that the Government carried this Bill, as he earnestly hoped they would—not that he cared particularly for the Government; but he did care for the honour of that assembly, and the respect the people ought to have for the free institutions and the well-balanced constitution under which we lived, and of which he was an enthusiastic admirer. Suppose the Bill carried, and that an election took place under its provisions. A new House of Commons would be created by the new electors; there would be an infusion of new blood, giving life, health, and strength to the representative system. In any essential characteristic, in any general feature, in, any element they wished to conserve, would there be in reality any difference between the House of Commons so elected and that which now existed? He asserted that there would be no material difference. In every respect it would be almost the same House of Commons. Would the landed interest fail to be represented? Would wealth fail to preserve its legitimate influence? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire gave a conclusive answer upon that point. He said, "The man of princely fortune has no more votes than the £10 householder, but his wealth, his station, and his character give him influence that will adequately represent his property." The aristocracy and the landed interest would have their full representation in the new House of Commons. Not only would the counties return the same class of men, but many a borough would be proud to take for its representative the scion of some noble house, or the possessor of broad acres. The navy, the army, and the bar would not be swamped by the £7 constituency. The *élite* of those professions would still find their way into that House. Men of letters, scholars, poets, historians, would not be disregarded by the democratic electors. Brighton would not overlook the merits of a scholar and a gentleman; and Westminster would still do itself honour by electing one of the foremost intellects of the day. No doubt there would be in the new House of Commons men whose only recommendation would be their money—*nouveau riche*—who had realized their wealth by industry and energy, or by luck, which was too often mistaken for both. But what element was more conservative than money, and who were more eager supporters of the institutions of a country than those who possessed it? But there was one class,that would not be represented directly in that assembly. The hon. Member for Westminster did not say, though he was charged by the leading journal with saying, that there would be a direct representation of the working classes by members of their own class. That was the only class that would not have their direct representatives in that assembly. The occupations to which they devoted their daily toil for the support of their families entirely precluded such a thing. Hon. Members need not, therefore, be alarmed that they would be jostled in the lobby or the dining room by men whose hands were hard with toil in some humble occupation. There were, indeed, numbers of that class who, from the gravity of their thought, the dignity of their demeanour, and the eloquence of their language, would do credit to any assembly in the world; but that class of men would not be found in that assembly. What then did they apprehend? There were certain Gentlemen in that House who had taken on themselves to lead the opposition to the Government, and range themselves as champions of the old institutions of the country, as they professed, against the hostile advance and dangerous innovation of the working classes. They seemed to apprehend the utmost danger from the passing of this Bill. But what right had those Gentlemen to speak in the name of their constituents, so called? He referred to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud, the right hon. Member for Calne, and the hon. Member for Salisbury. What right had they to speak to the House of Commons in any name but their own? Had they the right to speak even in their individual capacity in the name of their own constituency? Two of those Gentlemen were public men, public property, the property of the nation, and the nation was proud of them, though their own constituents were much discontented with their present course. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne was one of the most remarkable men of the age, and would take a leading position, no doubt, in future Administrations. No one regretted more than he did when a motion was carried in that House, in consequence of which he terminated his connexion with one of the most important branches of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud did Ireland the very great advantage of being its Chief Secretary: he really believed he was actuated by the kindest and most generous feelings to that country; and if again, with larger experience and deeper attachment to that nation, he resumed the office, he should be delighted to give him his humble and strenuous support. But the right hon. Gentleman, when Secretary for Ireland, was a decided Reformer, and had not the slightest fear of the £6 franchise of his Government. He did not even shrink with dismay from a £5 franchise. [Mr. HORSMAN: There was no £6 franchise Bill brought forward while I was in office.] Was there not a £5 franchise while the right hon. Gentleman held office? [Mr. HORSMAN: No.] Was he not a member of a Reform Administration when the question of Reform was brought before the House? ["No!"] He asserted that motions on the question of Reform were brought forward during that time by private Members ["No!"], and he adhered to his former assertion, that the right hon. Gentleman was a Member of a Reforming or a *quasi*-Reforming Administration. He asserted that the language they had heard the other night was never uttered previous to the year before last. In 1859 the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, voted for the amendment of Lord John Russell. [Mr. Horsman: No, I did not.] He meant to say that the right hon. Gentleman voted against that resolution, for he voted in the same lobby with himself, in favour of the Bill of Lord Derby. What, however, did he then say? He referred to the non-extension of the borough franchise as a great and palpable defect in the Bill. [Mr. Horsman: Hear, hear!] He should be delighted to hear what the right hon. Gentleman might say at a future time; but would he explain why in 1859 he was in favour of an extension of the borough franchise, while he was now appalled at the democratic proposal of the Government, who limited their proposal to a modest £7? To show further that the right hon. Gentleman had no right to speak in the name of the constituency of Stroud, he would refer to a resolution which was lately passed at a meeting in that town. [An hon. Member: How many electors were present?] The hon. Gentleman must consult the local records for that fact; but, if he was rightly informed, it was a public meeting, publicly convened, of those who were the supporters of the right hon. Gentleman, and who on former occasions had rendered him support. [Mr. Horsman: No; certainly not.] He was asked, however, how many electors were there, and in reply to that he would say—Suppose there was a meeting against the Reform Bill, and that electors were very thinly sprinkled among a great body of non-electors, would it not be said by the anti-Reformers that that was a most enthusiastic demonstration against the Government? The meeting first adopted a resolution in approval of the Government Bill, and the second resolution expressed indignation at the desertion from Liberal principles by the right hon. Gentleman, and declared that he no longer possessed the confidence of the Liberal party in the borough. The meeting, he understood, was a very large one, and the resolution was carried unanimously. He now came to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne; and if ever a Member of that House was called upon to explain the reasons why he had changed the opinions he held at former times—and times, too, not very remote—it was that right hon. Gentleman. In 1852 he made a speech at Kidderminster, which he (Mr. Maguire) might call a wild shriek in favour of democracy. The right hon. Gentleman then entertained no terror of democratic institutions, and he had since been a Member of Reforming Governments. He was a Member of a Government that proposed a £6 franchise; indeed, he was a Member of the Government which in 1852 brought in a £5 franchise. [Mr. Lowe: I was not then in Parliament.] In 1852 the right hon. Gentleman was preparing himself for taking office under a Liberal Government, and he offered to the people large and extended franchises. He should like hon. Gentlemen who cheered the right hon. Gentleman, and who might cheer him again that night or the next, to hear what he said of the Conservative party and the Conservative leader in 1852. His words were these—

> "'Nothing tends more to destroy confidence in public men than to see them contemptibly abandoning their pledges.' And he charged the Ministry of Lord Derby with having 'deceived their friends, falsified their pledges, and libelled the people of England.' . . . The 'Conservatives,' he said, 'had assumed a mission to exalt their horn against democracy—a great bugbear, which they intended to put down.'"

The right hon. Gentleman continued in a most remarkable passage, which he could assure the House was well worth hearing—

> "It is all very well to tell you about putting down democracy, but this country is not to be ruled like France or Germany; but, further than this, when they talk of suppressing democracy, they not only miscalculate their own power, but likewise the end and object of Government. It may be that in France when they elect a president they elect a master; but not so in England. Our Ministries are appointed to execute our will; it is from us that the original power is derived. We appoint them to make the laws obeyed, but not to say, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no further.' We can fix our limits for ourselves, not to be controlled by men who have been notoriously wrong in every principle. I will go even further, and say that not only is it the duty of a Government to refrain from a perverse opposition to public opinion, but that they are unable to read the signs of the times and unfit to be intrusted with the Government of this country if they cannot perceive that there is, by the permission of Divine Providence, an obvious tendency in this country towards democracy. The equalization is growing—railway trains carry alike millionaires and beggars—the telegraph carries alike the Queen's messages and those of her meanest subjects, and thus the distinction of classes is gradually breaking down. It is the duty of a Government to mark whither the people are tending, and to solve the problem, not by striving to show how the yearnings of the human mind may be stifled, but how a change

> may be effected with the least loss of that which we would gladly preserve."

The Australian colonies were now held up by the right hon. Gentleman and by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Marsh) as a terror and a warning to the Parliament and people of England. But what did the right hon. Gentleman say on that occasion?—

> "Before I quit the subject of Australia let me just say that I am glad to see that the Emigration Commissioners have made provision for transplanting thirty-five families from this town to that land of wealth and promise. When they arrive there each head of a family will find himself in possession of the elective franchise; and, Gentlemen, they owe that to myself."

MR. LOWE: Will the hon. Member allow me to explain? ["Order!"] Universal suffrage was not introduced into Australia for several years after 1852. The franchise of which I spoke was a £10 occupation franchise, introduced at my suggestion into a Bill for the government of Australia, which was carried through this House by the late Sir Benjamin Hawes.

MR. MAGUIRE asked what preparation there was for the attainment of that £10 franchise. None whatever. The moment the head of a family landed he was told by the right hon. Gentleman he was to possess the franchise without any schooling or preparation whatever. Manhood suffrage, however, existed at present in Australia, the votes being given by ballot; and notwithstanding what might be said by the right hon. Gentleman and by the hon. Member for Salisbury, he was not afraid of the example of the Australian colonies, for he believed that, so far from their being a terror and a warning to this country, the people of England had a right to be proud of the splendid group of those colonies, which were the noblest children of the mother country. The right hon. Gentleman, who formerly thought that, under Divine Providence, the public mind of the country was tending towards democracy, was not only afraid of democracy, but was alarmed at a £7 franchise, which he called democratic, but which he (Mr. Maguire) maintained was not so. It was only an infusion of new and healthy blood into our electoral system, and did not give the ascendancy to any class in the country. Now, considerable doubt existed as to what was the meaning of a celebrated speech made by the right hon. Gentleman a short time ago, and which created the impression that he was afraid of an inroad of the working classes. In the opinion of the working classes throughout the country the right hon. Gentleman had intended to wound and insult them. ["Hear, hear!" *and* "No, no!"] He did not say that the right hon. Gentleman had intended to insult them; but undoubtedly he had wounded them by saying that those who would be enfranchised by reducing the franchise to £7 were not fit to possess it. But it was not the first time of late years that the right hon. Gentleman had spoken in the same spirit of the working classes. The right hon. Gentleman in 1865, in speaking upon the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for Leeds, said—

> "This Bill will apply to the men who waste their time in these profitless and degrading pursuits, in order that they may be elevated and fished out of the mire in which they delight to grovel, introduced to power, and intrusted with control over the constitution of the country."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxiii. 1431.]

The right hon. Gentleman who, in 1852, had no horror of democracy, and welcomed this "providential institution," said in 1865—

> "I am no proscriber of democracy. In America it answers its purpose very well. In states like those of Greece it may have been desirable; but for England, in its present state of development and civilization, to make a step in the direction of democracy appears to me to be the strangest and wildest proposition that was ever broached by man."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxviii. 1437.]

Thus, in 1852, he asked the country to take a stride towards that democracy which he now regarded with such terror. The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to explain those contradictory opinions in a letter he sent to *The Times*. He therein said that he considered it very unfair to the working men who had already achieved the honourable distinction of the franchise, to mix them up with those who had not exercised the same prudence and self-denial. In the first place, he wished to ask the House of Commons whether the working men who had obtained the franchise were jealous of those who had not obtained it; and also whether it was wise to recommend the working man to sacrifice a large portion of his income for the mere purpose of obtaining the franchise. The Chancellor of the Exchequer some time since brought in a Bill, the object of which was to promote habits of frugality and saving among the working men;

whereas the policy of the right hon. Member for Calne would inculcate habits of extravagance, waste, and unthrift in compelling the working classes either to renounce the franchise, or to reside in a house the rent of which was above their means. Might not the man who received the lower wages be equally intelligent and as worthy of the franchise as the man who received large wages; and in such a case what wrong would the latter suffer by the admission of the former to a share in the electoral power? The electors of Calne had given their support to the Government Bill, and had declined to coincide in the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for Salisbury immediately on his arrival from Australia had delivered himself of a speech directed against the colonial institutions, in which he said that there was a great want of dignity and decorum in the conduct of their legislative proceedings, and warned the House against the £7 franchise as likely to establish a similar state of things in this country. Indeed the hon. Member for Salisbury was understood to have stated in this House that it was the habit in the Australian colonies for their Members to legislate in their shirt-sleeves. This assertion, however, was contradicted by many Gentlemen who were Members of the various Colonial Legislatures, who stated that the proceedings in those institutions were conducted with as much gravity and dignity as were manifested in the proceedings of that House. The example of the Australian colonies had been held out as a warning to this country; but was there anything very dreadful in their position? Let them take, for instance, the colony of Victoria, with a population which had increased since 1836 from 177 to 616,000, with an export and import trade amounting to upwards of £28,400,000, and which had exported to Europe in the last few years upwards of £135,000,000 of gold. In that colony education was sedulously promoted, religious equality was complete, and the laws were well administered and reverently obeyed, without the presence of a single soldier being requisite to enforce them, notwithstanding that the franchise was based upon manhood suffrage, while the elections were conducted with the greatest quiet, in marked contrast to many which had lately taken place in this country. He thought those facts were a complete answer to the speech of the hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Member for Hertfordshire had also warned them against the danger of a democratic franchise. The right hon. Gentleman prophesied that it would end in the destruction of the naval power of this country, and that the people would always be ready to rush into foreign quarrels upon the slightest pretext. He, however, denied that those who entertained democratic sentiments had the smallest desire to cripple the naval or military power of the State; and even Mr. Hume invariably voted for the Government on questions affecting our armaments, when it was shown that they were necessary to preserve our position and authority. Hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, too, were much more disposed to meddle in foreign affairs than were the working classes. The cause of Denmark in the Schleswig-Holstein quarrel was espoused by the Members of counties and Conservative boroughs, and not by the working classes; who even in the midst of their sufferings in Lancashire, resulting from the cotton famine, had not asked the Government to interfere in the American struggle, although they knew that the cessation of the war would be of the utmost advantage to their trade and industry. According to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wick, the institutions of this country, if we were not wise in time, would be swept away by the influence of democracy, and the principles of free trade and non-intervention would be abandoned with the passing of the £7 franchise. He felt convinced, however, that the working classes were too much alive to the advantages which had accrued to them from the adoption of free trade, to wish in any degree to change our policy in these respects. The hon. Gentleman also stated his belief, that if the working classes were admitted to a large share of power, an income tax of 2*s.* 6*d.* in the pound would be imposed; but he did not believe that this opinion could possibly be held by any other Member of the House. The Government were asked, why they had not included in this Bill, as had been done in 1852 and 1854, the question of the redistribution of seats; but the circumstance of the former Bills having included this question led to their rejection. It was natural enough that that should be the result; and he was only afraid that the Government had compromised the safety of the present measure in promising to lay upon the table of the House their scheme for the redistribution of seats before the measure now under consideration had been disposed of. The Amendment was an insidious, and, in his opinion, not an honest one; for its adoption would be death to the Reform Bill, and more than that, death to the honourable character of that assembly. He knew that many hon. Members who were Reformers voted against the Bills of 1852 and 1854, because their passing would insure the destruction of their constituencies, and deprive them of their political influence. With what favour did the House think the Bill would be looked upon by hon. Members who perceived in it their own death-warrant sealed by the sign-manual of Government? and even the Trappists, to whom the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer Lytton) had alluded, might, perhaps, not look with the same contentment upon graves dug by the hands of others as they would upon those which their own piety had induced them to dig. But, in reality, the lowering of the franchise and the admission of the masses to a share in our electoral system were the important questions, and the redistribution of seats only was the legitimate field for party contest. He had voted against Lord John Russell's resolution in 1859 because he believed the Government of that day ought to have been allowed to carry their Bill into Committee, where it might have received much improvement; and he hoped that the Opposition would in this instance allow to this Bill what had been refused to their measure of 1859. As compared with this scheme, the Bill of 1832 was a revolutionary measure, for the working classes of the present day were much more prepared for a £7 franchise than were the working classes of 1832 for one of £10. He did not believe any danger to the institutions of the country would arise from the passing of the Bill. There need be no fear in trusting the people; if any danger were to arise, it would be in refusing to trust them. As a working man had said a few days ago, the Government would not have been honest if they had asked the House of Commons to pass a more comprehensive measure than could reasonably have been expected to receive its approval; and he believed that had a scheme for the redistribution of seats been coupled with the present Bill, there would have been not the slightest chance of its passing this year. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), when leader of the House in 1859, asked:—

> "Is this question of Reform to be suffered to remain as a desperate resource of faction, or only to be taken up at a moment of great popular excitement, and settled, not by the reason, but by the passions of the people? Are we to establish, as it were, a chronic irritation in the public mind upon a subject which, of all others, should not form the staple of our party contests?"

This was a very strong opinion as to the danger of delay; and, in his opinion, the time had come when a settlement of the question could best be made. It had been urged against the Bill, that there was no excitement in the country in reference to Reform. If there was no excitement, at least great interest in the success of the present Bill had been manifested in all parts of the country, as demonstrated by the large number of petitions which had been presented to the House. There might not always be the same political calm in the country as now happily prevailed; and if any great disasters should happen to the people, and that in the midst of their misery they should also be goaded by a sense of wrong, they would not appeal to the House in the same calm and moderate tone. Advantage, therefore, ought to be taken of the present time for settling the question. He held in his hand an extract of a speech recently delivered by a working man of Todmorden, which was exceedingly creditable to him, and which fully showed that the working classes viewed the question of Reform with great solicitude, and that they had formed most enlightened opinions on the subject. Having read the speech, the hon. Member said, that if the House would show its confidence in the working men it would strengthen, and not endanger, the institutions of the country. The subject ought not to be made the staple of party conflict. He himself was not a party man; and, as he held that the Bill before the House would effect a fair settlement of the question, he felt bound to vote for it. Had the Conservative party been in power, and they had proposed a fair Bill, no predilection for one party or the other would have prevented him from giving it his cordial support.

Lord DUNKELLIN said, they were asked to agree to the second reading of this Bill as the first of a long series of measures which were to be carried through with the intention of materially altering and reforming our institutions. The question was by no means a new one, for it had been before the House for the last fourteen or fifteen years. When the question had been brought forward, during the time which he had had the honour of a seat in the House, he had thought it to be more consistent with his position to abstain from taking any part in the debates, and to content himself with giving a silent, conscientious, and cordial vote with the party with which he generally acted. If, on the present occasion, after much reflection and not without considerable pain, he found that he must dissociate himself from those with whom it had hitherto been his pride to act, he hoped that the House would allow him to state shortly why he must vote against the second reading of the Bill, and must give his support to the Amendment of his noble Friend (Earl Grosvenor). The reasons which induced him to take this course were founded — first, upon the manner in which the question of Reform was now brought before the House, and its various short-comings, which commended to his approval the clear and distinct positions which were laid down in his noble Friend's Amendment. In 1852, in 1854, and on subsequent occasions, when Reform Bills were brought forward, the course pursued had invariably been to lay upon the table of the House a full, distinct, and complete measure; and they were put into the position of considering what, according to the views of the Government of the day, embraced the question in all its bearings. But even under such circumstances, which were much more favourable to the consideration and adoption of the measure than those that now existed, the House had not been able to pass any Bill. The course which had been adopted on previous occasions was to his mind clear, sound, and intelligible; and had such course been adopted upon the present occasion they would, at any rate, have known what they were about! They would have been in a position to take into consideration the various matters that bore upon the question and their relations to one another, and might have hoped to have passed one whole harmonious measure, calculated to promote the end which every Member had in view—a satisfactory and final settlement of the Reform question. When he used the word final he meant only such a finality as could attach to any proceeding of that House, for he was not one of those who thought that a question of this kind could be settled permanently. Everything around us was moving onward, and the British constitution could not alone lag behind; the changes effected by time in our social system, the progress made in wealth and education rendered it necessary that our constitution should undergo the process of occasional improvement: but what they might have hoped to have arrived at was a settlement that would have lasted for at least one generation. But what was the position in which they now stood? Was it not to be feared that the course of the Government in laying one single chapter of their measure before the House, and asking them to accept that and blindly trust them for what was to come after, was more likely to disarrange than to settle the matter? He was not surprised that the Bill under discussion should bear signs of hurry, nor to hear of the haste with which it had been prepared. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that, at the first Cabinet meeting after the funeral of Lord Palmerston, a measure of Reform in the present Session was decided upon as being absolutely necessary, and, that being so, the very proper course of collecting information on the subject was taken. That information it took a long time to collect, but in such a hurry were the Government to introduce their measure that, instead of waiting to ascertain the result of the inquiry which they had ordered to be instituted, the Chancellor of the Exchequer owned, just on the eve of introducing his Bill, that he had not been able to obtain a copy of the Blue-book containing the statistics for his own private use. The Bill must bear signs of haste if it were founded upon these statistics. He did not blame the Government for the time which had been spent in collecting the statistics; nor would he blame them even if the report were true that they had consulted the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) before preparing the Bill; for the matter was of such importance that they were perfectly justified in seeking for information and assistance wherever they could hope to find them. Indeed it would, in his opinion, be the right and honest course for them to adopt, to take counsel with the hon. Member for Birmingham in the matter if they believed his views to be so much in accordance with their own as to enable them to obtain such support in framing their Bill as he could lend. But he must for his part take leave to say, that having studied the speeches and writings of the hon. Member for Birmingham, he could not help thinking that a Bill framed under his patronage was not one which would be likely either to secure his support or to disarm his suspicions. The hon. Member for Birmingham and those with whom he acted were willing to accept this as the first of the Reform measures, and he did so, not because it was final, but because it was a step leading to another, and perhaps another step, and would probably finish with almost universal suffrage. [Mr. Bright: I never said so.] He did not pretend to quote the exact words of the hon. Member; he was merely giving that which he believed to be the tenour of the views entertained on the subject by him and those by whom he was supported. Whether, therefore, the Government consulted with the hon. Member as to the sort of measure which they should introduce, or whether, by a curious coincidence, their views happened to agree with him in pressing forward their proposals after a partial and piecemeal fashion—especially when they were asked to pass one portion of a plan and to trust to the Government as to what the rest might be—the principle on which they acted appeared to him to be one on which it was dangerous to proceed, and which could not be otherwise than very unsafe as a precedent. Let him suppose that the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed a Budget, in which he should announce it to be his intention to take off the income-tax, stating that he would let the House know what further proposals he intended to make on a future occasion for the purpose of raising a sufficient revenue, would hon. Members below the gangway be likely to encounter such a mode of proceeding otherwise than with the most decided opposition? The right hon. Gentleman in his speech at Liverpool argued that the fact that the question of Reform had been brought before Parliament by so many different Governments of late years proved that the present House of Commons was bound to deal with it without delay, but that very fact in his opinion proved that the subject was one on which it was exceedingly difficult to legislate, and one which could not be disposed of lightly. Again; the right hon. Gentleman addressing the meeting at Liverpool, made use of a metaphor which, like everything that fell from him, was well suited to his audience. He asked them what would be their opinion of a man who, instead of meeting his engagements, went on constantly renewing them; but he (Lord Dunkellin) would ask, what would be the opinion of a merchant who, when the time came to take up his engagements, proposed to satisfy his creditor with a blank bill? This was really the position in which they stood at present. It was idle to say that the question of the franchise was not intimately connected with that of the redistribution of seats, or that the question of seats was not intimately connected with the question of the enlargement of the boundaries of boroughs. In carrying out the great question of Reform there was also to be a measure as to corrupt practices at elections; and then there were the Bills for Ireland and for Scotland—measures dealing with which were, if he was not mistaken, laid on the table on the very night on which a previous Reform Bill for England was introduced; not that they might clash with it, but with the view of placing the entire scheme before the House. And he, for one, must say that he should like, before they passed the present Bill, to have some information as to what was to be done for Ireland in the shape of Reform? Was anybody employed in collecting statistics on the subject in that country; and why were they being collected? Again; in what position, he should wish to hear, did the promised Bill for the redistribution of seats stand? When he saw the notice on the paper of the question which had that evening been put by the hon. Member for Salisbury on the point, he thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have returned something like a categorical answer, but in that he had been disappointed. He saw on the paper of to-day a notice of a question to be asked by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh) of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He (Lord Dunkellin) was curious to learn what answer he should receive. At the same time he anticipated that the right hon. Gentleman would not give him a categorical reply. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in answering the question, said that as he had never looked upon any measure of the kind as final and irrevocable, he had only to say that the Government proposition as to the redistribution of seats was not yet settled. Well, he (Lord Dunkellin) asked whether that was the way the House of Commons ought to be treated upon a question of this vital importance? But let them now consider the Bill itself. The main feature of it appeared to be the reduction of the borough franchise to £7, the abolition of the rate-paying clause, and the power of leaseholders in towns to vote for county Members. Now, he confessed, he failed to discover any possible reason why £7 should be fixed upon as the limit of the borough franchise. He could only suppose that, as some hon. Gentleman had proposed that the franchise should be reduced to £8, and others to £6, and some had advocated a Reform Bill which went down as low as £5, that the right hon. Gentleman had adopted £7 as a kind of compromise between both parties. Nobody, so far as he knew, had suggested a £7, and so far there was a degree of novelty and originality about the proposition; but no reason whatever had been given why that particular sum should be fixed upon. Whilst opposing the present measure he was by no means averse to the principles of Reform. He viewed with no alarm whatever an infusion of new blood into the existing constituencies. He thought that there had been a great deal of trash or foolish talk in regard to the common people—he meant "the lower" orders. When he saw their boasted friends in that House saying that the lower orders, whilst demanding the franchise as their right, did not mean to despoil the noble Lord, the Mover of the Amendment, of his property—that they were not all violent men, easily corrupted, or drunkards—his (Lord Dunkellin's) simple answer to all such foolish remarks was, Whoever said that they were? The party with whom he acted never charged the working classes with such faults; and therefore it was the height of absurdity for any of their friends in that House to set about vindicating them from charges which had never been made. He should be the last person conscientiously to say or think that the lower orders of his countrymen, as a body, were characterised by violence, drunkenness, or venality. He respected the working man who earned his bread by the sweat of his brow. He knew that there were many men amongst the working classes who were possessed of a good intellect; and whose clear perception and general information made them perfectly qualified to express an opinion upon the ordinary political questions of the day. But he also knew—and it was idle to deny the fact—that amongst the lower orders there were some who occasionally got drunk, who were not proof against the temptations of corruption, who committed violence, and who otherwise misconducted themselves in such ways as had been recently disclosed before certain Committees upstairs. On the whole, he believed that they were a good average class, and he would be glad to admit to the franchise those who by steadiness and prudence proved themselves entitled to it. But was, he asked, the present franchise totally out of their reach? Was it not possible by thrift and care for a working man to occupy a £10 house? He believed that it was, and he also believed that many of the working class who compounded for their rates and lived in cheaper houses did so in order to get more enjoyment and amusement out of their wages. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on a former occasion, asked what was the magic of a £10 franchise, or of the weekly earnings of 35*s*. He (Lord Dunkellin) asked now what was the magic of a £7 franchise? If the right hon. Gentleman objected to 35*s*. weekly wages as the standard of a man's capacity for the franchise, he (Lord Dunkellin) asked him what was the magic in the weekly earnings of 25*s*.? He had listened with pleasure to the very able speech of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) the other night; but it struck him (Lord Dunkellin) that the hon. Gentleman was somewhat contradictory in his arguments, when he held out the advantages of the working classes being represented in that House by Members of their own body, that those representatives would never be so numerous in that House as to make their influence much felt; and then when he added, that if the working classes were allowed to return Members of their own body to represent them, there would soon be established a school in every parish. The hon. member for Westminster said he would be content to accept this Bill if there were no other in contemplation. But this "if" made all the difference in the argument. Because he knew that there were many other measures in relation to this subject in contemplation, he (Lord Dunkellin) was of opinion that it was more advisable to wait until the whole scheme of Constitutional Reform was before them before the House committed itself to one particular fragment of it. He could not help comparing in his mind the speech of the hon. Member for Westminster with that of the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett). The latter hon. Gentleman, whilst contending that the opinions of the working classes were not sufficiently represented in that House, remarked that if they had been they would have been found in favour of our interference in behalf of Poland, and of going to war on behalf of Denmark. Now if the hon. Gentleman truly represented the opinions of the working classes, it was evident that they would exert their influence in that House to plunge this country into a war, and to involve us in all sorts of difficulties with Foreign Powers. Such a dangerous state of things could scarcely be imagined, and he thought that the speech of the hon. Member for Brighton was a most unlucky speech for him to have made as the friend and advocate of the working classes. The country would certainly think twice before running the risk of delivering the charge of the Foreign Office and of the Treasury to the representatives of classes holding such sentiments. Looking at the proposed £7 franchise as a compromise between the £8 and the £6 propositions, it appeared to him that this system of dealing with a great question of this kind was a most dangerous one; and, if permitted to be acted upon, there was no reason why the franchise should not be reduced lower and lower until they reached manhood suffrage at last. Indeed, it seemed to him that the arguments used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer tended very much to manhood suffrage. The right hon. Gentleman urged the right of the working men to a certain share in the representation by reason of the large contributions to the revenue of the country paid by them in proportion to their income. That point, however, had been ably commented upon by the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), when he said that the logical deduction from such an argument was, that in proportion to the quantities of spirits, beer, and tobacco, consumed by the working men, so were their rights to the possession of the franchise established. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appeared to be driving his coach fast down the hill without a drag. Now the drag which he (Lord Dunkellin) would suggest was the rate-paying clause, which was likely to last a great many years without breaking. It was a sound, clear, and intelligible principle. He did not think it was unreasonable, before voting for a representative who was to have a voice in the enactment of measures relating to the income and expenditure of the country, to require the elector to pay a small share towards the general taxation. He did not object to the £7 franchise if he knew that it was to be established upon any fixed principle. But by taking away the rate-paying clause the Government were removing the only safeguard against the electoral coach running at a dangerous speed down the hill, and landing us in universal suffrage. Another objection he had to the measure was the proposal to give leaseholders in boroughs the right of voting in counties. It appeared to him impossible to calculate the number of voters that would be created under this head. The principle which was here recognized was in his opinion a most objectionable one. Those were the three features of the measure which made it so objectionable to him. It might be said that the objections he had stated were merely technical, and might be considered in Committee. He went in his zeal for Reform so far as this: if the Bill had been met by hon. Gentlemen opposite with a direct negative, so as to prevent one from adopting the principle of Reform, he should have swallowed his objections and voted for the second reading. But when he found an Amendment moved which enabled him at the same time to express adherence to the principle of Reform, and also to state his objections to the particular measure brought forward, and the mode in which it was brought forward, he thought it more straightforward, manly, and honourable to support that Amendment, than to act but the part of a false friend and give it a stab in the dark in Committee. The Amendment of his noble Friend had been very much criticized by small men out of doors and by great men in the House. It had been criticized by the noble Lord at the head of the Government; it had been pooh-poohed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said he did not understand it, and probably no one could; and it had been mentioned by the Home Secretary as an Amendment without a principle — a dishonest measure, which would have no effect but to retard the settlement of the question. Now he (Lord Dunkellin) was astonished to hear the right hon. Baronet make that remark, because he was generally sharp and clear in discovering the meaning of much more abstruse sentiments. The right hon. Baronet said that the Amendment of his noble Friend could not bear any comparison with that moved in 1859 by the noble Earl now at the head of the Government. That, he said, was an Amendment which could be understood. It stated a principle, and there could be no mistake about it. But he (Lord Dunkellin) would take the liberty of saying that any one who read the Amendment of his noble Friend must put on it, as he did, this meaning—that it was as clear as the sun at noon day, that this House before it votes for a partial measure of Reform is anxious to see the entire scheme of the Government by which they intend to amend the representation of the people. It therefore appeared to him that the Amendment was distinct, honest, and sound. It was distinct—at all events, those on that side who voted for it were ready to consider the question of Parliamentary Reform with a view to its settlement. Were they now considering the question with a view to its settlement? Now he (Lord Dunkellin) would just put it to the right hon. Gentleman in his calmer moments to say who were really the parties that were unsettling the question. Were they not those who were forcing on a fragmentary and partial measure—a portion of a scheme so dark and uncertain that it even forced those who generally supported the Government to ask them for further explanation? Let the whole scheme be placed before them, and they would at once proceed to consider it. They had before them the Bill for the Representation of the People, which would probably in the course of this week pass through its second reading. ["Oh!"] Well, he would assume that it would pass a second reading. But, before going into Committee they were to be favoured with a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats—a measure intimately connected with the Franchise Bill, and one which he believed would be brought in chiefly in consequence of the unwieldy mass of voters which the present measure would add to the constituencies. He contended that those two measures ought to be looked upon as one and the same Bill, and to be considered at the same time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had clearly shown that, with the time that must be taken up in the discussion of this Bill, and other measures which must be passed this year, it was almost impossible to get another Reform Bill discussed this Session. In what position, then, were they placed? Suppose this Bill passed both Houses and received the Royal assent, and that Parliament was summoned next year to consider the Bill which would be laid on the table this Session, for the Redistribution of Seats, did any one suppose that it would not be fought with the utmost pertinacity? He recollected some years ago listening with great pleasure and satisfaction to the glowing eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman whilst delivering a clever speech in defence of the small boroughs. He (Lord Dunkellin) looked forward with much pleasure to an equally eloquent speech of the right hon. Gentleman on the subject of the disfranchisement of small boroughs. Many of those boroughs which the right hon. Gentleman now doomed would die hard, and there would be an eternal squable about the redistribution of seats. The Distribution of Seats and the Franchise Bill were so intimately connected that he should like to put the questions which had been placed on the paper by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh). What boroughs was the right hon. Gentleman going to disfranchise? To what constituencies was he going to give new members? Were the counties to have an increased representation? The towns in the north would put in an extensive claim to be considered. Was the right hon. Gentleman going to divide the new Members equally between the counties and the northern towns; were any to be given to the southern towns, or was a preponderance to be given to the manufacturing towns? These were questions which affected the constitution of the House of Commons, and it was most desirable that they should be answered. Suppose this Bill went through its different stages and became law, and suppose that, in the course of next Session, the Government should fall, and that the measure for the distribution of seats was thrown out—where would they be then? They would pass this Bill, increasing the constituency, on the understanding that fresh seats should be formed; but the result might be that they would find large constituencies without boroughs. He did not know whether the Government meant to stand or fall by their Borough Boundaries Bill, as well as by their Bill for the Redistribution of Seats. It was a most inconvenient thing to have this standing or falling of the Government continually hanging over their heads. It was objectionable to have the sword of Damocles always suspended over their heads. If the House was always to have this threat impending over them, and to be told, "For God's sake don't do this or that, for the Government are going to stand or fall by it," their public and private business could not be satisfactorily carried on. He should like to have some idea, before they passed this Bill, of the increase that would take place in the voters, and of the manner in which sects were to be apportioned. To use a homely simile, he should like to know the depth of the stream before he took a header into it. That Bill, they were told, would be laid on the table after the second reading; but the present Bill was brought forward originally as a final measure, though the Government had since yielded to the persuasions of their friends, and had given notice of other measures. Therefore, the question put by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), as to what guarantee they had that they would be able to pass a Redistribution Bill was a most pertinent one. During the recess, the Government might listen to other persuasions of other friends, and the Bill might be so altered that next year they would not be able to recognize their friend. They were asked to place implicit faith not only in the honesty but in the wisdom and sagacity of the Government. Now the head of the Government had made several efforts in favour of Reform, but without success; what certainty was there of the noble Lord being more successful with the Bills referred to? The noble Lord was a man of independent mind, and of a strong will; he had attained a great reputation by his Bill of 1832; and, on the strength of it, as a member of many Cabinets, occasionally took steps which did not meet with the concurrence of his colleagues, for the plain and simple reason that he had not submitted his views to their consideration. Could they place a blind and implicit confidence in the Government of which the noble Lord was the head, with regard to a matter which was not yet before them, and which might be modified before they came to be submitted to the Parliament? No one could tell therefore what might not happen to these other Bills during the recess, and they might find themselves obliged to reject or modify them, in spite of the Government standing or falling by them. The Reform question ought surely to be dealt with by one Bill, so that they could consider the franchise and the redistribution of seats at one and the same time. Hon. Members were urged to vote for the second reading on the ground that they thereby simply affirmed the principle of lowering the borough franchise; but would they not thus also affirm the principle of patchwork and piecemeal legislation? They were asked to swallow the powder of the franchise in full confidence of having the jam of redistribution after it. This, however, was not a wise or constitutional method of dealing with the question. The Amendment really expressed his view, which was that it was inexpedient to legislate on Reform, with a view to a settlement, until they had the whole scheme before them. He had heard different motives assigned for voting for the Bill. Some would vote for it because they thought it would be an easy way of getting rid of it; some because they wanted more Reform, and some because they were disappointed in their political aspirations. He had no sympathy with those who wanted to get rid of it in an underhand way; none with those who wished for no reform, and none for those who were disappointed in their political aspirations. He did care, however, and did take an interest in the constitution of the country; a constitution which had lasted for 600 years. [An hon. MEMBER: Only since 1832.] Parliamentary institutions, he was right in saying, had been in existence 600 years. But to take only the last thirty years, had not the House fairly reflected public opinion? Had they not reduced taxation, promoted education, removed religious disabilities, ameliorated the condition of the poor, and produced a feeling of general comfort and contentment in the country? He wished to see our Constitution improved and fortified by the widening of its portals, but the fabric was not so rotten that they should pull it down without a minute's consideration. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that there had been enough of idle and mocking words, and that deeds were what were wanted; but the Government were only likely to increase the flow of idle and mocking words by proposing legislation in shreds and patches. Let the right hon. Gentleman bring in one whole and perfect scheme, showing his views and ideas of what ought to be a complete measure of Reform. Let them have such a Bill before them, so that they might consider it, not in a party spirit, but in a clear and considerate way, with a view to a final and satisfactory settlement of the question —to a settlement not less constitutional than satisfactory, because it would be founded on sound constitutional principles.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER: I regret to stand in the way of the hon. Gentleman who is a new Member (Mr. M'Kenna); but in the present Parliament we are all new Members. I hope the House will give me its attention for a few minutes while I address it on the subject under consideration. But before doing so I wish to make a few remarks on the speech of the noble Lord who has just sat down, and others who have supported the Amendment. I think the House must see great inconsistency between the terms of the Amendment and the speeches of the hon. Gentlemen who support it. With the exception of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), all those who have spoken in favour of the Amendment, from the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) to the noble Lord who has just spoken (Lord Dunkellin), have discussed the merits of the Bill, although the Amendment expressly says that it is inexpedient to do so till the whole Bill is before the House. They have shown why the franchise should not be reduced, or why it should not be reduced in the manner proposed by the Bill. What they should have done, therefore, was to propose an Amendment, declaring that it was inexpedient for the House to pass the Bill. But they knew that it would not have answered their purpose to meet the question in this direct way. For five or six nights more the House will probably continue to discuss this Bill, and all the Members who will in discussing it have shown reasons against it will vote together for the Amendment, which says that it is inexpedient to discuss it at all. Is not this trifling with the question? The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) did not take that line, for he took care not to discuss the principle of the measure. He dealt frankly with the House. He did not support the Amendment on the ground of opposition to the principle of the measure, and indeed he gave hopes that before long we would find him as earnest a reformer as any of ourselves. But other Members opposed the £7 franchise, which they looked upon as something terrible. The right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) said he was opposed to any reduction of the franchise, and he gave his reasons for that view. Now, what is the issue raised by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley)? It said,

> "It may be right that the franchise should be reduced, and reduced in the manner proposed. It may be that such reduction would not be impolitic or dangerous; it may merely give to the non-electors a right which they had a right to demand; but we will not give them those rights before a redistribution of seats, for it would make the absurdity and anomaly of the small boroughs more glaring."

But that, I contend, is no argument against this Bill, though it may be an argument against small boroughs. But, after all, that is not the real question at issue. The real question is, Whether the borough franchise should be reduced, and reduced in the manner now proposed? I hope the House will allow me to say a few words on this part of the question, with a view of showing why the franchise should be reduced, and reduced precisely in the manner proposed by my right hon. Friend. For myself, I should prefer to see that reduction carried much further; and if three or four years ago I had been told that a Liberal Government would propose such a moderate measure, I should have been surprised; and still more surprised if told that it would be rejected by the Conservative party. But because we are now willing to accept this moderate measure, is that any reason why Conservatives should refuse it? You— the Conservative party—may say that you would not be satisfied if in our place. You may think our confidence in the noble Lord at the head of the Government and in my right hon. Friend misplaced; but because we have confidence in them, and because, on account of that confidence, we are induced to accept a more moderate Bill than we otherwise should, is that any reason why you should complain of that confidence? I am looking at the question from your point of view. I have always endeavoured to put myself in the point of view of those who are opposed to me; and looking at this question from that point of view, I am surprised that you, the Conservatives, do not accept this Bill. If you knew the working classes as well as I do, you would accept it. I am now speaking of the borough franchise only, not of the county franchise. I have no doubt that on both sides of the House there is a feeling that a larger number of the working classes, that the *élite* of that class, ought to be admitted to the franchise. The right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), indeed, takes his stand upon the £10 franchise; he says that working men have been admitted under that franchise, and that they would be more and more admitted in the course of time. But I think we are entitled to ask the right hon. Gentleman, if such be his opinion, how it was that he continued to be a Member of a Government which proposed to reduce the franchise to £6? The right hon. Gentleman, like other persons, is of course entitled to change his opinions; but I should like to know what were the arguments, and what was the process of the operation which induced him to do so. From St. Augustine to Dr. Newman the most convincing and informing records of conversions have been those in which men have described the process in their own minds by which they were brought about; and if the right hon. Gentleman would only give his confessions and the reasons which brought him from a £6 to a £10 franchise, I for one should receive them with pleasure. But it is generally acknowledged that there ought to be some admission of working men. I think that the Government might have lowered the franchise to £6 without danger. But of the various modes which have been proposed for the admission of working men to the franchise, I believe the proposition of my right hon. Friend is the least fraught with danger. It is really a safer mode of accomplishing the object than the educational franchise proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Hull (Mr. Clay), in his able speech. The educational franchise would admit by picking and choosing the young men who had just left school and finished their education; whereas the Bill of my right hon. Friend will admit the hard-working heads of families—that is, those who have the security of having hearthstones of their own. In the town which I represent what will be the effect of this Bill? You reduce the franchise to £7, but in reality a man will have to pay *3s. 6d.* a week in rent and rates before he can become possessed of the franchise. If you go through the great manufacturing towns, you will find the occupiers of these *3s. 6d.* houses to be composed, in the great majority of cases, of hardworking heads of families, skilled artizans, men who exhibit much self-denial in order to be able to lodge their families in houses somewhat better than those about them. The noble Lord opposite seems to think that the artizan has only to exhibit a little self-denial to obtain a £10 house, but I should myself be very sorry to exhibit the self-denial which would be necessary for such a purpose. Why, Sir, such men are as far removed from the general notion of a mob as it would be possible to conceive. If you ever mixed with a mob you will find that such men were not in it. They are men who are obliged to work hard; they may, it is true, have some profligate individuals amongst them, as there are amongst all classes, and you cannot introduce any class so as to effectually exclude such men. You must take a section, a rude slice; and even looking at the question from the most Conservative point of view, you could not get a safer slice than that which we now offer, and which is, in fact, a slice from the top. These working men are as loyal as any other class of Her Majesty's subjects; indeed, it is only insulting them to praise their loyalty, and so far from being too democratic, they have a great respect for authority. My experience of them certainly goes that way, and nothing more surprises me than when I hear them accused of being wanting in respect for authority. In those large towns where a large portion of the population is not in communion with the Established Church, there is often no man more respected than the vicar; indeed, when Dr. Hook left Leeds, there was no more respected or popular man in the borough. That, it is true, may have been a special case; but wherever the vicar does his duty, he is respected by the working people. Something of the same kind applies to the feelings entertained by working men towards gentlemen. There is something in the position of the genuine working man, the receiver of wages, that renders him more independent than the small shopkeeper; and whilst I have observed that he cares little for mere wealth or rank, there is none who entertains more respect for those qualities which we understand as constituting a gentleman. The hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) says all this may be true, but that it is not the working man he is afraid of, but his leaders. That was an announcement which would not much please working men, because it is telling them, "We do not take you for rogues, but for fools, and we fear the leaders which you will foolishly follow." No man has watched the working classes more attentively than I have. I have attempted to lead them, and not seldom I have not succeeded; they heard me attentively, but they would not follow. I can give a striking instance, an open-air meeting at Leeds, similar to that lately held, where 10,000 men stood out through a cold damp day for a political object. I believe that after the repeal of the Corn Laws there was no more popular man than the late Mr. Cobden. He was elected for the West Riding in his absence, but when he came down to Leeds to address a large meeting of working men on the subject of the Russian war, against the policy of which he entertained very strong opinions, the working classes received him most cordially, they cheered him frequently, and when the question was put to the vote they voted against him ten to one. This shows, I think, that the working men can follow their own opinions. In the article in a great Tory review which was alluded to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, allusion is made to the conduct of certain working men in Sheffield, as a reason why we should not pass this Bill. But are we, because certain individuals in a restricted trade have acted badly, to refuse electoral privileges to the whole body of working men? Is that sound reasoning? Then the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) is taunted with the want of education exhibited by the children in Manchester; but hon. Gentlemen opposite are aware, that whilst this Bill admits 200,000 of the working men to the franchise it excludes one million, amongst whom will be 20,000 in Manchester alone, most probably the fathers of these uneducated children. But now we come to an argument which strikes me as being the most extraordinary of all. It is said that the working men may as individuals be loyal, men of sound practical knowledge and good intentions, but that they are to be feared because they are members of large and extensive classes, who may, not now, but at some future time, become so numerous and influential as politically to swamp all the other classes of the community. They are fit as individuals, and not as classes. Why? At some future time they may overwhelm the rest of the community. This Bill, it is said, will form a precedent. You admit men now because they are fit, but hereafter so many will be admitted as to be unsafe for the balance of the Constitution. That, in fact, is as much as to say—do not admit men now, however fully they may be entitled to admission, lest at some future time too many should obtain admission. Now, what does this dangerous class consist of? The noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne) told us that the Bill would be a transfer of the taxing power, and that the working classes would have the power of taxing all the rest. What, I ask, is to be the mysterious bond of union amongst these men, who have never acted in union before, and who in the nine boroughs in which they are known to have the majority have returned so many Members to sit on the opposite benches? I can understand but one bond of union. It has been urged outside of this House, that the men who now strike for wages will soon begin to strike for political power. We who are employers know how difficult it is to maintain those trade organizations, and we are not afraid of them, and we think it a delusion to imagine that there can be any political union got up between the miners of Cornwall, the masons of London, and the mill hands of the North. But I would not say so much if you persist in withholding the franchise. If you keep the receivers of wages from the franchise because they are wage receivers, you then give them a real bond of union. They are in fact excluded at this moment. I know the returns give a total of 120,000 working men as exercising the franchise, but if you take from that number the men who keep shops, or who work at home and keep apprentices, you will find the actual number of wage receivers to be much smaller, so small as to make the class of wage receivers to be more excluded from the franchise than any other class in the community. If you continue to keep them excluded you will give them a real bond of union, and if you keep them excluded too long you may at last induce them to make the trades union a political engine. As a buyer of labour myself, I say that you could not take a more effectual mode to embitter the question. Well, I have given you my reasons why these men are fit for the franchise, and why there should be no cause for their exclusion; and these are my reasons for thinking this Bill a conservative measure. It is not a final settlement of the franchise. It is not intended to be a final settlement; but this I honestly believe, that it will be a settlement of the question for a period longer than our political lives. It is not so easy, I must remind the House, to get up frequent agitations on questions of this kind. Gentlemen may laugh, but if they were working men themselves, they would find it not so easy to leave work and lose wages for the purpose of attending political meetings. This will be such a settlement that there will not for a long time be any effort to get any other settlement. It will get the more active amongst the working men into the franchise, and they will be satisfied. I believe, further, that if the country goes on in prosperity, it will be a self-adjusting franchise, and that is another reason for my accepting it as a settlement. I shall give but one or two reasons more why I think the House ought to pass this Bill. I do not think it need be frightened: I do not fear a violent agitation like that of 1832. There will be no men from Birmingham marching to Palace Yard; no burnings in Bristol. I do not believe that there will be even any alarming accident: but this I do believe, that if you decline to legislate, you will even have a different state of things to deal with. You will have to deal, not with the friends of the non-electors, but with the non-electors themselves, better taught, with more concentrated power, and with cheaper political information to guide them towards organization. They are increasing in power and in intelligence every day, and if you refuse them the moderate boon they ask now they will lose all faith in Parliament, and take the settlement of their political rights into their own hands. We have been told, and properly told, that the *onus probandi* lies with those who would exclude the working man, and you will find that *onus probandi* a very difficult argument to deal with when you are proving to the working man that it is not safe or proper to give him a vote. The question will be changed from to whom should a vote be given, to from whom shall you keep their rights? If I were looking merely to the interests of Radical Reform, I should be very easy about the result of this debate. The cause of Radical Reform will not suffer from the rejection of this Bill; but we have other things to do besides extending the franchise. We want to make Ireland loyal and contented; we want to get rid of pauperism in the country; we want to fight against a class much more to be dreaded than the holders of a £7 franchise—I mean the dangerous classes in our large towns. If we can get into Parliament those who are more immediately above them, we shall be able to legislate more efficiently for them. We want to see whether we cannot make for the agricultural labourer some better hope than the workhouse for his old age. We want to have Old England as well taught as New England. Why not come forward with this first step, and have no fears for the result? I want to ask the vast majority on both sides who take a patriotic and not a party view of this question, whether you are taking a safe course in opposing the growth of the people and the progress of civilization? I believe you could not if you would, and I trust you would not if you could. I am myself called an advocate of democracy, and it is little matter what so humble an individual as I am should think; but I am not one of those who wish that the great conservative force of this country should lose its power. I believe it is necessary for the welfare of the nation; and I ask all Conservatives, whether those opposite or those behind me, why not look at the question as true conservatives, and not let the fabric of the state fall to ruin for the want of a little necessary repair? I ask whether you would not be acting the part of true

Conservatives by assisting us in settling this question, and thus make available for the future the memory and experience of the past.

Mr. M'KENNA said, that in rising to address the House for the first time, he was afraid he might go over ground already trodden: he would, however, endeavour to confine his remarks to the precise issue before the House, travelling out of that line as little as possible consistently with clearness. It might be well to state thus early, as it would tend to throw light on his future observations, that he intended to vote for the Amendment. He did so because he wished to show that he did not place a blind confidence in the Government. In adopting this course he denied that he opposed Reform: he believed that several measures of Reform were needed, one for each of the three countries constituting the United Kingdom; but in making this admission he claimed that the confidence of the House should not be abused, and that they should know what the bill of fare was. Now, the Ministry had brought forward their measure, not merely in a piecemeal manner, but they had failed to indicate what their bill of fare was. The noble Lord who last spoke upon the subject had said, that the Ministers were serving out the powder now, and promised that they should get the jam hereafter; but he would, perhaps, be pardoned if he were to say that they were being coaxed into taking the jam now, and that they would be forced to take the powder afterwards. The proposition of the Ministry was pretty nearly this: they said, "Take this dish which we now offer you, which certainly ought to be palatable. Take it, and when you have taken it, what we offer you next we promise you, whether palatable or not, shall at least be wholesome." He thought the House was entitled to have the full confidence of the Ministers extended to it before it placed them on the vantage ground which would give them a powerful constituency at their back to force their wishes on the House, or to carry other measures in a future Parliament to which this House would not now consent. Many reasons had been urged on the Ministerial side of the House in favour of the Bill, to many of which he gave his full assent; and he granted that the arguments of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. S. Mill) had great power in them. The arguments of the hon. Member for Westminster in support of the Bill were characterised by great force. He contended that although the Bill might be only a fragment of Reform, yet it was a good Bill in itself, and ought to receive the assent of the House on its own merits. That was a reason for voting for the Bill, which, however unanswerable it might be when addressed by one Member to another, was untenable as proceeding from the Treasury Bench. For on the part of the Government there was no allegation that they did not know what they proposed to do next, and next, and last. In dealing with the question, they must be guided by some definite policy on the question of Parliamentary Reform; and why did they, he would ask, refuse to confide that policy to the House of Commons, and make themselves at the very outset accountable for their complete scheme? Some hon. Members on their own side admitted with great candour that they did not do so, because, if the House was aware of what was to come they would not have the Bill at all. They had not then before them any proposal for the redistribution of seats or for the amendment of the representation of either Scotland or Ireland: therefore the question at issue was not simply whether the Members for England and Wales would be satisfied with the Bill for the redistribution of seats which was to be introduced, there was the further question whether the Scotch and Irish Members were contented that the Reform Bills for those countries should be kept from their knowledge while they were asked to vote in favour of the measure under discussion. He would appeal especially to the independent Members from Ireland who had pledged themselves to their constituents to oppose every Ministry which should refuse to bring forward a proper scheme of Reform for that country, and which was not ready to introduce remedial measures of a still more urgent nature, whether they thought they were redeeming their pledges by lending their support to the Government while the Habeas Corpeas Act was suspended, and the gaols in Ireland were crowded with political prisoners? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, it should be borne in mind, had adduced no argument to show that the Bill under discussion was a measure of a pressing nature; but there were a great many grievances of which Ireland had to complain, which called for remedy very urgently indeed. If then, by the aid of the Irish independent Members, the Government were able to carry their Bill, they would be making them masters of the situation, and leaving them totally unpledged to introduce those measures which these very Members had been sent to Parliament to advocate. That, in his opinion, was not a wise course for the Irish Members to pursue; and he denied that the arguments in support of the Bill which had that evening been urged by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Maguire) were proper arguments, coming from a Liberal Irish representative; because there was such a thing in the political arena as the maintenance of the balance of power, and the expediency of providing as far as possible that no particular class should secure such an influence all at once as to leave another class or country at its mercy, or at the mercy of a probable combination. At the commencement of the Session it was very generally said that the views of Ministers on the subject of education in Ireland were very sound, taken in an Irish and Roman Catholic sense. A Notice, however, had been placed upon the paper, that a Question was to be asked on the subject of the intended reforms; and the education question disappeared, in consequence, it was supposed, of some mysterious communication directly or indirectly made to the Government by some forty or fifty Members sitting on their own side of the House, who stated that if the Government did not accede to their views with regard to national education in Ireland, they must not expect their support. There was in fact nothing which ought to induce the Irish Members to vote for the Bill. Of course it might be that the intentions of the Government on that and other questions affecting Ireland were good; but, then, they had given no such evidence of their desire to act in the spirit of these intentions, if they entertained them, as would justify him in voting for them on such an occasion as the present. Their proposal with respect to Reform had been characterized as one inviting Members to take a leap in the dark; but he (Mr. M'Kenna) looked upon it rather as an invitation to leap into the dark, to leap out of the light upon ground, it might be firm, but still ground enveloped in darkness. A very accomplished and skilful, but yet a wayward, guide urged him and others to take that leap; but he trusted he would be forgiven if he, for one, preferred retaining such footing as he had on the Constitution; and unless his guide showed him a map of the road he should, to use a phrase which had been used in another sense a few evenings before, decline to follow him up the mountain. Adverting to another topic he would observe, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, as the House was aware, such a master of statistics, such a wizard of finance, that the inference from what he said, in dealing with figures, seemed to be greater than was apparent on the surface. In moving the second reading of his Bill on Thursday last he had, with the purpose of refuting certain false theories which he said prevailed on the subject to which he was addressing himself, put his argument on the question in the following shape:—He estimated the income of the working classes as being five-twelfths of the aggregate income of the United Kingdom, while those who held that amount of income, which paid so large a portion of the national taxes, possessed only one-seventh of the electoral power of the country; and the right hon. Gentleman seemed to infer that, if we retain that proportion of the representation, we ought to change our whole system of taxation. The right hon. Gentleman left out of consideration the fact that the working classes—at least those whom the Bill before the House would enfranchise—escaped to a great extent the pressure of taxation, for a man earning 35*s.* a week who might have a vote would not, for instance, be liable to the income-tax. He (Mr. M'Kenna) believed that the income of the working classes amenable to taxation was not one-seventh, nor so much as one-twelfth, of the income of the country. It had been intimated that the Government regarded the Amendment of the noble Lord, the Member for Chester, as a vote of want of confidence; but the question did not concern a want of confidence; but the point was whether that House would vote a blind confidence in the Ministers, who, knowing perfectly what they intended to do should the present Bill be carried, would not favour the House with the smallest portion of their confidence. He certainly was not prepared to extend to them his confidence in the circumstances under which they had brought the subject under the notice of the House.

SIR JOHN SIMEON said that the Bill had been received, as might be expected, with aversion on one side of the House, and with no great amount of enthusiasm on the other; but he thought that, as the discussion proceeded, Members upon the Ministerial side of the House were beginning to view the Bill in a truer and fairer light than that in which they were at first inclined to regard it; and as it was discovered that the motives of the Government were honest, their measure was receiving more general acceptance. He did not himself entirely approve of it, and should have liked to see a more complete, a more comprehensive, and, in some respects, a more philosophical measure; but he did not for a moment doubt the propriety of supporting the Bill as it had been introduced: he was not going to allow himself to be drawn aside by the red herring which the noble Lord the Member for Chester had trailed across the scent. It was not for him to attempt to fathom the motives of the noble Lord: he might, for aught he knew, be an earnest Liberal and a true friend of Reform; but he (Sir J. Simeon) could not follow him in what he could not but consider a deplorable act of political suicide, the attempting the destruction of a Liberal Government by the help of Liberal votes. They had been told that this Motion ought not to be regarded as a vote of want of confidence. Now, in his opinion, it was emphatically a vote of want of confidence; and after the assurance that the Bill for the Redistribution of Seats would be laid on the table immediately after the passing of this measure, and that the Government rested their position in the House and the country as much upon the Bill for the Redistribution of Seats as upon that for the improvement of the franchise, it was a want of confidence not only in the administrative power of the Government, but in their honour and plighted faith. The right hon. baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton), in his able speech on Friday last, flung across the table a sarcasm on a large portion of the Liberal party, and affected to believe that they were ready to vote upon that occasion in direct antagonism to all their political convictions. But he (Sir J. Simeon) entirely repudiated that charge for himself, and he believed he might add for hon. Gentlemen around him. He felt that he at least stood unaffected by those sarcasms, and that he could stand erect, and look the right hon. Gentleman boldly in the face, even were he to hurl his heaviest volume across the table of the House at the devoted heads of Liberal Members. He was not going to weary the House with statistics, of which they have had enough and to spare, and were likely to have more. He desired only to state the common sense view of the question which he entertained, and which, he believed, was held by a large majority of reasonable men throughout the country. No one could doubt that a Reform Bill must one day be passed; and it was equally impossible not to see that they would not, by delaying the settlement of the question, obtain a more moderate measure than that which was at present proposed by Her Majesty's Government. There had been pledges given upon the subject by successive Administrations; and now Members upon the Opposition side were careful to say that this Resolution did not imply that hon. Gentlemen were indisposed to consider the question of Reform. He was afraid if it were left there, a great deal of valuable time might be lost in putting on the considering cap merely to take it off again. Would any one believe that a less measure of Reform than this would satisfy the country when larger measures had been offered? Was it wise to allow the anticipations of the country to be constantly raised and always disappointed when they had the opportunity of purchasing the affection and gratitude of the unrepresented classes at the price of a very small sacrifice of power? And did they not incur the risk of having, at a later time, to purchase a much smaller amount of gratitude and affection at the price of a more serious surrender of power, and possibly more dangerous to the welfare and happiness of the country? Was it wise to allow this question of Reform to be continually blocking up the road, and standing in the way of those measures of improvement to which the attention of Parliament ought to be directed? While the House is occupied in wasting its time, which is the time of the country, and its energies, which are the energies of the country, in discussing what is after all only a means to an end, it was neglecting measures having for their object that war against pauperism and ignorance so touchingly alluded to by the Member for Westminster in the speech which sank deep into the hearts of the House, and would, if he mistook not, form an epoch in its annals. They were told that there was at the moment no cry for Reform; and no doubt there was no loud cry for it among the classes which were already represented. But every one who had any acquaintance with the working classes, or who had even merely noticed the number of petitions recently presented to that House, must be aware that those classes were animated by an earnest desire to obtain political enfranchisement. Parliament, ought to be as the pulse beating in sympathy with the whole heart of the nation, and not with that merely of the represented classes. Is not this argument that there is no demand for Reform the best evidence that can be given for the necessity of an extension of the suffrage. To refuse Reform now would be a continued premium to agitation; while by granting it they would convince the people that agitation was unnecessary. Increased rights would induce a sense of increased responsibility, and the people would educate themselves up to the point of their political privileges. This was the case with the great middle class whose claims were admitted in 1832. The apprehensions with respect to the Reform Bill of 1832 had been falsified; but who shall say that had our fathers been wise in time, and carried that Bill before it was forced upon them by the voice of an indignant people, the Constitution might not have assumed a form of more theoretical perfection, and that security might not have been taken for such a representation of property and intelligence as no one now dreams of being able to carry. He thought that by admitting a large body of the working classes to the franchise they would, instead of damaging the bulwarks of the Constitution, be strengthening them, by manning a new line of defence. He was satisfied that the men whom it was proposed to enfranchise would bring within the pale of the representation sound intelligence, good English hearts, and, when once admitted, a pride in maintaining the institutions of the country to which they are now alien, but which they will then look upon with that personal interest which always arises from a sense of gratified possession. He should give his cordial vote for the Bill, believing that the passing of the measure would give general satisfaction to the working classes of the country.

MR. LOWTHER said it appeared to be universally acknowledged by both sides of the House, and also generally throughout the country, that before this question of Parliamentary Reform could be considered as finally settled, or perhaps, as hon. Gentlemen opposite would say, settled for a time, three distinct and all-important questions must be dealt with,—namely, the question of the reduction of the franchise, the redistribution of seats, and the readjustment of boundaries. Now, while this measure only proposed to deal with one branch of the series, he asked the House whether it afforded any guarantee that it would effect the settlement even of that limited portion of the Reform question which it affected to settle. He had listened in vain to the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other hon. Members who supported the Bill, and to the speech of the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), for any indication that information would be afforded to the House by the Government, that this Bill would really form a settlement of the question. In addition to the Debates in that House, the subject of this Franchise Bill had been discussed elsewhere with more freedom and with greater frankness. Allusions had been made to the various public meetings which had taken place in different parts of the country in support of the Bill. Now the fact was, that a great majority, or a very large number, of these meetings had been signal and notorious failures. But two or three of these meetings, nevertheless, were worthy of consideration, because they showed what were the real objects and intentions of the principal and only hearty supporters of this Bill. Within the last few days—since the termination of the Easter Recess—one of those meetings was held in St. Martin's Hall, organised by the National Reform League. The views of that body were well known. It was in favour of manhood suffrage—universal suffrage in its widest acceptation, with vote by ballot. He was not a little astonished to find that an association founded with these objects could support a Bill which proposed to effect a final settlement of the franchise in a spirit which fell so short of their expectations. But in order to prevent misconception, Mr. Beales, the chairman of the meeting, stated his reason for taking the chair and supporting the Bill. And what did he say?—

> "But while we give this recommendation, we protest emphatically, for the reasons already as-

> signed, against this Bill, should it become law, being regarded as a settlement of the Reform question. Whether it be passed or rejected, we urge you and our friends in every direction to aid us in maintaining with unabated zeal a peaceful and moral agitation for 'the extension of the franchise to every resident and registered adult male person of sound mind and unconvicted of crime, and the obtaining for the voter the protection of the ballot.' We cannot consider anything less as final. Until these are gained, our work is not fully accomplished."

That statement had the merit, at any rate, of being straightforward and frank. And in the course of the evening Professor Beazley, a man apparently of some little influence among the knot of agitators forming the National Reform League, uttered his sentiments:—

> "I attribute, said he, the revival of the Reform agitation to the result of the American war. Republicanism is now looking up in the world; and the question, before long, will be, not whether we shall reform our institutions, but whether we shall recast them."

That remark was followed by loud and continuous cheering. In justice, however, to the hon. Member for Lambeth, it must be added that he lost no time in repudiating, as every hon. Member of that House would do, such sentiments of downright treason. Another meeting was held at Camberwell, and *The Daily Telegraph*, an authority which would no doubt be recognized by hon. Gentlemen opposite, in writing about it said:—

> "In the earlier part of the evening a brass band had been employed to draw people together by a constant repetition of the favourite and appropriate air of 'Wait for the Waggon.'"

He (Mr. Lowther) presumed the waggon they were waiting for was the Bill for the Redistribution of Seats.

> "Men bearing, sandwich fashion, huge placards pasted on boards, made their way through the throng, stopping ever and anon to afford time for the perusal of announcements of 'Gladstone this evening—working man's friend,' and others of a similar character; some reflecting upon Messrs. Horsman, Marsh, and Lowe, and Lords Elcho and Robert Montagu, declaring that 'while open enemies were to be respected, false Liberals were to be execrated,' and calling upon 'illustrious industry to the rescue.'"

Mr. Lucraft, who was stated to be a cabinetmaker, though, in this instance, he was doing his best to unmake a Cabinet, said:—

> "Although he had been for twenty years trying to advocate manhood suffrage as a right, he was persuaded that they ought to accept this instalment as a help to the rest"

In conclusion, the chairman of the meeting, casting a longing eye to "the space between Charing Cross and the venerable Abbey," of which mention had been made in a memorable letter, proposed a motion which was agreed to, that as many of the meeting as could attend should go down to Westminster on Thursday afternoon to cheer their friends. What mode of salutation they were to employ if they happened to see any of the noble Lords or hon. Gentlemen to whom allusion was made upon the placards the terms of the motion did not state, but he presumed they were to express their feelings in a becoming manner. Such were the views of those supporting the Government Bill. And who were they? The advocates of universal suffrage and the enemies of the Throne. In the different meetings held throughout the country, there was one favourite assertion which had done duty for argument, and which had originated in a Member of that House: this was, that hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House were the enemies of the working classes. As the representative of a constituency possessing upon the register a larger number comparatively of working men than was perhaps included in the constituency of any other hon. Member, he should not enter into any personal repudiation of the charge. But of the charge generally, which was one that ought not to be lightly made, he would say that it was utterly opposed to the fact. In the advocacy of any measure which they honestly believed to be for the social and material well-being of the working class, the Conservative party had always been foremost. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not condescended to adduce any reasons in favour of this measure—unless, indeed, they were to accept the anatomical and somewhat sanguinary argument to which reference had since been so frequently made; and the hon. Member for Birmingham, casting aside all reason, invoked the aid of physical force. The House, he trusted, would mark their sense of this dangerous and unsound measure by supporting the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester. It was a measure prepared without thought, introduced without argument, supported by menace, and now sought to be forced on a reluctant Parliament and an unwilling nation.

Sir FRANCIS CROSSLEY said, he should not have risen on the present occasion had it not been that the large constituency which he had the honour to represent took a deep interest in this question, had held very many and numerous meetings, and had presented a great number of petitions to the House in favour of the Bill now under consideration. The hon. Member for York, who had just sat down, had told the House that many of those meetings had been failures. He (Sir Francis Crossley) was not aware that a single one of them had been a failure. The hon. Member had also told them that the parties who had addressed those meetings were in favour of manhood and universal suffrage. If that were so, it was highly to their honour that they were willing to take such a moderate measure as that now proposed, and which he thought would confer the franchise on the cream of the working classes. The arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite and of the few Members who sat on that (the Liberal) side of the House might be summed up in these words—that they were against lowering the franchise. They alleged that they were for extending the franchise; but they would only extend it to the same class as possessed it at present. That was the very reason why they failed in 1859 to settle the question of Reform when the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli) introduced his Bill. When this Bill was introduced a month ago he (Sir Francis Crossley) stated that he considered it to be an honest measure, and that he should therefore support it. But the hon. Member for Wick had ridiculed the idea of its being thought an honest measure. The hon. Gentleman said, that if it were an honest measure its honesty consisted in lowering the franchise. That was the very reason why he (Sir Francis Crossley) considered it was an honest measure. The Bill of 1859 was in name a Reform Bill—it promised to the ear, but broke to the heart. It found them with a £10 borough franchise, and left them just where it found them; but they all knew that the working man could not pay £10 rent and do justice to his family unless he was an overlooker or something more than an ordinary man. The working man was told that it was not intended to bring him in, and that he must rise to the franchise by becoming something more than a working man. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had been much twitted with having stated on a former occasion, that he did not believe above 10 per cent of the working men possessed the franchise, whereas the statistics that had been laid on the table proved that they possessed it in the proportion of 26 per cent. But how had that 26 per cent been obtained? Those who obtained these particulars were told, that if any man who was working with his hands and saved money enough to set up a shop, which his wife or some member of his family attended to while he attended to his own business, he was to be put down as a working man. If he only worked with his hands, whatever other means he had, he was described as a working man; but what the House wanted to ascertain was, how many of these who laboured with their hands, and had nothing else to depend upon, possessed the franchise. If they had adopted that test, he believed the percentage of working men who possessed the franchise would be very near the estimate of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If they took the speeches made by hon. Gentlemen on the hustings, he had no hesitation in declaring that those speeches would warrant them in coming to a conclusion, that there would be a large majority for the moderate measure of Reform that was before the House. But they now turned round and said, "We want two things at a time and you have only brought one before us." They hesitated to vote for this measure because it did not do everything at once. He did not, however, see upon what ground they should insist upon Members who were anxious to vote upon the franchise question voting at the same time on the question of the re-distribution of seats. There were many Members for small boroughs who, though in favour of an extension of the suffrage, would hesitate to vote for such a measure if they knew their boroughs were to be interfered with. He thought the Government had done wisely in separating the two questions. With the exception of the noble Lord the Member for Galway (Lord Dunkellin) he did not remember any one during the whole debate who objected to the abolition of the ratepaying clause. He thought the Government had acted wisely in proposing the abolition of that clause. The collectors of these rates were generally partizans, and they did not call upon the ratepayers who were opposed to them in politics until it was a day too late to place their names on the register. But there was a still greater evil, which amounted to bribery and corruption, but of which the House did not take cognizance. It was this—that in a considerable number of boroughs, where parties were nearly balanced, a number of electors often had rates paid for them, and that fact alone was sufficient to justify the Government in proposing the abolition of the ratepaying clause. They were told that if they passed this bill they would find that there would be such combinations of the working men to raise wages that they would be past dealing with, and that the men would become the masters. He did not believe that. The company with which he was connected employed 4,500 people. He had been connected with them all his life, and had been finding employment for them not only in brisk times, but also in times when employment was very difficult to find at all. And when one had been a great many years working with a certain class of people, in all sorts of circumstances, one was likely to find out what they were made of. He spoke not only for himself but for many other employers of labour who sat in that House. He would venture to say that he could find ten Members of that House who with their partners employed 50,000 people who would vote for this measure, whereas he would defy the Conservatives to find 100 Members voting against it employing an equal number. Why should the holders of broad acres be afraid of that property running away from them, when no apprehension was entertained by those who, if this measure was so disastrous, would be the first sufferers? After all that had been said about strikes and combinations, wages could not be raised by such means any more than the quantity of water in a valley could be increased by damming up the streams. The class of domestic servants had increased their wages more than any other class, and yet they had had no strikes or combinations. He was not aware of any combinations or strikes of domestic servants. They knew that what raised wages—and they ought all to rejoice at the rise of wages—was the freedom of commerce, as every district and every neighbourhood could now buy goods as cheap as they could be got in any foreign country (with allowance for carriage)—and the result was that two masters were competing for one labourer, instead of two labourers offering themselves to one master. As long as that was the case wages must rise. By passing so moderate a Bill as this they did but keep pace with the times, if they did that—and by taking men into the citizenship their attention would be diverted from strikes and combinations to that of interesting themselves in the welfare of the country. Many had been surprised that so moderate a measure had been so well received, and some could not account for it. He thought he could account for it in three ways. First, the people were well off, and men were easier to please when they had had a good dinner than when they had not had a dinner and did not know were to get one; secondly, if they did not take a great interest in the Bill when at first introduced, notwithstanding the eloquence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yet when great Liberals such as the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Stroud and Calne, and some others who sat below the gangway, rose against it, and when it was found that they could say so much against it, working men began to perceive that it was an honest measure, and that the Government were honest when they staked their existence on it. And the third reason was that very last fact, that Government did declare that they would stand or fall by it. The hon. Member for Huntingdon seemed to ridicule the idea that if this measure were rejected the Government would go to the country. But the working men of this country did not expect that Government having pledged themselves to the measure, were going to run away and shrink from it. If this measure were rejected, the working men would call on the Government to dissolve Parliament. They had been told that the country was Conservative, and not disposed to reduce the franchise. But he had perfect confidence as to what would be the result of an appeal to the country on that question; and he should be extremely disappointed if, in the event of the Bill being rejected, the Government did not at once make that appeal.

Mr. ADDERLEY: Sir, one thing has struck me in the course of this debate, and that is the way in which all the supporters of the Government either affect to misunderstand, or else wholly ignore the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, which is the real topic of the discussion now before the House. They assert, though none have ever attempted to show, that those who support the Amendment are indirectly shirking the question of Reform. Can anybody deny, at any rate of many of those who have supported the Amendment, headed by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, that they are as much in earnest in the cause of Reform as any hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House? Amongst them I profess myself to be one. I can conceive no question more important or more urgent at this moment than that of Parliamentary Reform. I believe that large numbers of the Members of the House of Commons are returned by means which are a scandal to the country, and demoralising to the nation; the more so that, whilst the subject is denounced, it is at the same time made a joke of and treated with measures of repression costly but wholly ineffectual. I believe also that there are many places in this country, as well as men, who ought to have a voice in returning Members to this House, and who have not; and many who have a voice and who ought not to have it. But the question before the House at this moment is not Parliamentary Reform. The question before the House is Parliamentary freedom—freedom of debate—whether we are to give such blind confidence to any Ministry as to consent to vote upon or even discuss a measure not before us—to discuss the second part of a great constitutional scheme while the first part which explains it is withheld from us; and that without any reasons being assigned for withholding those further measures which are the key to the meaning of the whole. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said—and that is his only allegation of excuse—that all the measures could not be passed in one session. But can he give a reason why they cannot be produced in one session? Can he assign any reason why this House should be denied even a sight of those measures which can alone give any definite meaning to the one before the House, but of which he has told us nothing? I hope there never was a Minister in the country, and I hope there never will be one strong enough to be able so far to insult and degrade the House of Commons as to ask them to discuss a fragment of a measure and to withhold from them the context, from which alone they can read its definite meaning and bearing. Why, the humblest imitation of this representative assembly in the world would not concede so much to the executive. The Senate and Deputies of France would not concede so much to the Emperor. They at least require a programme of any law before they debate it, even though their debates may bear but a faint resemblance in independence and effect to those held in this House. If we were to allow such a course, what a precedent it would give! Why should not Government call upon us to vote supply without items and without appropriation? Is it too much to say that the Government have the audacity to ask us to discuss what has no meaning at all, or any meaning in the world, according to other measures they profess to intend and wilfully keep in the dark? If any body denies that, let him try any portion of the Bill. Let him consider the fourth clause, which proposes a £14 rental for county qualification. Does that mean anything except according to the other Bills? If that £14 rental is to accumulate votes for counties in the suburbs of large towns represented and in the whole of towns unrepresented, it is a county qualification a great deal too low; but if they are going to introduce measures like those of the Bill of 1859, in which unrepresented towns would have representatives of their own, and suburbs of represented towns be included in their representation, then the £14 is needlessly high. In some of the speeches made during the recess, those who sit on this side of the House have been accused of inconsistency in opposing the £14 county franchise when we had, in 1859, proposed one of £10. But our proposal was, that both town and county franchises might be £10, with the localities of representation so corrected. Take, for another instance of the Bill's ambiguity, the reduced town qualification in clause 7. It will have no effect in some towns; in others it will simply aggravate existing evils: it may have a Conservative tendency in some boroughs, and I believe there are Liberals on the other side of the House who trust that it will have the Conservative tendency of introducing a class of workmen over whom they as masters will have more control. But this is clear, that the effect may be anything according to the other measures which we are told are to be introduced. To call upon us to vote for a measure which depends for its meaning on another measure is to ask the House of Commons to resign its functions as a deliberative assembly, and to place a blind confidence in Ministers. It is to ask us to jump at once to the *ultimatum* to which universal suffrage would finally lead this assembly; namely, the separate and independent dictation of the Executive. It has been said that Lord John Russell did not directly oppose the second reading of our Reform Bill. But mark the difference. There was not a point in debate on the Bill of 1859 that could not have been settled in its own Committee. But, on this occasion, we are asked to vote a second reading, not because points can be settled in Committee, but may be left for discussion on some other Bill or Bills as to which we are entirely in the dark. This House will not, I am confident, irrespective of the merits of the Bill, abdicate its functions as a deliberative assembly. I will go further. I see that there are some, and a very considerable portion of those who are going to support the Government—I may say one-half the phalanx on whom they depend—who appear to dread more the possible immediate effects of an adverse vote on themselves than the ultimate consequences of the Bill on the Constitution. At first they uttered a very natural cry of alarm at being asked to swallow a fragment of a measure devoid of all definite meaning; but they have since been reconciled to the process by a most remarkable theory. They have been assured by the remark of the hon. Member for Bridgewater (Mr. Kinglake), that on the second reading of the Bill they are only dealing with an abstract principle, and may safely leave the details and the application to the future. Let me ask what the abstract principle in this case is? Is it the extension of the right of voting in the abstract? Does not the question immediately arise—How, where, or on what principle? Does not the application become immediately involved? Is it extension to greater numbers, no matter how or where? There are men who idolize numbers—the quacks of Reform—the Sangrados of constitutional doctors—who, whatever the disease or no disease of the constitution, prescribe simply letting out more blood. But the numbers even introduced by the Franchise Bill depend wholly upon the additional measures which have not been introduced. The franchise we are now called upon to consider may add 400,000 voters to the existing constituency, or 1,000,000, according to the localities and arrangements intended. Is the abstract principle simple representation? I heard some hon. Gentlemen say, that anybody who votes against the Bill votes altogether against the principle of representation. But is there any abstract principle of representation possible to be conceived? Every one takes the word in his own meaning, and waits for the concealed measures to give it force. As far as the general principle can be defined, we should all agree that every man should have a voice in the choice of representatives who has a qualification for a share in the government himself—that he possess a stake in the country—that he should possess intelligence—that he should have sufficient independence to have an individual interest in the matters to be legislated about. So far we shall all agree. We might agree still further that, if the qualifications of wealth and intelligence became more distributed through the nation, the voice in representation should extend itself *pari passu.* But if you take that definition, you must also take its corollary, that as these conditions of wealth and intelligence are never equally distributed, so neither should the power made to depend upon them be equally distributed — still less should we go out of our way to distribute that power in the inverse ratio of the defined qualification. Is then the principle of the Bill simply to carry out the principle of the Act of 1832. Then what was the principle of that measure? It was, in the words of its preamble, the amendment of the representation, and this it attempted mainly by putting an end to a preponderance of one class in the representation which then existed. Now if it is obvious that this Bill will produce a new preponderance of another class, so far from carrying out the principle of the Act of 1832, it will absolutely reverse it. There were many supporters of this Bill on various vague and arbitrary principles who really supported it with a view to some ulterior objects — some foregone conclusions, wholly independent of any premisses. They did not want premisses, but had their conclusions ready. The Birmingham petitioners stated their principle of representation to be, that the population of their town having doubled since it was enfranchised, therefore they claim a double number of representatives. [Mr. BRIGHT dissented.] I think that was what the petition stated.

Mr. BRIGHT: What the petition stated was, that there were boroughs that had eighty times the amount of representation in proportion to numbers that Birmingham had; but it did not say anything about Birmingham having double the number of representatives, though I presume that they expected that large boroughs would have more Members.

MR. ADDERLEY: I think that if the hon. Gentleman will refer to the petition, he will find that they claim an increase of representation in proportion to that of the population. Now, I maintain that this principle is novel, and never was applied to the representation of this country. The principle of the Constitution is, that every locality shall have a voice in this House; and that when two Members were given to every place, it was uniformly two to each, and only two instead of one, that one might attend in the event of the other being ill, or unable to attend; but it is new to the Constitution that a town should have Members accumulated in proportion to the number of the population. This would be treating Members not as a consultative body, but as counters for a division only. It was, indeed, discussed a few years ago, when that novel principle, followed out to its result, was shown to lead to this—that the metropolis should have twenty more Members, that it should have as many as the whole of Scotland, and that thirty should be added to Ireland; and these results were thought sufficient to dispose of the matter, and it has never been mooted in the House since. I only mention this to show how loosely hon. Members have been talking of the abstract principle involved in this second reading, when the truth is that every Member has, in his own mind, some particular application that he expects this Bill to carry to a conclusion. The hon. Member for Birmingham, in his recent speeches during the recess, suggested many objects he had in view; he even hinted that the House of Lords might be merged in this House, and many other things might be done which certainly were not all in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Constitution, though, in his opinion, they might be great improvements upon it. The mode, therefore, in which the hon. Member for Bridgewater (Mr. Kinglake) sought to cover his own retreat, and to induce hon. Members to vote for the Bill, was a simple sophism, just enough to spread a filmy veil which might conceal the craven fears of some and the ulterior projects of others. But there is another ground on which we are called upon to discuss this fragmentary Bill—the ground taken by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill). He said that, whatever the ulterior measures might be, that supposing there was no such sequel whatever, and that the promise should come to nothing, he said that he was content to take the present Bill upon its own merits —that it was such as by itself would produce very good fruits, and that it ought therefore to be passed. Now, this is a legitimate ground to take; and if the Government will take it, I am perfectly ready to take issue with them in that point of view. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is bound, indeed, to take this ground, and to treat the Bill as capable of being defended on its own merits; for he said it was the fulfilment of a pledge to the people, and he took credit to himself as being the only man ready to fulfil that pledge, while he condemned hon. Members on that (the Opposition) side of the House, as having given the pledge, and not being ready to fulfil it. But the fulfilment of a pledge consisted in a *bonâ fide* satisfaction and not in a half measure. Let us, then, take the Bill as an entirety. It will, in that view, have two principal effects. The first is the suppression of the agricultural interest generally in the elections, as I will presently show; and the second effect will be, to hand over the election of a very great proportion of the borough Members of this House mainly, and in many places wholly, to manual labourers. The first effect, the suppression of the agricultural interest, will be caused by this Bill in two ways. In the first place, by inundating the county constituencies with urban and trading votes of £14 renters, not within the limits of the represented boroughs, and from the numerous towns which are unrepresented. In the second place, by adding to the anomaly that already exists, that of giving town freeholders the right to vote for county Members—giving A. the right to name a representative for B. —the copyholders and leaseholders besides. In these two ways the Bill will in many cases wholly, and generally to a great extent, suppress the agricultural interest in county elections. I wish, however, to say a word on each of these points. It is rather difficult to arrive at county statistics, because in fact the Government has given us none. There is evidence enough from this circumstance alone, that they have confined their attention to the interests of the towns, and have wholly forgotten, in framing their Bill, the interests of the country, if indeed their string-pullers have not carefully studied their suppression. The

House was told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he could not get them this information, and he left the representatives of the counties to get statistics for themselves. I have endeavoured to do so with regard to the two counties with which I am best acquainted, viz. Staffordshire and Warwickshire; and it has taken me only a week to obtain, what the Government found unattainable. I certainly find that the Government has been very much in ignorance as to county statistics, for this is apparent throughout their Bill; but then they seem to have been equally unconcerned about the statistics which they did obtain from the boroughs, for they admitted that when they got their returns they were surprised at the result, though they did not allow that surprise in the slightest degree to affect the Bill, which was draughted independently of that information. The Chancellor of the Exchequer let out the extent of his ignorance about the county constituencies a few days ago, when he told the House that there were hardly any working men in them; and when that statement met with a general denial on this side of the House, he changed his ground and said that there was no preponderance of such class in the county constituencies. In the first instance he had said that there was scarcely any of what was called "the contamination of the working classes," which he afterwards spoke of as "the fly in the pot of ointment." This was one of the cases in which the right hon. Gentleman has originated offensive phrases, and having been the only man that had ever used them, has imputed them to the Opposition. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER dissented.] I mean that he originated the phrases "the fly in the pot of ointment" and "contamination of the working classes." He may not have imputed those phrases to us; but he originated and also imputed to us the comparison of the enfranchisement of the working classes to the letting loose of an invading army. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER again dissented.] If he did not impute it to us, then the country misunderstood the report of his speech; but I distinctly say that no such expression was ever accepted on our side of the House. Neither "contamination," nor "invasion," nor the pot of ointment have ever been imagined by any hon. Member on this side of the House. Nay, I will go further and say, that so far from such expressions having been used by any one on this side, I firmly believe that the feeling which they represent is absolutely alien to the minds of these hon. Members. As to my own county (Staffordshire), I have several statements sent to me which show that the working classes constitute one-fifth of the county constituency; they belong to the best portion of the working men; and indeed, to my mind, are the very best part of the constituency. They are men who have worked for weekly wages, and by means of thrift and providence have laid by a portion of their earnings, and possessed themselves of small freeholds. So far from being a "contamination," I look upon these men as the pride of the constituency; and much as I prize the honour of representing that county, I prize the honour of representing them most of all. What, then, is the meaning of its being thrown in our teeth, that we regard them as a "contamination," and as "the fly in the pot of ointment;" and what is the amount of knowledge of county constituencies on the part of the Government who can suppose that this class is almost excluded? I will now show the House how the Bill taken by itself will swamp the agricultural interest. The way in which it will do it is, first, by the £14 renters. The £14 renters in North Staffordshire would be chiefly those who rent houses in the suburbs of boroughs that have representatives already, such as Stoke-upon-Trent; and in manufacturing towns, like Leek, Burton-on-Trent, and others throughout the county; and would amount to 3428, the existing constituency of the division being about 11,000. In North Warwickshire the number added will be even greater in proportion to the existing constituency. The £14 renters, at least three-fourths of them, of urban and trading interest, will be 3,000, added to an existing constituency of 7,000; and the constituency now being pretty equally divided between the two interests, the augmentation will leave the trading interest in the division as seven to three compared with the agricultural interest. This will be the effect of the £14 clause alone, to say nothing of the other portions of the Bill, which will have the same tendency to a larger degree. I will not weary the House by further statistics, but will go on to notice the second mode in which the Bill will swamp the agricultural interest—namely, by the addition to the town freeholders having county votes a host of copyholders and leaseholders besides; and I will remark by the way, that this provision is introduced into the Bill in the most surreptitious and secret way. It does not appear upon the face of the Bill, and even persons conversant with Acts of Parliament and skilful in interpreting them, have asked me whether it had not been omitted from the Bill, for they could not find the provision anywhere. It is not done by special enactment, but by repealing two clauses—the 24th and 25th clauses—of the Reform Act of 1832, a mode of legislation always most unjustifiable, and, in the case of Constitutional Reform like this, wholly intolerable. Now, what will be the result of this addition? I really think that much as the right hon. Gentleman was by his own admission surprised by his own borough statistics, he will be still more surprised by the statistics which I am about to give him, when I tell him that, in North Warwickshire, the addition of copyholders and leaseholders in the Birmingham polling district alone would add 5,000 voters to the present county constituency of between 6,000 and 7,000. This little item, surreptitiously introduced, will very nearly double the constituency, and add 90 per cent of urban interest to the present equally divided urban and agricultural body. Birmingham freeholders already constitute one-third of the county constituency, and this reinforcement of leaseholders will give them half. I believe the right hon. Gentleman is astonished at this statement; but it rests on the highest authority, and I shall be happy to give him the returns which I have received. I will next say a word upon the principle of this admission of town freeholders, copyholders, and leaseholders into the county constituencies. When the Derby Government proposed in their Bill of 1859 that each place should represent itself, and that the qualification arising in each place should give a vote for that place and no other, they were met by Earl Russell, who said there was an essential distinction in the way of their proposal. There was in the noble Lord's mind something in a freehold which had an essential affinity to a county qualification, and something in an occupation that had an essential affinity to a borough qualification. What the essence of the affinity was I have never been able to make out; and it appeared to me that the Apostle of Reform, instead of being a master of principles, had become a slave to terms and words. The noble Lord was quite ready to make the town freeholders vote for the counties, but was he equally ready that the county occupiers should vote for the towns, or that the agricultural interest should in any way participate in the choice of the representatives for towns? Did it not directly militate against the noble Lord's distinction that large numbers of occupiers in towns should swamp the counties? He had no objection to that. He did not object that the occupation votes of Birmingham, outside the borough, should swamp the county constituency. But that a Birmingham freeholder should vote for the town was intolerable disfranchisement. When I found that the Bill so completely annihilates the agricultural interest in almost every part of the United Kingdom—I speak more especially of the Midland counties with which I am best acquainted—I began to think it was not intentional, that it must be the result of carelessness; but during the recess I studied the explanatory speeches and comments made on the Bill by those who were the warmest advocates and probably originators of it, and I found distinct indications that this was no accident or carelessness, but the distinct intention of the Bill. I chiefly allude to the hon. Member for Birmingham, and I judge from the short letter of his addressed to a meeting at Birmingham—which meeting, by the way, when it was known that the right hon. Gentleman would not be there, was a very considerable failure—that the reason he believed this to be an honest Bill was because it would make the representation less that of the landlords. That is the *animus* of the Bill, as it is the *animus* of the hon. Gentleman. His ceaseless diatribes against the landlords amount almost to a childish monomania. One would think that he had been taught from his infancy that Tory landlords were the wicked people; that all the vices common to humanity were theirs; that they resisted all that was good, and encouraged all that was evil; whilst he himself contemplated them from the retreat of public wisdom and virtue. Everything mean and selfish was their special province, and the resistance of his wiser counsels. The same measures which, when introduced in the interests of landlords were bad, if introduced in the interest of manufacturers were good. Protection, when it was first advocated by manufacturers, had no harm in it; in fact, recently the hon. Member himself advocated Protection with a view to converting India into a cotton field. [Mr. BRIGHT: I never did.] When it is in the interest of landlords it is mean, narrow, and selfish. It is as easy for the hon. Member to form a judgment upon political as upon judicial questions, and we know he can condemn a man of murder before he is tried. In political questions the hon. Gentleman has a similar Ready Reckoner: anything proposed in the interest of the landlords is evil; against them, must be good. The unembarrassed flow of one idea assists his natural eloquence, and the clearness of a single eye to one side only of every question, seeing through the glowing medium of a hearty prejudice. Has the question ever occurred to him whether, if Providence were ever to send him any large possession of land he would himself become as narrow-minded, selfish, and wicked as the rest of landlords; or whether a long contact with trade has so expanded his mind as to make him proof against corruption. But if so, how does he reconcile the fact, that one-half the landlords themselves sprang from trade, and that all the long-sighted tradesmen are doing their utmost to become these short-sighted landlords? Let me tell him that if he were able to eliminate the landlords from the constitution of this House, he would not eliminate all that is narrow-minded. He might find a good deal of human nature's weaknesses remaining. Nothing, perhaps, is more narrow-minded than a capacity to consign a whole class of your fellow-countryman to one category of vilification, and to assert to oneself the monopoly of political virtue and wisdom. To return to the features of the Bill taken as a whole by itself. I said its second great effect would be to entrust to the working class specially the choice of a large portion of this House. The present borough franchise of £10 is calculated by the Returns to give the working classes one-fourth to one-fifth of the elective voice of the country, and in some towns two-thirds; but whether it be on the average one-fifth or one-fourth, I am prepared to prove that all that class of artizans which the hon. Members for Birmingham and Leeds have stated to be excluded are included in the existing franchise. When the hon. Member for Birmingham has described the excluded class, he has said, why should such intelligent men as foremen, men who are entrusted with the control of others, and of much property, be excluded? They can govern their men in the factories, why should they not have votes for the government of the country? That class of men are every one of them in the constituencies already. This Bill proposes to reduce the borough franchise from £10 to £7. It is also conceded that the abolition of the rate-paying clauses practically reduces the £7 franchise to £6 10*s*., that is to 2*s*. 6*d*. a week; now if you refer to the evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords you will find, that, in a considerable part of England, such a franchise will be equivalent to household suffrage. In most of our midland towns there is no rent below 2*s*. 6*d*. a week. The advocates of the measure, moreover, tell us that this is only an instalment. The Opposition are told they are fools to look forward; and "H.," a very clever writer in *The Times*, declares the "thin-edge" argument to be part of noodle's oration. The borough franchise is avowedly to be put on a sliding scale to universal suffrage, but we must not look on to the end. But take this first instalment; a proposal to give up half of our election to working men. On what ground, I ask, is this to be done? Is it on the ground of the abstract rights of man? Is it on the ground that it will improve our legislature? or is it on the ground that it will politically educate the people, and give them more interest in public affairs? or is it, fourthly, on the general ground assigned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that we are to put trust in the people and shut our eyes to consequences? The abstract right argument seems to have dropped out of this House, ever since the remarkable speech of the hon. Member for Calne last year. The Rights of Man have been relegated to the *limbo* of the historical reminiscences of the French Revolution. It is true the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer started it again in a flight of rhetoric the other day; but he soon withdrew it in a more deliberate revised edition of his speech. He has again started the doctrine in the phrase of trusting "our own flesh and blood." He has not, however, yet defined the scope he gave to the term "flesh and blood;" whether, for instance, female as well as male. We may hope the idea is still in embryo, and that it has not yet developed into universal suffrage. Equal right to property is part of the same idea. At St. Martin's Hall meeting yesterday it was said, Parliament needed reform for tolerating the monopoly of land by large proprietors. A Birmingham man complained to me of my denying that any one had an abstract right to a vote, and said that he had as much an abstract right to a vote, as I had to my property. My reply was that I fully agreed; as neither the one nor the other had an abstract right to either the vote or the property, as the rights to both were actions of law. So much for right. Is the object, then, to amend the Legislature? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has sung a pæan on it, on account of all it has done, and especially in the interest of the working classes; and I think the hon. Member for Birmingham is the only man in the country who has abused the Reform Parliament. Lord Russell, in the last edition to his work, said upon this subject, "the best constituency is that which produces the best Parliament;" and therefore, according to the prevalent opinion, we have the best possible constituency now. But I will not hold men to such admissions. I allow there may be an object worth even the risk of deteriorating the Legislature. I will then proceed to the third ground, and ask the House, Whether it is prepared to give the main task of our election to this House to the working classes on the ground of politically educating them? On this point, I will only quote the hon. Member for Westminster. The hon. Member says in his *Representative Government:*—

> "Among the foremost benefits of free government is the education of the intelligence and of the sentiments, which is carried down to the very lowest ranks of the people. Every American is in some sense both a patriot and a person of cultivated intelligence. Political life in America is a valuable school, but it is a school from which the ablest teachers are themselves excluded, the first minds in the country being as effectually shut out from the national representation and from public functions generally as if they were under a formal disqualification. The Demos being the one source of power, all the selfish ambition of the country gravitates towards it, as it does in despotic countries towards the monarch. The people is pursued with adulation and sycophancy, and the corrupting effects of power fully keep pace with its improving and ennobling influences."

This is not encouraging. It appears that the advocates of this mode of political training, ask us to educate the lowest classes at the sacrifice of the education of the highest class. They ask us to extend an interest in public affairs among the lowest at the cost of excluding from the administration of the affairs of the country, men of the highest capacity, and who have means and leisure to be trained for its service. Lastly are we asked to act upon the principle put forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "to place trust in the people, only tempered with prudence." Upon what ground is he to ask us to trust the people? Is there not an assumption in the phrase itself? Is not the right hon. Gentleman himself one of the people? Is he to stand outside the people and say he will condescend to trust them? But after all he qualifies the maxim by the words, "tempered with prudence." What does he mean by that? Is not that the whole question between us? The noble Earl at the head of the Government lays down very strict injunctions as to the prudent limitation of this trust. He says:—

> "It seemed to me sufficient to lay down some such conditions as the following, as necessary qualifications for the body of electors:—1. That they should be of average intelligence. 2. That they should, on the whole, form a security for stability of property. 3. That although bribery cannot altogether be excluded, the body of electors, as a mass, should not be tainted by corruption. 4. That the electoral body should be identified with the general sense of the community."

Adding:—

> "Such being my object, there were two modes of arriving at it:—1. Qualification of franchise. 2. Distribution of seats. The first not sufficient alone, lest in large cities population might outweigh property, or, in large counties, property might outweigh population."

Now, it appears that the Government will not trust the people without very considerable qualifications; so that, after all, it turns out to be only a question of degree; and only the hon. Member for Birmingham would go to the utmost limit of trust. He laughs at all the caution which others insist upon as requisite in this Reform: he is opposed to the proposed corrective of plurality of votes and the representation of minorities as suggested by the hon. Member for Westminster. The hon. Member for Birmingham, however, need not envenom his cause by exasperating the working classes against us; nor need he put himself into such anger upon this subject. There is a fair issue between us, capable of calm and dispassionate arguments. He need not misquote us as saying, that the working class is not fit to vote, because we say they are not fit to have almost all the votes to themselves. There is no more necessity for us to vilify the people, as the hon. Member for Birmingham has wrongly accused us of doing, than there is for him more offensively to flatter the people in order to make out his side of the argument. It is from an utter absence of argument that the hon. Member resorts to declarations of this sort. It is from an utter want of argument, that he resorts to threats of violence. The artizans of Birmingham, whom I know much more intimately than he does, will not indorse his views when he vilifies the landed interest. They feel that with no class of the community are they more constantly and kindly united than with the landed gentry around them, not in the way of patrons, but as co-operating with them for mutual good. I take their view of the question, and not his, when I refuse to consent, even in the interest of Reform—for which I pretend to be more *bonâ fide* in earnest than he is—to give a draft in blank to be filled up by men who take his view on the subject; and in sitting down I protest against any Government asking the House of Commons to discuss a measure not fully before them, and which has no meaning whatever, without other measures which are promised but not produced.

Mr. LAYARD: Sir, I should have desired not to have taken any part in this Debate, but I owe a debt of gratitude to those who sent me to this House, which forbids me to be silent on an occasion when a subject of such vast importance to the working classes, and in which they take so deep an interest, is under discussion. I may have a special claim to be heard on their behalf, and as one of their representatives. With only two exceptions, I think, there is no Member of Parliament who has so large a number of working men amongst the registered voters of his constituency as I have. Of the 11,631 electors of the borough of Southwark no less than 5,515 or nearly one-half, are absolutely working men—artizans and mechanics. I have been sent to this House by those men, and by those men, I may say, alone. By their generous, loyal, and disinterested support I have been able to fight more than one hard battle. I shall never forget that at York, where I took part in a contest against influences of no ordinary nature, and on that occasion exerted to the utmost, I was nearly achieving success through the support mainly received from a committee composed of working men, all non-electors, who carried on the battle with a moderation and disinterested devotion beyond all praise. Any position, however humble, that I may hold in this House or in the country I owe, therefore, to them, the working men. Had this discussion been limited to the Amendment moved by the noble Earl, and to the arguments so ably put forward by his seconder, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), I should have deferred my remarks to an occasion when the principles or details of the Bill were in debate. But whatever may be said to the contrary, and however much hon. Members opposite may disclaim this intention, the country at large feels that the real issue at stake is, not whether the Bill proposed by the Government, or any other Bill, shall pass; but whether the question of Reform shall be entertained at all. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton) concluded his brilliant oration, in which the arguments that have been heard over and over again against Reforms of all descriptions from men of genius were perhaps never more ably and eloquently expressed, he asked the House of Commons, in a highly wrought peroration—to do what? To vote for the Amendment? No; but to vote against the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wick, (Mr. Laws), after declaring that if the Bill had contained clauses for the redistribution of seats he should have voted for it, proceeded to condemn the reduction of the franchise, and said that he would not vote for a measure which had not checks and compensations and safeguards to render the enfranchisement of the working classes safe; that is, I presume, unless the Bill was something altogether different from what it is, namely, a Bill founded upon the broad principle of a reduction of the franchise. Even the noble Earl who moved the Amendment soon forgot the object of his own Motion, and favoured us with his notions as to how the question of Reform was to be dealt with. He would refer it to a Committee of the Privy Council like the cattle plague or any other plague. There are some Gentlemen who openly avow that they only vote for the Amendment because they wish to shelve Reform altogether. I was surprised to see in the newspapers this morning a letter from the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh), who, it appears, has also been called to account by some of his constituents for the part he is taking in this question. The hon.

Gentleman declares boldly, and I admire his frankness, that he votes for the Amendment, not because he is in favour of any settlement of the Reform question, but because it is sometimes necessary to vote against one's conscience as a matter of Parliamentary tactics. His words are in a letter to Mr. Lush:—

> "There is, as every one knows, sometimes a necessity in Parliamentary tactics, and this to a certain extent is the case at the present moment, as I should myself prefer meeting the Reform Bill with a direct negative to voting for Lord Grosvenor's motion."

I cannot understand how my right hon. Friends the Members for Calne and Stroud, and the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire, can vote for the Amendment, as they have declared against all Reform. [Lord Elcho: No!] The noble Lord denies that he has done so. But he has declared himself against all Reform of the nature which we propose, that is to say, founded essentially on the reduction of the franchise. The only Member on the other side who has dealt fairly with the question of the Amendment is the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley). In a speech of much ability he brought forward all the objections that could be urged against the mode of proceeding adopted by the Government, and stated them as well as they could possibly be stated. The right hon. Member who has just sat down (Mr. Adderley), although he pretended to deal with it in his somewhat excited speech, only talked about the Government having "insulted and degraded" the House, and of their "audacity" in having dared to propose this measure. To such vague and general accusations it would not be becoming in me, nor respectful to the House, to reply. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has, no doubt, shown that there are very weighty arguments against bringing in a Bill which only deals with the extension of the franchise, and does not include the redistribution of seats. There are unquestionably most grave reasons against proceeding with a single measure, or, to use a phrase now in common use, to proceed with "piece-meal legislation." But equally good reasons might be adduced on the other side of the question, as in all questions in which the "for" and "against" are pretty equally balanced. Such being the case, the Government had to determine which course would be most convenient, and most likely to lead to a practical result; to bring in a Bill dealing with one subject, or a Bill dealing with several; in a word, a Bill which had a chance of passing through Parliament in this session, or one that had none. They believed that the first course was the best; that it was the one most likely to effect the object they had in view—namely, to carry through this House a moderate and useful measure of Reform. I think I can show that their view was an honest one and a right one.

The objections put forward by the noble Lord opposite to the course pursued by the Government have not, perhaps, hitherto been fully dealt with by hon. Members on this side of the House, for the simple reason that those who have spoken against the Government have placed the debate upon a totally different issue, and have argued not for the Amendment but against the Bill itself. If the House will permit me I will now allude to those objections in the order in which they were brought forward. The noble Lord's first objection was that the Government, by bringing forward only a part of their measure and withholding the remainder, asked the House to put trust in them whilst they refused to put trust in the House. It appears to me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has met and answered that argument by saying that the Government were prepared to deal with this question as one of confidence in the Ministry. He did not appeal to the other side of the House, but to the Liberal party. He declared that for various reasons it might be dangerous to the success of a measure in which the country took deep interest to bring forward the Bill for the redistribution of seats before the principle involved in the Bill before them was accepted, and he asked the Liberal party to place confidence in the intention of the Government to proceed with the other part of the question as soon as this part was settled. In this sense the Liberal party have accepted the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that is one of the issues now under discussion. The next objection was, that it was altogether unusual and unconstitutional to legislate by "piecemeal." But is it not frequently the case that Bills which have a natural connection one with the other, and that form part and parcel of one general measure, are brought in in different Sessions, and that one Bill is passed one year on the understanding that Government shall introduce another Bill which may be considered as a sequel to the first in the following year ? We constantly proceed on the same principle in financial matters, when a Committee of the House is asked to accept a part of a general scheme on the understanding that the remainder of the scheme is to be carried out at a future period. [*Loud Cries of* "Name! Name!"*and* "Order!"] I regret that I am not allowed to pursue my argument, but that without cause or reason, as far as I can ascertain, I am exposed to these interruptions. I must be permitted to say that the conduct of this side of the House furnishes a striking contrast to that of the other side. We have listened with patience and attention to every speech made by those who have opposed the Government. Hon. Gentlemen are little inclined to show a similar spirit of fair play, and I fear that I appeal in vain to their sense of courtesy and justice.

The next argument advanced by the noble Lord against the mode of proceeding adopted by the Government was, that it gave rise to a suspicion—he would not say whether well-founded or not—that something was lurking behind—that they had some object which they dared not avow. By taking this course some kind of compulsion might be used against a certain number of Members. Schedules, he said, were elastic things. It might be hinted to Gentlemen that if they voted against Government they might find the borough which they represented transferred to Schedule (A) or (B), or that if they voted for, their constituencies might be spared. The noble Lord went on to say that he had heard that such things had happened when the Reform Bill of 1831 was under discussion. But it appears to me that this illustration of the noble Lord's argument at once destroys the value of the argument itself; because in the case of the Reform Bill of 1831 the redistribution of seats formed a part of the measure, and the Government's intentions on the subject were known when the question of the franchise was under discussion ; consequently the argument of the noble Lord applies equally to the course taken by the Government and to the one which, according to him, they ought to take. The noble Lord then went on to argue that the Government could not pledge itself to bring in a particular measure next year, when, after all, there was no certainty whatever whether the same Ministry would be in office at that period. In answer to this objection, I can only say that it lies in the power of the noble Lord himself and his friends to prevent so great a calamity befalling the country, by giving a fair and generous support to Her Majesty's Government. After putting forward these and other objections, the noble Lord declared that if the Government had found it absolutely necessary to proceed with only one part of the subject, it would have been preferable to have dealt with the Redistribution of Seats first, and to have brought in a Franchise Bill afterwards. He pointed out that by taking the course that Government had taken, we were exposing the country to the great inconvenience, if not danger, of having either to appeal, in case of a dissolution between the passing of this Bill and a Redistribution of Seats Bill, to a constituency already condemned, or to a new constituency of which we had no experience, and which was new to the exercise of political rights. He described our state in this case as that of acting under a "provisional constitution." I confess that I could not altogether follow the noble Lord's argument. It seems to me that the same constituency which elected a House prepared, according to the noble Lord himself and others who have spoken, to deal with the whole question of Reform for its final settlement, could be entrusted to elect another House fit to deal with only a part of it. As regards the second part of the noble Lord's objection, it has been completely answered in the logical and conclusive speech of the Member for Westminster (Mr. Mill), who showed that if a new constituency is to be chosen which is to deal with the greatest and most important questions that can be submitted to a Legislature, it is well able to deal with such a question as that of the Redistribution of Seats. Indeed, it appears to me that the plan suggested by the noble Lord would be by far the most dangerous and inconvenient mode of proceeding; because, if you were to pass a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats it would be absolutely necessary to dissolve at once, or otherwise you would have Gentlemen in this House voting for constituencies which they did not represent, or which no longer existed, whilst other constituencies which we had called into existence were not represented at all. I think this proposal of the noble Lord shows how easy it is to criticize the course adopted by the Government, but how difficult to suggest one which would be better. But the real fact is, that similar objections would have been urged against any course which the Government might have pursued. Hon. Gentlemen opposite are opposed to any measure of real Reform—such as we understand Reform to be, and their object is to delay the passing of any Bill whatever. As the hon. Member for Westminster most justly pointed out, if any measure is to be passed through the House of Commons, it must, in order to please hon. Gentlemen opposite, be of such a nature that they could, by manipulating the seats in redistributing them, destroy or nullify all that may have been gained by the lowering of the franchise. In fact, as he said, the Conservative party are afraid of the new constituency which would be called into existence by the lowering of the franchise, and the only way they see of destroying any influence which that new constituency might have is by a re-arrangement of the seats. I will not dwell upon the necessity for introducing any Reform Bill—a necessity denied by hon. Gentlemen opposite—nor upon the pledges under which not only the Government but this House are under to deal with the question. The noble Lord, with his usual candour and straightforwardness, admitted that the Government were under a solemn obligation to introduce a Reform Bill. He did not argue against the Bill, or condemn the Government for introducing it. He limited himself to criticizing and condemning the time and manner of its introduction. But I wish to say a few words upon an argument used by the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe)—that a Member who has pledged himself on the hustings to his constituents to support any particular measure is not bound by that pledge, and should not abide by it if, in his opinion, it would be prejudicial to the public good to do so. This, I confess, appears to me to be a very mischievous and a very demoralising doctrine. [Mr. Lowe: It is his duty to resign.] I willingly accept the correction of the right hon. Gentleman; and I would say that it is the duty of many Members of this House, before they vote against this Bill, to resign, and to go again to their constituents to whom they have pledged themselves on the question of Reform. Remember that pledges given on a question so vitally affecting the interests of the people of this country are not like promises lightly given concerning trifling local matters or insignificant public questions. We are now discussing a question involving a principle of the greatest—of the most vital importance. If a Member is returned to support that principle, and to act with the party to which that portion of the country which believes in the soundness and justice of the principle has confided its application, then, I say, to vote against its adoption because, in his individual opinion, it is not for the public good, is a grave dereliction of duty, which cannot fail to have a most mischievous and demoralizing effect by shaking the confidence of the people in their representatives and in the House of Commons.

In reply to the argument advanced by some hon. Gentlemen who are generally supporters of the Government, I would remind them that Lord Russell was under an obligation not only to the country, but to several members of his own Government, to bring in a Reform Bill. It is unnecessary for me to enter into the reasons which induced me, and other Members of Lord Palmerston's Government, in whose name I may venture to speak, to remain in that Government whilst the pledge which had been given to the country over and over again to pass a Reform Bill had not been kept. [*Ironical Cheers.*] I do not owe any explanation to hon. Gentlemen opposite. My reasons were fully stated to my constituents, and were by them approved, and that is sufficient for me. Nor is it necessary for me to touch upon the circumstances which rendered it undesirable during the lifetime of Lord Palmerston to attempt to carry a measure of Reform. Those circumstances are well known to the House and the country. When Lord Russell succeeded to Lord Palmerston as the head of the Government, the state of things was altered. He was unanimously accepted by the Liberal party as their leader, because they considered him as the true representative of the Reform question, and looked to him for the introduction of a Bill upon the subject. Consequently Lord Russell could not do otherwise than introduce a measure of Reform. Had he not done so he would have been untrue to his principles and to the party which placed such implicit confidence in him. Lord Russell was not the man to shirk the duty which had been thus imposed upon him. Nor was he the man to deceive the House and the country by introducing a measure which he knew could not be passed, and which would consequently have been nothing else but a sham. He might easily have proposed what is called a large and general measure, including all those subjects which hon. Members opposite now seem so anxious to deal with; but if he had done so would there have been any prospect of passing such a measure? Might he not have availed himself of the excuse of the rejection of his Bill to say to the country that he had done his best in the cause of Reform, that the House was opposed to it, and that having redeemed his pledge he would drop the subject altogether? That mode of dealing with this great question might have satisfied hon. Gentlemen opposite, and, I am afraid, some hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House; but it would not have satisfied the country and those Members who honestly wish for Reform. It was Lord Russell's duty to deal with the question in a manner that would prove to the country and his supporters that the Government were honest in their intentions, and that they earnestly desired to bring in a measure which would pass into law. It was on this account that he had brought in a Bill which only dealt with the franchise, and did not include other questions of equal importance, which would require prolonged debate, and would consequently render the passing of any measure impossible. For this it was—and not, as the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing) had asserted, because the Bill was all in one direction—that the country had accepted the measure as a fair and honest measure, and that the Bill had been called an "honest Bill."

Can any one believe that a Bill including the franchise question and the redistribution of seats, besides other matters, could have passed through Parliament during this Session? The noble Lord who spoke in the early part of the evening (Lord Dunkellin) has described the consternation which the redistribution of seats would produce; how each Member who was about to lose his constituency would fight over his dying borough; and how every place which was to lose a Member, and every one which was to gain one, would make a battle-field of this House. Let any one refer to what took place during the year 1831, when the Reform Bill was under debate, and they will find that the discussions which occupied the House of Commons from the beginning of February to October, were mainly connected with the redistribution of seats, nearly all other public business being suspended. Is it, then, to be believed for one moment that a Bill which contained these two great subjects—subjects which, I contend, involve distinct principles, although, of course, more or less connected with each other—and, moreover, which, we are told, ought to have dealt with even other matters, such as the new definition of borough boundaries, to say nothing of the Reform of the constituencies of Scotland and Ireland—in fact, what is called "a perfect measure"—could have passed into law in one short session of Parliament? I contend that to have attempted it would have been to trifle with a great question, and to have deceived the country. Admitting all the objections that have been advanced against dealing with the question of Reform "piecemeal," I do not hesitate to assert that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, in the peculiar temper of the country, the most straightforward, the safest, the most honest way of dealing with the question is the one chosen by the Government; and I believe that the country will be well satisfied if the Government succeed in passing this measure, which, imperfect as it may be admitted to be, is, after all, a step in the right direction, and will be a great gain to the cause of Reform.

Now let me turn to the Bill itself, and to the question of the reduction of the franchise, which is the real issue before the House and the country. As far as I can understand, the principal arguments used against the Bill, and against any lowering of the franchise, are the following:—It is urged, in the first place, that the working classes are already sufficiently represented in Parliament; that if this Bill should pass, such a number of the working classes would either be immediately admitted to the franchise, or would shortly obtain it, as would lead to the swamping of other classes, and that this would be opposed to the spirit of the Constitution, which does not admit representation by numbers, but representation by classes. Secondly, it is contended that the working classes are not yet fitted to be admitted, to the extent proposed by this Bill, into the pale of the Constitution, and that in admitting them we should be extending electoral privileges to those who, from their education, or rather want of education, their modes of thought, their habits, and their moral character, are unfit to enjoy it, and who would be open to corrupt and dangerous influences. The third argument I shall mention is, that this Bill would confer the franchise upon those who do not pay direct taxes, nor are taxed to the same extent as other classes of the community, and who, therefore, have not the same stake and interest in the country, and who consequently are not so much concerned in its peace and welfare as those who do contribute directly to the taxation of the State, and who are the owners of property. Fourthly, it is declared that if this Bill pass, and the franchise be lowered to £7, the constituencies would either become so corrupt as to be purchased by wealthy men, or would be completely under the influence of demagogues, who would be returned to Parliament by flattering their worst prejudices and exciting their most dangerous passions. A fifth argument is this, that as no proof has been advanced to show that the present representative system works ill, or that the present House of Commons is unfit for the discharge of its duties, there is no reason why any alteration in them should be made, and that, therefore, the measure proposed by the Government is unnecessary.

I have, I think, thus pointed out the principal arguments which have been brought forward against the Bill. There was, indeed, another argument advanced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), and, as far as I can remember, by him alone, namely, that as the end of all government is the well-being and good administration of the State, if that end is accomplished we have nothing to do with the means by which it is attained. This is an argument which may suit other countries, but which will never be admitted in this land of ours. Whether the English people are theoretically right or wrong, they have made up their minds to one thing before all others—that whether they be ill or well-governed they will govern themselves; and that they prefer self-government, even should that government be proved to be in many cases faulty and defective, to being governed by those who do not represent them. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman may suit very well those countries in which despotism doles out liberty with a sparing and grudging hand; but he will quote Aristotle and Montesquieu in vain to the people of England, however excellent may be the principles or maxims with which their works may furnish him, if he thinks that he can persuade Englishmen to renounce that which they esteem above all other rights—the right of self-government.

I will now endeavour to meet the principal arguments and objections which, as I understand, have been urged against the Bill of the Government. I will endeavour to do so as shortly as possible, so as not to avail myself too much of the kind indulgence of the House, to whose courtesy I can only appeal for a patient hearing.

Now, as regards the first objection, that the working classes are already sufficiently represented, and that by admitting a larger number of them to the franchise we should be running the risk of swamping and overpowering other classes, which have an equal right to representation. It appears to me that the fallacy of this argument has been so fully pointed out in the masterly speech of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Mill) that it is scarcely necessary for me to enter at any length into the subject. The hon. Member took, for the sake of argument, the Conservative view of the case, and admitting that representation should be founded on class, and not on numbers or fitness, he proved that, even in this view of the question, the working classes were not represented in this House. He demonstrated conclusively that, even admitting that 25 per cent of the constituencies were composed of working men—a statement which many of us do not admit, and are prepared to disprove—even then they had no palpable and direct share in the representation; and that, until you could show that they had actually formed majorities in any election, and had returned men of their own order, or fully representing their views and opinions to the House of Commons, you could not say that they were represented here. No one has attempted to meet the hon. Member on this ground; to show that what he has stated is not the fact; or to contend, admitting it to be the fact, that his inference is wrong. He did not contend that there were no working men on the registry; far from it, he admitted the fact: and I cannot account for the surprise shown by many hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House, that there should be so many working men amongst our voters. As far as I am concerned, I am surprised that there should be so few. I was never one of those who believed or said that there were no working men who enjoyed the franchise. Representing, as I do, a constituency which contains so many working men, I could not have been ignorant of the fact. I have contended, not that there were none, but that there were not enough. And I confess it does cause me great surprise to find it now proved by these returns to Parliament, that in the great centres of our commercial and manufacturing industry — in Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, and Liverpool—where the population of artizans and mechanics is so large, in which these men have such extensive interests, there should be so few of them on the register. It is, indeed, chiefly in towns and boroughs in which the population of real working men is small, and in which they have not the greatest interests at stake, that they are found in greatest numbers amongst the voters. I most cordially agree with the hon. Member (Mr. Mill) that it would not only be just to the working classes but that it would be equally advantageous to to them and to this House, if a few men of their own order could be returned to Parliament. It may be very well to say that there are Gentlemen sent to this House by majorities which are partly made up by the votes of working men, or who represent constituencies in which the working classes have considerable influence, and that therefore they may be accepted as their representatives. But I contend that there is no man in this House who can say that he fully represents the feelings, opinions, wishes, the prejudices, if you like to call them so, of the working classes. I am one of the very few Members of this House who are actually returned by working men, whose seat here depends exclusively upon their votes. I may say that I feel the deepest interest in all that concerns them, that I have endeavoured to learn what their views and desires are, that I am as anxious as any man can possibly be, both because I feel that I ought to represent them, and because I am earnestly anxious to contribute to their welfare, to promote their interests in this House; but I cannot expect, after all, that they will place confidence in my ability to represent them fairly and fully, and that they will feel that I am in a position and have sufficient knowledge of their opinions and of their condition to speak with authority in their name. Until we have men in this House who are of the working classes themselves, who are in constant association with them, who have that intimate knowledge of their habits of thought, their necessities, their real or imagined grievances, and their views, and who can consequently state them to the House of Commons in a manner which will be satisfactory to the artizans themselves, I contend that the working classes are not properly represented in Parliament. No two men, probably, in this House have more right to be accepted as representatives of the working classes than the Members for Birmingham and Bradford (Mr. Bright and Mr. Forster); but they are or have been both employers of labour, and there may be questions discussed in Parliament in which the rights of capital and labour may be supposed to be antagonistic, and in which the working classes may believe that they cannot be fairly represented by either of those Gentlemen, whose interests, they may suspect, would be opposed to those of the employed.

The rest of my noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire seems to be disturbed by nightmares of Mr. Odger, and he is haunted by visions of Mr. Potter and the Trades Unions. But I confess that I should feel no alarm at seeing those Gentlemen amongst us. On the contrary I think their presence here would be of great advantage to us and to those whom they represent. If the grievances of which they complain on behalf of the working classes are just grievances, they would be listened to; and if redress were possible, I cannot doubt but that the justice of the House of Commons would seek to give that redress. If those grievances were ill founded, or were attributable to causes over which legislation had no control, the truth would appear after impartial and open discussion, and I have sufficient confidence in the good sense and fairness of the working classes to feel convinced that they would yield to argument and admit themselves wrong. We have nothing to fear from fair public debate of these delicate and important social questions which affect and agitate the working classes; but we have everything to fear from the effect which a sense of injustice produces upon those classes when they think that they have not a fair hearing, and when they believe that the House of Commons refuses to listen to and to remedy what they consider, whether erroneously or not is beside the question, their just grievances.

But allowing that the reduction of the franchise as proposed by the Government would admit a far larger number than 25 per cent of the working classes to the register, there is no chance whatever that such men as I have mentioned would be elected to Parliament in any sufficient numbers to affect the balance of classes in this House in the slightest imaginable degree. I will go further and say, that if we were to adopt the most extreme democratic views, and have universal suffrage, there are no statistics to show that the working classes, as opposed to the agricultural and other classes, would obtain such a majority in the constituencies of the country as seriously to affect the character and composition of the House of Commons, and through it the institutions of the country. The alarm felt lest the working men should obtain such an ascendancy in the constituencies as to be able to return a House composed of a majority of their own body, is surely a mere delusion. It is founded upon an assumption which is quite baseless, viz. that but one set of opinions upon political and social questions exists amongst the working classes, and that they are at all times prepared to act and vote together. Now my experience of the working classes proves to me the contrary. I believe that the political opinions of those who compose them differ as much as the political opinions of any other classes in this country. For instance, it is well known that a large portion of the artizans who would form part of the constituency of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) are engaged in the manufacture of small arms. There opinions upon a question of peace or war would probably differ very much from those of artizans residing in a manufacturing district, the interests of which might be seriously affected by any interruption of trade caused by war. The same would occur on every other great political question.

But now, admitting for the sake of argument, that if this Bill should pass, and the franchise be lowered to £7, the working men would obtain an absolute majority in some boroughs, and would return Members of their own order, or persons fully representing them, to Parliament, is there, I ask, any probability of the working classes obtaining such an ascendancy in this House as to swamp the representatives of all other classes put together? Referring to an article in the *Quarterly Review* which has already been quoted, I find that with a desire to make the most of the number of boroughs which are to have a majority of voters of the working classes in the event of this bill passing, the writer can only show a list of seventy-seven boroughs, returning 133 Members, as coming within this category. In ten of these, however, according to his own admission, the number of artizan voters would be 50 per cent of the constituency, leaving 50 per cent for the other classes. We may consequently leave out these ten boroughs, and the number would then be reduced to sixty-seven. But is this a sufficient number, supposing even that each borough returned a working man, or a representative of the working men, pledged to support all their views and claims, to swamp the House of Commons, to sacrifice every other opinion and every other policy than those which promoted the peculiar class interests of the working classes? It is surely absurd to maintain anything of the kind.

But then we are told that the working classes might take advantage of the disunion amongst other classes or amongst political parties, and give their support to one side or the other, first exacting promises and conditions favourable to their designs, and that by thus commanding the majority they could secure the objects they had in view. It appears to me that this argument also has been fully answered by the Member for Westminster (Mr. Mill) when he pointed out that in the face of great public interests a minority never could be a majority, and that it was the most improbable of all things that if the working classes, in an absolute minority, were to put forward views and claims which were dangerous to the real interests of the other classes, they would be able to carry them in Parliament. The truth of this has been proved over and over again.

But I maintain that statistics as to the numbers and probable predominance of the working men in this or that borough are really of little value, and do not tend to prove anything unless you are ready to furnish at the same time statistics as to the influences which exist in those boroughs. You assume that the whole number of working men in those boroughs will vote with entire independence, according to their individual opinions, and without interference or control. This might be the case if the ballot formed part of this Bill, but it is notoriously not the case now, and would not be the case if this Bill were passed.

I object altogether to the use of the word "class," as applied to the working men of this country. Indeed, we generally use the word in the plural, "classes," when we speak of them. That is an admission that there are as many divisions and subdivisions amongst them as there are amongst any other part of the community. If we are to have what is called "class representation" in this House, as applied to the working classes, we must then go further, and see that every class of artizan, according to their different interests, occupations, and employments, should be duly represented. If this principle be acted upon, we must, indeed, go still further, and ascertain whether every other class,—whether the various professions, such as the lawyers, the doctors, the army and navy, whether landholders or capitalists, are all equally represented. Such an inquiry might, indeed, find occupation for a Committee of the Privy Council! But I am surprised that hon. Gentlemen opposite should suddenly entertain and express so great a fear of class legislation. After all, class legislation has been for generations one of the distinctive characteristics of the party to which they belong. If they now condemn it altogether in principle, they must be strangely forgetful of what has taken place in this House within, I might almost say, a few days, when our time was exclusively taken up in discussing and resisting the demands for a measure which was intended for the exclusive benefit of a class.

Let me now turn to the second objection—that the working classes are from various causes not fitted for the exercise of the franchise. I have no desire to recur again to the words of the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), which have been the subject of such frequent comment in this House and elsewhere, and have made so deep an impression on the working classes throughout the country. The right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to explain away the meaning of those words; I leave it to the country to decide with what success. But I wish to show that, supposing those words bore the interpretation placed upon them by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the working classes, they would only express an opinion upon the condition of those classes, and upon their unfitness to be admitted to political rights, which has more than once been expressed by the right hon. Gentleman. If, in speaking of the drunkenness, violence, impulsiveness, and venality of certain persons, he had meant to designate the vices of the working classes in general, it appears to me that he would only have been repeating and enlarging upon a view of their character expressed in a speech delivered in this House last year. If we accept the explanation which the right hon. Gentleman gave a few days ago of the words he uttered this year, that explanation will not apply to those which he uttered last year. And there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the report of what he said on that occasion, because the whole speech has been reprinted, I understand, with the right hon. Gentleman's sanction, from the columns of *The Times* in the form of a pamphlet, and was, moreover, inserted at full length, previous to the general election last autumn, in the columns of one of the organs of the Opposition—*The Standard*—as a statement of the views and opinions on Reform,—as a kind of manifesto, indeed,—of the Conservative party. In the course of that speech the right hon. Gentleman read an extract from a report made by Mr. Baker, one of the Poor Law Inspectors (I think), who, after describing how a certain number of working men in a particular district had, by savings, acquired through industry, obtained possession of small freeholds, which gave them a vote, went on to say that,

> "In the same locality, employed at the same work and at the same wages, and without any extraordinary drawback, a vast number of those who possess no such properties live on from day to day, regardless of every enjoyment which is not sensual, exhibiting no desire for an elevation of their character among their fellow-men."

After quoting these words from Mr. Baker's report, the right hon. Gentleman went on to say:—

> "I ask the House upon which of the classes here described will the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds operate? Not upon the provident, but mainly upon the improvident, class. For the provident are not only in possession of the franchise; they have soared far above it, and have got into the region of freeholders. It will therefore apply to the men who waste their time in these profitless and degrading pursuits in order that they may be elevated and fished out of the mire in which they delight to grovel, introduced

to power, and entrusted with control over the constitution of the country."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxviii. 1431.]

This statement, according to the republished report of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, was received with cheers. I may presume that those cheers did not come from this side of the House, but from the other; and that, accordingly, hon. Gentlemen opposite accepted and approved of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that those whom the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds was intended to enfranchise were "to be fished out of the mire in which they delighted to grovel." The right hon. Gentleman went on to point out, that if working men would only drink less beer, they might save enough to purchase the franchise; and he then said:

> "The question for you now to determine is, whether you ought to bring down the franchise to the level of those persons who have no such sense of decency or morality, and of what is due to the health of themselves and their children; whether you will degrade the franchise into the dirt, and imperil your institutions; or whether you will make this franchise a vast instrument of good, a lever by which you may hope to elevate the working classes, not in the manner which a mawkish sentimentality contemplates, but by fixing the franchise at a reasonable level, requiring a little, and only a little effort and self-denial on their part, a little security that they are able to conduct their own affairs before we entrust them with ours." ["Hear!"]

Hon. Gentlemen cheered these sentiments; but I would desire to point out to them that, plausible as the statement of the right hon. Gentleman might appear, judging from the inference he drew from it, he either attempted (as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already argued with regard to the speech of this year) to prove too much or too little. If he spoke only of exceptions to a class, why condemn the whole class, because, as in all other classes, there were bad and unworthy characters in it, and exclude them from a share in the constitution? If he did not speak of exceptions, but of a whole class, then it appears to me that the words spoken by the right hon. Gentleman this year, as well as those spoken last year, can bear but one interpretation, and that interpretation the one placed upon them by a large majority of the country, namely, that in his opinion the working classes we propose to enfranchise are unfitted on account of their vices and habits to be admitted to the franchise. It appears to me that it is impossible for the right hon. Gentleman to escape from this dilemma. But if the right hon. Gentleman should say that those observations were only applied to a certain class of persons, viz. those who are to be admitted to the franchise by this Bill, or were to be admitted by the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds, and that for the good qualities of the remainder of the working classes he has the highest respect, and that they are in no way to be included amongst those whom he has denounced, then I would ask him who are his "Hyperboreans?" Are they those of the working classes who are not included amongst the voters to be admitted to the franchise by this Bill, or those who are beneath the £7 householders? If so, I may call upon my right hon. friend to support household suffrage, or manhood suffrage, or even universal suffrage. But it is evident that the right hon. Gentleman used the *ex uno disce omnes* argument, and no one who considers fairly and impartially what he said can maintain the contrary.

There is an argument which has been advanced more than once in this debate against the working classes, grounded upon the charge against them of "impulsiveness," which ought not, I think, to be left unnoticed or unanswered. I mean the argument, or rather the assertion, that if they had any preponderating influence in this House, and in the government of the country, they would soon plunge this country into war. This assertion has been supposed to receive support from a statement made by the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) which has been misunderstood. Let us test the validity of this argument by facts. Let us look at the annals of the last Parliament, and see whether motions in this House and opinions outside of this House in favour of war have been supported by the working classes or by hon. Gentlemen opposite and those whom they represent. ["Oh, oh!" *and* "No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite interrupt me, and seek to deny what I say before I have said it. I am merely desirous of stating facts in opposition to assertions, and in answer to arguments urged by hon. Gentlemen in this House. I would appeal, not to those who were not Members of this House during the last Parliament, but to those who were. I will address myself to the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Cranbourne), who is a truthful and straightforward man, and will not, I am sure, deny what I say if I say that which is true. Did he not, let me ask him, during the Danish difficulties, constantly urge the Government to take a course which must have led to an European war, and condemn the Government most strongly for not taking that course, and supporting Denmark, even by going to war for her? Whilst the civil war was raging in America, what classes in this country called upon the Government to take steps which would have inevitably involved us in war with the United States? Was it the working classes? [*Interruption, and Cries of* "Question!"] I desire to confine myself to the question before the House; and I beg hon. Members to remember that I am not making any assertions gratuitously, but am answering statements made in this House which I have a right to answer, and which should not, I think, be allowed to remain uncontradicted, namely, the assertion that if this Bill were to pass we should be under the influence of the working classes, whose impulsiveness would lead us into constant wars. It has been stated what democracies would do; I merely wish to point out what aristocracies have done. The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Sir Hugh Cairns) denies my statements; but I cannot forget that in the debate when the conduct of the Government for detaining the Confederate rams was most strongly condemned by the party opposite, the ablest arguments advanced against the Government were those urged in the speech of the learned Gentleman. And, let me ask the House, if the Government had acted upon the advice given by that learned Gentleman, would they not have plunged this country into war with the United States? It is a fact not to be forgotten—and it is one, I think, which furnishes a complete answer to the charge made against the working classes of their readiness to drive the Government into war—that during all the suffering entailed upon a great body of the working men of this country by the suspension of their labour in consequence of the cotton famine, not a single petition was presented to this House by them asking for any interference in the affairs of the United States; and that, with the sole exception of Liverpool, every constituency in this kingdom in which the working classes have any influence, most warmly and cordially supported the Government in their determination to maintain strict neutrality during the civil war in America.

Having now disposed, so far as I am able, of objections to the lowering of the franchise founded upon the impulsiveness of the working classes, let me say a few words on the charge of venality brought against them. This accusation has been urged by several Members of the House during the debate, but by none with greater force and eloquence than my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton) in his great speech of the other evening. He described, in his telling manner, the contest for the vote of the working man between Smith with the £5 note and Brown with the rights of man, in which Smith, of course, prevailed. Whilst he was speaking, I could not help remembering a very remarkable speech delivered by my right hon. Friend some years ago, in which he produced a somewhat different version of the same novel. I dare say some hon. Gentlemen who heard the speech to which I allude, will not have forgotten the touching description which he gave of the trials and fall of poor Smith the plasterer, who, living in want, was tempted by the different agents of Thomson the rising statesman, and a candidate for Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman described, with his usual power, how poor Smith was first too openly and too grossly tempted by the bare offer of £3 to repair his house; and how a more adroit agent in the shape of the attorney then appeared upon the scene, and placed the bait before him in a more alluring form; how poor Smith went home and saw his pale and suffering wife, and heard the hunger cry of his supperless children; how his honest virtue gave way before the scene of hopeless misery; and how, after a long struggle, he ended by persuading himself that, after all, there was no harm in taking £3 in the way the attorney had "put it" and voting for Thomson. The indignant and lofty virtue of the House held up poor Smith the plasterer to execration. His fall was hailed with enthusiastic cheers by hon. Gentlemen opposite. But, let me ask the House, was there no one more to blame, more worthy of our indignation than poor Smith the plasterer? Do we not daily pray that we may not be led into temptation? Are we so sure that we should ourselves resist it if we were placed in the same position as poor Smith the plasterer? If we fall, we attribute our fall to the direct agency of the arch-tempter, who must himself appear to assail our superior virtue, whilst poor Smith the plasterer is handed over to the arch-tempter's most ordinary agent, the attorney.

Sir, I say that until this House is prepared, until society itself is prepared, to condemn and punish him who corrupts, it has no right to condemn and punish him who is corrupted. Nor have we any right to exclude from the franchise a large portion of our fellow-countrymen, whose honesty as a class I will venture to declare will bear comparison with that of any other class, because we can show that some of them have been corrupted.

I now come to the next objection, viz. that the working classes do not pay direct taxes, and have not sufficient stake in the country to entitle them to a larger share in its government. The best answer has already been given to that objection by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he showed that the aggregate incomes of the working classes amount to almost as much as the aggregate incomes of all other classes of the community; that is to say, that it is nearly half the actual income of the country. Not to go over that ground again, I will confine myself to pointing out the remarkable evidence of the increased wealth of the working classes afforded by annual returns laid before this House, and I would particularly direct honourable Gentlemen's attention to those made by Mr. Tidd Pratt, the official registrar of Friendly and other Societies. They will find that the Co-operative Societies declared last year profits to the amount of above £200,000, and that the aggregate funds deposited by Friendly Societies with the Commissioners of the National Debt and savings banks amount to within a small sum of £4,000,000. The great Mutual Benefit Society of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, with ramifications all over the kingdom, possesses no less than £2,000,000 of accumulated funds, subscribed by 370,000 members, whilst the London Unity of Odd Fellows has, I understand, more than £200,000 capital, with 40,000 members, and the United Foresters nearly £1,000,000 capital. To all this must be added the large amount of money invested by the working classes individually in the savings banks and in the Post Office savings bank, amounting to many millions. Do not these facts say something for the increase of the wealth and well-being of the working classes? Do they not say something in proof of their increased thrift and providence? Do they not furnish some arguments against the charge advanced against them of having no stake in the country? Remember that these great Friendly Societies, with their accumulated funds, are managed exclusively by working men, and are completely and entirely under their control. And do not these facts furnish convincing proofs not only of the enormous increase in the aggregate wealth of the working classes, but of the spread amongst them of sound opinions on the most important questions of political economy; false notions upon which might, if widely entertained by the working classes, have been dangerous to the rest of the community? A very short time ago, as we well know, the working classes resented the action of the Government in regard to Friendly Societies as an unwarrantable interference in their affairs. They refused to register them under the Act. They persisted in carrying them on upon principles which were unsound, and could only end in bringing Benefit Societies to bankruptcy. But the working classes soon learnt the truth, and are now willing to conform to regulations and laws upon which alone these societies can be carried on with advantage to their members and with perfect success. Does this not prove that the working classes are open to conviction when they are wrong? They may entertain erroneous opinions on questions of political economy, like others have done with regard to protection and free trade. But it is no small thing in their favour that they have yielded willingly and of their own accord to argument and the force of truth.

I may further point out this remarkable fact—one most deserving of attention, and in my opinion reflecting the highest credit upon the working men—that theirs is the only class which, as a class, provides for the poor, the needy, the sick, and the suffering, by an organised and regular saving from individual incomes—by the daily putting by of something which leads to an actual privation and sacrifice. And remember how hardly their wages are earned, and what the sacrifice is when the laying by so much a week means an actual taking away from the necessaries of life, from that which is almost essential to the support of their wives and children. We impose no such self-denial upon ourselves. I say, Sir, that with all that other classes may give in charity—and no one will deny the charity of our middle and upper classes—none make so great a daily uninterrupted sacrifice. And let us for one moment think of what these working classes are doing for us and for other classes by thus providing for their own poor and for those who are unable to work, who would be thrown upon the poor rates, and whom we should have to maintain. I think that this consideration alone entitles them to no little gratitude and respect.

Have the working classes then no stake in the country, as it has been asserted? Would their property, large as I have shown it to be, be less affected, less liable to loss, than that enjoyed by any other portion of the community, in the event of foreign war or domestic commotion? They know as well as we do how sensitive credit is, how the funds rise and fall, how misgovernment, how any interruption to the public peace can lower the value of all property. I will go further, and maintain that they have even a greater stake in the country than other classes have, and would feel more acutely than any other class any derangement in the public credit or any event which might check the prosperity of the nation. To us a decrease in the value of our property or of our incomes means a luxury the less; with them it means a necessity the less: with us reduced rent means food and clothing less luxurious, less costly; with them reduced wages or no wages at all means too often no food and no clothing at all. And will any one say in the face of these facts, that the working classes have no interest in the well-being, prosperity, and peace of the country?

I will now come to another argument against the Bill to which I have alluded, viz. that by lowering the franchise and increasing the size of and lowering constituencies, you render it impossible for any but rich men and demagogues to enter the House of Commons. There is no doubt that the first part of this objection is, in the present state of things, not unfounded. But the same argument was constantly used during the debates on the Reform Bill of 1831. It was then gravely asserted that if that Bill passed into law only rich nabobs returned from India would be able to get seats in the House of Commons. We know how far that prophecy has been fulfilled. The expenses of an election in a large constituency, and in many a small one too, are very serious. Unfortunately the House of Commons has never been sincere in its desire and in its attempt to lower this extravagant expenditure. I believe that no reform will be really effective and useful until this is done. I believe it could be done if we were to set about it with sincerity, with a determination that this scandal should no longer attach to our representative system. This may be one of the results of a reformed Parliament. I say it can be done, because I have seen elections carried on without such expenses, and without bribery. I was in Italy last autumn during the elections—and allow me to say that of all countries in Europe I believe that Italy will show herself most fitted for free and constitutional government. I was in the company of a friend who was a candidate for one of the largest, the most populous, the most rising, and I may add the most radical of the cities of the north of Italy. The time was one of considerable excitement owing to the struggle between the Conservative, Mazzinian, and Clerical parties. The election was hotly contested, and the candidate who headed the poll had not the requisite majority of votes required to return a member, and a second election became in consequence necessary. Yet with all this the members were put to no expense whatever, everything was done with the utmost order and regularity, and there was no bribery or intimidation of any kind. If such things can be done in Italy where Parliamentary government has only just been introduced, why can it not be done in England, with all our experience and the boasted superiority of our institutions?

For my part, Sir, I believe the time will come when all the legitimate expenses of elections will be met by a county and borough rate, and when all expenses not absolutely necessary and legitimate will be prohibited by laws which we shall be prepared to enforce, and when those who incur illegal expenses will be duly punished. Until the corruption of voters is not only a punishable offence, but is considered to be disgraceful by this House and by society, and until this House and society unmistakeably mark their sense of the conduct of those who have engaged in such practices, corruption and bribery will never be put an end to. You have no right to throw it in the teeth of the working men that they are unfit to exercise the franchise because they are corrupt, whilst you are their corruptors. [*Great confusion and interruption from the Opposition.*]

Sir, I can assure honourable Gentlemen opposite that I have no intention whatever of casting any imputation upon any honourable Member, or upon any one party more than upon another. I am simply speaking of a state of things which most unfortunately is known and admitted to exist. I am addressing the whole House of Commons and the country. I maintain that hitherto we have not looked upon corruption (I may be as much to blame as any one else) in its true and proper light, when used as an agency to gain admittance to this House; and that until we do condemn it as it ought to be condemned, and visit those who use it as they ought to be visited, we have no right to use the language which is sometimes applied to the working classes.

But now let me turn to the second part of the objection, that besides wealthy men only demagogues, who would pander to the passions and prejudices of the mob, would be returned to this House. This again is an assertion which can be tested by facts, and I venture to say that facts are entirely opposed to it. In the first place no constituency in which the working classes at this time have a decided influence at elections return a "demagogue," or any Member who can be considered as bearing any resemblance to that character; nor, as far as I am aware, has any "demagogue" offered himself for election to any such constituency. That was not so thirty or forty years ago, when men who would certainly be now thought demagogues of the most violent character were returned to this House. In truth, as you trust the working classes, as you extend to them their just rights, men of this kind have less influence over them, and are less likely to become sufficiently important to command the support of any number of working men. The old demagogue is, in fact, out of work now. We want you to put an end to him altogether. And there is no way better calculated to do this than such legislation as we invite you to support. Whilst in other countries of Europe the people are daily becoming more democratic in their political opinions and the Governments more Conservative (or I might use a much stronger term), in this country the reverse is the case. Let honourable Gentlemen remember the kind of measures that used to be submitted to this House but a very few years ago; such as the resolutions constantly brought forward by my honourable friend the Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King) and others, for the abolition of the laws of primogeniture, proposals for doing away with the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords, and resolutions in favour of triennial Parliaments, for which we find even Lord Grey and other eminent English statesmen voting as a necessary measure of reform. Even the ballot, I am afraid, now receives fewer supporters than it used to do. But let us look out of doors and see the great change that has taken place in this respect in the opinions and desires of the working classes. Above all, where is now the Charter with its six points of which we used to hear so much? We hear no more of it now. I have the honour of representing one of the most democratic constituencies in the kingdom, and yet I will venture to say that there are no avowed Chartists in it. Where are the newspapers, such as the *Northern Star*, which some twenty-five years ago used to be the open advocate of sedition and discontent, and which exercised so great an influence over the working classes? Where are the prosecutions for treason and sedition, which used formerly to teem in our criminal courts? All these things have passed away. May not these great and beneficial changes be attributed to the passing of the Reform Bill, to that which this House has done for the admission of a larger portion of the people of this country to the franchise? You say that the working men have been silently obtaining the franchise, and that we now find that which seems to surprise many persons, that, after all, 25 per cent. of working men are on the register. If so, are we not justified in assuming, that there is a connection between cause and effect, and in attributing to this very fact, to this very increase of influence, some of the changes and improvements that I have described? The result, therefore, of the working classes having to some extent gained admittance to the franchise is, not that we are more democratic, but that we are more conservative than we used to be. We only ask you to act upon the experience we have gained, to continue in the same direction, to admit a still greater number of the working classes into the pale of the Constitution, convinced as we are that by so doing you will increase, and not endanger, the well-being and the contentment of the country at large.

When the Reform Bill of 1831 was introduced, many Liberal statesmen and public men who were disposed to concede as much as possible to the people thought that the borough franchise had been fixed too high at £10. But it is scarcely to be wondered at that even they, with the events of the French Revolution fresh in their memories, and under the influence of that which was passing around them in this country, should have hesitated in giving too much power to the working classes. They were therefore content to compromise the matter, and to accept the £10 test. But they had no intention that we should remain for ever at that point, and that if the working classes showed themselves fitted for a further reduction of the franchise, Parliament should not give it to them. After all, the reduction of the franchise is a matter of experience and of expediency. Is it right and safe and expedient that it should be reduced? Has the admission of the working classes, limited as it has been, proved beneficial or not to the country? If those questions are answered in the affirmative, I contend that we are not only justified in lowering the franchise, but that we are bound to do it. I was glad to hear some hon. Gentlemen on the other side admit that the reduction of the franchise was a question of fitness, although others had contended that fitness had nothing whatever to do with it, and that we must take into consideration the principle of representation by classes as the only one known to the Constitution. I will address myself to those who take my view of the question, and I will ask them whether any one will venture to say that property is less secure, rank less respected, the influence of religion less felt, at this time than it was before the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832? No one will, I am sure, say that they are. If this, then, is admitted, have we not proved our case for the reduction of the franchise?

Mr. Layard

I can entirely corroborate what my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) stated this evening in his calm, able, and convincing speech, that the working men of this country in their difficulties and troubles look up to men of rank and position, and are always ready to consult them, and to be guided by them; that even in their strikes they would rather go to a "gentleman" than to one of themselves for settling matters. A remarkable example of this occurred last year during the prolonged strike in some of the manufacturing districts of the midland counties. To whom did the artizans on strike apply? Was it to any demagogue? No; it was to Lord Lichfield, a nobleman well known for his sympathy with the working classes, for his desire to promote their true interests, and for his high honour and impartiality. They applied to him to settle the differences between them and their employers. He readily undertook the task, and although for various reasons he did not quite succeed in reconciling them, the working men expressed in a feeling manner their gratitude to the noble Lord for what he had done for them, admitted his impartiality, and thanked him for the efforts he had made in their behalf.

Sir, I confess that it appears to me somewhat strange that those who remember the prophecies, and warnings, and fears that were repeated over and over again in this House and throughout the country before the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, should be now alarmed at this mere bugbear of democracy. They know how completely those prophecies failed, and how utterly unfounded those fears have proved to be. Democracy may be a very good and safe subject for young politicians to try their maiden speeches upon. Amongst the tribes in which I spent a considerable part of my early youth it was the custom for the chiefs to keep a stuffed lion, upon which the young warriors and huntsmen were made to practise the use of their swords and spears, in order that they might prepare themselves for encounters with the real animal. Much in the same way the more aged and experienced of the hon. Gentlemen opposite use my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham. He is made to represent this formidable monster—democracy; and upon him younger Members of the Conservative party are invited to try their courage and their strength. The mode in which they treat my hon. Friend reminds me of a game which was said to have been much played in fashionable circles some years ago, and which has become classical. They set up my hon. Friend, they blacken his face (after the Eastern fashion), they paint him as hideously as they are able, and then placing in his mouth a Bill—not the Government Bill, but a Bill which in the lively imagination of these hon. Gentlemen passes for the Government Bill—they set to work to smash this Bill with their speeches, and they so batter and disfigure my hon. Friend himself, that in a very short time his most intimate friend would not recognize him. But I must admit, Sir, that my hon. Friend is very much to blame for the manner in which he is treated; if he will persist in frightening, as he does, hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. He is, I know, a great reader of Shakspeare, and he should remember that Shakspeare says, "that to bring in a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wildfowl than your lion living." If my hon. Friend must occasionally roar so as to terrify the nervous and the timid politicians opposite, he should at least "allow half his face to be seen through the lion's neck;" and he should really allay their fears by telling them, "If you think I am come hither as a lion, it were a pity of my life. No, I am no such thing; I am a man, as other men are." And if this were not sufficient to reassure them, it might be necessary for you, Sir—as it would, I believe, be unparliamentary for my hon. Friend to do so himself—"to name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner."

I cannot, Sir, understand how it is that the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Oxfordshire and the University of Cambridge (Mr. Henley and Mr. Walpole) should join in this cry of fear, and in these paroxysms of terror at the threatened invasion of democracy, at the fearful results which are to arise from the lowering of the franchise to £7, which according to the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton) is not "Reform," but "revolution." Those right hon. Gentlemen are known to have left Lord Derby's Ministry because that Ministry would not consent to lower the franchise to £8. Is there then, in their opinion, but £1 between the British Constitution and revolution? Are we to be saved by this small sum from all the evils, all the horrors, which have been pictured in such terrible colours by the right hon. Gentleman's friends and colleagues? We have heard when a man was bold enough to trust himself in a ship, there was only one plank between himself and eternity. But even that is not a more awful position than that in which this country would have been in if the right hon. Gentleman's £8 franchise had been adopted, and we should only have had £1 between us and the utter destruction of all our institutions.

And all this dread of democracy—all these predictions of terrible results to the Constitution—are founded upon the supposition that a certain number of the working classes must be admitted by the Government Bill to the franchise. Have you, then, so much fear of the working classes—do you think that their admission to a share in the Government of the country would be productive of such vast evils? You now declare that you do not doubt their individual fitness, if character and conduct are to be the tests of fitness, to exercise the franchise. You now repudiate the description of their habits and their vices which you cheered not long ago. You go further; you now praise them, and declare that you have unbounded faith in them. I do not doubt the generous sympathy felt by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer Lytton) for the working man; and few who heard his speech will forget the noble words in which he described the aspirations of the working man as "the eternal link between the aims of educated labour and the dreams of philosophy and genius." But it is of little use to talk of sympathy for the working classes, and to admit their fitness for the enjoyment of the franchise, whilst at the same time you refuse to put any trust in them, and to give the franchise to them. Your opinion of our duty to the working man somewhat resembles the view which the Scotch pedagogue took of our duty towards our neighbour, which his pupil had described to be, "to fear him, to love him, and to trust him." "You may fear him and love him as much as you like," said he, "but you must not trust him." As long as the working man is just what you wish him to be, you will say a good word in his favour; but he must be the model working man after your own notion. He must have all the virtues of his own class and of all other classes put together. If he pays his rent punctually for twenty years, brings up respectably a large family of children, has never been seen at the beerhouse, and is unknown to the relieving officer, he shall receive a prize of 10*s*., presented to him by a great peer, or by an illustrious man of letters. He will be allowed to read newspapers, to study history, and to attend lectures at the institute. All this he may do, and a great deal more; but if he attempts to apply the principles that he has learned—if he attempts to put into practice the lessons of political economy which he has been taught—if he begins to think that he is entitled to make the most of the sweat of his brow and the labour of his hand—if it dawns upon him that he has as much right to combine with his fellow-men to obtain a fair price for his work as the owners of capital have a right to combine against him for the regulation of his wages—then, indeed, the benevolent admirers of the working classes, and the dispensers of so many good things to him, lift up their hands in amazement, stand aghast at his audacity and his ingratitude, and behold the flood of democracy about to sweep over the land, and to wash away, even to the very last vestiges, the glorious institutions of this country.

Now the working man is not ungrateful for what you may do for him, nor is he insensible to your good opinion; but he is at the same time independent, and he will not accept what you offer him upon the terms by which it is accompanied. He will meet you as his political equal, and not upon any other footing. Otherwise he feels that there are rights to which you are admitted, but from which he is excluded, and this begets a sense of shame and injustice. [*Interruption from the Opposition.*] Sir, I do not wish to occupy the attention even of hon. Gentlemen opposite if they are determined not to hear me, but I think it is only fair that, as all other classes are freely heard in this House, the opinions and sentiments of the working men, whether those opinions are right or wrong, whether distasteful or otherwise to any party in this House, should be freely stated here. I cannot but believe that hon. Gentlemen opposite are only damaging their own cause when they are seeking by these constant interruptions to prevent me expressing what I believe to be the views entertained by a vast number of men in this country. Remember that those who read our debates out of doors will not attribute these interruptions and the conduct towards me of hon. Gentlemen opposite to their disinclination to hear an inefficient speaker, or one who cannot speak with authority upon the views and sentiments of those whose cause he is pleading, but to their determination not to allow those views and sentiments to be heard in this House.

You do not know the effect of what passes in this House upon the working classes. You forget that all we say and do concerning them is thought over, and weighed and considered, and is the subject of their constant thought and conversation. You do not understand how sensitive the nature of these men may be. The few words spoken some nights ago by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—not the cold and well-balanced words of a treatise on political economy, but burning and generous words, coming straight from the heart—have touched a chord amongst the working men which has vibrated through the length and breadth of the land. Not because the working men have been altogether unaccustomed to hear words of kindness and sympathy regarding them spoken in Parliament, but because it is something new—something unexpected—something undreamt of, to hear such words coming from the great and recognized Leader of this House, which they had been brought to believe had no feeling of kindness or sympathy for them, and no desire or intention to do them justice. If I know anything of the working men of this country I may venture to assure the right hon. Gentleman, that what he has said of them, and what he has done for them, will never be forgotten by them, but that they will be ever grateful to him. [*Loud and ironical Cheers from the Opposition.*] I entreat hon. Gentlemen opposite not to think lightly of these things, or to believe that the feeling which has been aroused amongst the working men is but a temporary feeling—that it has been brought about by artificial means, and can only be nourished by such means—that these are mere illusions. The working man, as he returns to his ever-recurring toil at the loom, ponders over these things; he dwells upon his wrongs and his grievances. I will not say that they are real wrongs and real grievances, but he believes them to be such, and you foment and strengthen that belief by refusing to give him an opportunity of stating them, and of being heard through those who can faithfully and honestly represent him in this Commons House of Parliament. Depend upon it, that the more this House refuses to listen to the statement of their grievances, whether they be well-grounded or not, the more will the working classes be convinced that they are real.

The Government have felt this, and they desire that some means shall be found by which the impression which undoubtedly exists amongst the working classes, that they are not represented or heard in this House, shall be removed. They have, therefore, proposed a measure which is moderate, and, whilst moderate and not causing any violent change, is one which the working classes themselves are ready to accept. Let us be wise in time. You say that Reform is unnecessary, because there is now no demand for it, no general excitement, no agitation in the country, no pressure on the Government. Even admitting this to be true, although I do not admit it, is it, let me ask you, statesmanlike, prudent, or wise, to refuse to do right until a wrong is committed? Are we to wait, as our forefathers did, until the people are driven by a sense of wrong and injustice to commit acts which are illegal and to be condemned, before we concede to them that which we admit they are entitled to?

I will venture to say that there can be nothing more worthy of notice than the attitude of the working classes with regard to this Bill. The hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Baxter) has told us that, at a meeting of his constituents, only fifteen persons held up their hands in favour of a resolution for manhood suffrage. I can go further, and state that at a very large and crowded meeting of the working classes of Southwark—a meeting composed exclusively of artizans and mechanics—only one person advocated manhood suffrage. The meeting would not hear him, and at once rejected his resolution. It is all very well for hon. Gentlemen opposite to quote the words of Professor Beazley, spoken at some meeting, and to seek to prove from them that the views and wishes of the working men are not such as we say they are; that although they may for the present, and for a special purpose, pretend to be moderate, they are really under the influence of violent and unscrupulous demagogues. But if I am rightly informed, Mr. Beazley is an Oxford Professor, and a Gentleman who has received his education in that seat of learning. Therefore, for any opinions that he may have advanced or may profess—and I really do not know whether they are such as they are said to be—Oxford, and not the working men, must be held responsible.

But I contend that the working men are honestly and sincerely willing to accept this Bill. I will not say that they are entirely satisfied with all its provisions, that it meets all their expectations. They had, no doubt, hoped for more. They knew that a very large number of Members of this House, and of the Government itself, had pledged themselves to a £6 franchise, and we must not be surprised, therefore, if they think £7 too high. They are also of opinion that a lower lodger franchise would not only have been safe and fair, but that it would have had a good moral and social effect by encouraging working men to live in a better class of buildings than small and mean tenements at low rents. But they are willing to give up these views and opinions to meet the House of Commons half-way. And is this not a proof that they are moderate in their desires and expectations, and that they are really well-fitted to be entrusted with the franchise? Much has been said, and most justly said, in praise of the conduct of the men of Lancashire, during the terrible trials and sufferings entailed upon them by the cotton famine; but I think that the attitude of the working classes in the matter of this Reform Bill is scarcely less deserving of commendation, and affords scarcely a less striking and conclusive proof of their claim to the confidence of their fellow-countrymen.

But still you refuse to meet them, although they have come forward with so much good feeling and moderation to meet you. And yet there never was a time more opportune for the settlement of a great question of this nature than the present. The atmosphere is clear and calm. The condition of the working classes at this present moment, and their temper, are such that they are willing, for the settlement of those questions which affect them so deeply, to accept what the Government has offered to them. The time may come, if we do not avail ourselves of this opportunity, when they may not be satisfied with the measure of justice which they are now willing to receive, and when they may insist upon much larger concessions. It is our duty to forestall that time. Do not show distrust in this large body of your fellow-countrymen. I do not ask you to give with a liberal, with a generous, or with an ungrudging hand, but with a just hand. I appeal to the justice, not to the liberality, of the House of Commons. If you will only do justice to the working classes, if you will only place confidence in them, depend upon it that they will not show themselves unworthy of that confidence, but that they will give you even greater proofs than they have hitherto given of the love they bear to the Throne, the institutions, and the greatness of their country.

Sir HUGH CAIRNS: The course of this debate has shown, and I think shown in a very marked manner, the advantage of the discussion of public questions in the House of Commons. During the recess we have heard of meetings held in various parts of the country, addressed by speakers of great ability and great eloquence; but, Sir, I am afraid that there is a tendency in the human mind which, when a speaker addresses an auditory brought together in support of some particular or preconceived views, where no controversy is intended, and where no controversy is allowed, leads him to resort rather to vague and empty declamation, and to exalt emphasis and energy of language above accuracy and above argument. In this House, on the other hand, we expect a fair and candid statement of the question which is to be discussed, and we expect arguments fairly and boldly addressed to that question; and when we find an absence of those arguments we not unnaturally suspect a weakness of the position which argument cannot defend. Now, I fear that this is a test which may fairly be applied to the somewhat remarkable speech of the Under-Secretary who has just resumed his place. We have heard from him that the constituency of Southwark contains a greater proportion of working men than any other constituency in the kingdom; but the hon. Gentleman says that the working men have no confidence in him, and that he does not represent them, and cannot speak for them. Far be it from me to dispute that proposition. He has told us what a number of people have said at different times about Reform. I think if all that has been said at various times by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen sitting beside him were to be collected and compared, we should have a very extraordinary publication. He has told us that the issue which is to be discussed here is not at all the issue raised by the Amendment which you, Sir, have put from the chair, but some imaginary issue of which, I confess, I could not understand the hon Member's definition. He says that last year the party who sit at this side of the House were extremely anxious to precipitate the country into the Danish war; but one of the greatest ornaments this House ever had, who is now removed from us—the late Mr. Cobden—expressed his opinion that it was Her Majesty's Government who, by their despatches, were on the point of plunging us into war on that question. He has told us—descending to a very small individual indeed—that I, forsooth, keenly urged the release of steam rams in order that they might be used in the war by the Southern against the Northern States of America. If that subject is worth referring to, I beg most emphatically to deny every word of the hon. Gentleman's assertion on that point. I remember offering, as strongly as I could do so, my comment on the conduct of Her Majesty's Government, who, contrary to law, detained vessels which, either because they felt they had no grounds, or because they had not sufficient courage, they did not venture to arrest; but whatever opinions I entertained on the subject of the American civil war, the hon. Gentleman knows nothing about them; for it so happens that neither in the House nor out of it, directly or indirectly, did I ever express that opinion. Well, the hon. Gentleman further told us that, whatever the private opinions of Members of the House of Commons might be, they ought to sacrifice everything to exigencies of party. [Mr. Layard expressed dissent.] I beg pardon and withdraw the statement, but I so understood the hon. Gentleman. If the hon. Gentleman now withdraws that opinion, I will only hope that he will induce the other members of the Government to take the same views. But there was one thing which the hon. Gentleman promised to do, and which he has not done, which was to meet the Amendment which has been moved by the noble Earl opposite (Earl Grosvenor), and the arguments of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) in support of it. The House desire, no doubt, that this debate should come to a close within some reasonable period, and as therefore it may be more convenient that I should detain them for some little time to-night, perhaps they will allow me to call attention to what I think the hon. Gentleman did not call their attention very clearly to — namely, the point at issue. The question resolves itself into two matters, in one sense distinct, and in another very closely connected together — one the manner in which this Bill deals with the subject of the franchise; the other the manner in which Her Majesty's Government propose to deal with the whole question of Parliamentary Reform. As I have remarked, these points are in one sense distinct; but, at the same time, it is impossible to properly proceed and deal with the second unless we go into the character of the Bill now before the House. I heard a member of Her Majesty's Government — I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer — say the other night, that the Government did not propose to overthrow the Constitution of the country. ["Hear!"] I was very glad to receive that assurance, and I hope hon. Members are not prepared to contradict the statement. But that being so, it has always seemed to me of the first importance in dealing with such a matter as the representation of the people, that we should ascertain if we can what is the principle of the Constitution; because, if we can come to some agreement on that point, the differences between us will be very much simplified. I lay the more stress on this, because I have heard in the discussion of this Bill a view which was novel from the hon. Member for Birmingham—whose name, though I am compelled to mention it, I shall treat more respectfully than was done by the hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I have a great respect for the hon. Member for Birmingham. I differ widely from his views, but I admire, beyond the possibility of expression, the eloquence which he always exhibits in debate; and I was perfectly amazed to hear a Member of Her Majesty's Government insinuate that, after all, the hon. Member for Birmingham was only "Snug the joiner!" almost suggesting that you, Sir, should address him by that name from the chair. But I will speak of the hon. Member more respectfully. What is the principle of the representation of the people of this country? Is it personal fitness? Is it boon and concession? Is it a question of universal right? Or is it something different from all three? The hon. Member for Birmingham told us he had a theory on the subject derived from Lord Somers. He said that Lord Somers, a great Whig authority, not accidentally and conversationally, not in the course of some hasty speech, but in a solemn conference and deliberation between the Houses of Lords and Commons, pronounced an opinion that every man in England had by birth a right to suffrage. Don't let me misrepresent the hon. Gentleman's words.

> "Do you mean," said he, "to tell me that Lord Somers, who lived in an after time, was not himself a great authority, and to a large extent one of the builders of our existing Constitution, and yet Lord Somers, being on a joint committee in the House of Lords, told a committee in the House of Commons, in conference, that although the Lords were of opinion that no man by birth had any right to an office, yet that by birth he had a right to a vote, and that the possession of the vote was the only true security which an Englishman had for the possession of his life and property."

Now, observe, this is represented as the opinion of Lord Somers, that every Englishman has by birth the right to a vote. That is a very startling proposition, and one calculated to alter our opinion of Lord Somers, for I never heard of his taking any step to give effect to such a doctrine. The reference is to a very well-known passage in Parliamentary history. But I think the hon. Member for Birmingham is in error in saying that Lord Somers ever made that statement himself. The language to which the hon. Member alluded was no doubt used at a conference between the two Houses; and on the part of the Lords this was conducted by managers of whom Lord Somers was one, and Lord Somers of course was responsible for what was said; but, if I recollect rightly, Bishop Burnet says that it was he himself who principally conducted the conference. But what was the question then at issue? At the beginning of the 18th century the High Church party in the House of Commons proposed to apply a sacramental test, so that no member of a corporation, be he one of the corporation, or one of the freemen, should vote for a Member of Parliament until he had taken the test. That measure was passed by large majorities through the House of Commons. The House of Lords, greatly to their honour, withstood the Bill, and introduced Amendments which led to a Conference. The argument, whether by Lord Somers or others, which was then put forward, was as follows:—

> "That though the Lords allow that no man hath a place by birthright, or but few such examples in our Government, yet that giving a vote for a representative in Parliament is the essential privilege whereby every Englishman preserves his property, and that whatsoever deprives him of such vote deprives him of his birthright."

But how is he deprived? The meaning is obvious. When he has got his vote—when the State has given him his vote beforehand as a right which he may exercise, then, if you impose a sacramental test on the exercise of that vote, you deprive him of the birthright which he has, not by nature, but by the operation of the law. I think, therefore, putting aside the birthright view attributed to Lord Somers, we may revert to the principle of our Constitution. That principle, as I understand it, is, that Parliament shall be a mirror—a representation of every class—not according to heads, not according to numbers; but according to everything which gives weight and importance in the world without, so that the various classes of this country may be heard, and their views expressed fairly in the House of Commons, without the possibility of any one class outnumbering and reducing to silence all the other classes in the kingdom. Let me ask attention to a few lines from an authority that every one will admit on constitutional questions — Lord Russell himself. He says:—

> "The representative body should be the image of the represented; not that it should represent property only, or multitude only, or farmers, or merchants, or manufacturers only; not that it should govern with the pride of an insulated aristocracy, or be carried to and fro with the breath of transient popularity; but that it should unite somewhat of all these things, and blend these various colours into one agreeable picture."

Well, then, this is the advantage of determining beforehand the principle upon which the Constitution proceeds. How has the Constitution worked out that principle? There were two methods which might have been adopted. The first was to have an unequal suffrage by which a value might be given to a vote in proportion to the property and intelligence of the man exercising it. That principle has never been adopted except by theoretical writers. The other course which remained open to adoption was to distribute the suffrage in such a way that mere numbers would not, by the possession of an equal and even suffrage, outweigh the other classes who were not so numerous. Our Constitution adopted this second course. It said, with regard to the suffrage, there should be a certain point—it may be a question what that point is—below which the suffrage should not descend, in order to avoid an overwhelming influx; and, on the other hand, that there should be a certain point in the opposite direction beyond which, however great the property, no increased weight should be given to property. And, therefore, you have reposed the whole motive power of the Constitution between those two extremes in the middle class—using the term "middle class" to describe the whole of the country except those outside these limits. That being so, I think we gain one great step in the argument. It seems to me to disembarrass the present case of the somewhat invidious consideration of fitness for the exercise of the suffrage. I agree that unfitness ought to prevent the exercise of the suffrage; but it by no means follows, that because there is fitness there should also be the right to exercise the suffrage. I would, even for argument's sake, suppose that every person in the country were possessed of an abstract fitness to exercise the right of voting, and yet I would maintain you would at once overthrow the whole balance of the Constitution if you admitted all to a privilege equal with the existing voters of the kingdom, and therefore the mere question of fitness is not conclusive of the argument. It is most fortunate that we are not driven into the consideration of this invidious question of fitness, because, if fitness alone be the test, I want to ask hon. Members, and especially those sitting below the gangway, on what principle it could be contended that the possession of a £10 house would be sufficient to indicate fitness, while the possession of a £9 house would indicate unfitness; or why, in like manner, the possession of a £7 house should indicate fitness, and that of a £6 house indicate unfitness? In truth, Sir, the more the question is examined, the more it will be found that the spirit of our Constitution has not assumed that mere fitness is a sufficient title to the suffrage, but has rather aimed as its object at preserving a balance in the representation of all parties and all classes in the country. The question of fitness is indeed a consideration, but only a secondary consideration. The same reason led to the maintenance of county and town constituencies. It was in order that, by different constituencies, you might have a representation of every constituent portion in the kingdom, and at the same time preserve a proper balance in that representation. If that be so, I think I may assume that, to a considerable extent, we shall find an agreement, not perhaps among all the Members of this House, but among a considerable number of them. In the first place, I think we agree, that if all the working classes were admitted to the suffrage, the balance of power in this country would be overthrown. I do not expect that advocates of universal suffrage will agree to that, but I firmly believe that the great majority of the House will. We also agree, I think, that there should be a fair representation of the working classes in the constituency; and although the hon. Member who last spoke ridiculed the statistics which the Government themselves have presented to the House, I think the House will agree that there is at the present time—observe, I do not say a sufficient but—a substantial representation of the working classes in the boroughs. Then the only question remaining is — and it narrows the argument very much—is that a sufficient representation of the working classes, or ought it to be increased to any and what extent? If that be so, it is a question of degree, and we must decide upon the question of degree in the light of the facts of the case; and it is important that our facts should be accurately stated.

Now, let me ask the House to consider how important it is that the facts should be accurately known. If I refer for a moment to what took place in 1860 and 1864, I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not suppose that I do so in order to taunt him with having made at that time what appears now to be a mistake. We were all in ignorance as to the facts then, and I desire to remind the House, that if we had legislated in 1860 or 1864 upon this subject, we should have done so under the pressure of an error of a most serious and palpable kind. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1864, expressed his opinion upon the state of constituencies as he considered it at that time. Will the House permit me to read a very few sentences? In his revised speeches I read as follows:—

> "There ought to be not a wholesale nor an excessive, but a sensible and considerable addition to that portion of the working classes, at present almost infinitesimal, which is in possession of the franchise. Now, Sir, if I am asked what I mean by a 'sensible and considerable addition,' I reply that I mean such an addition as I think, and at the time contended in argument (3 *Hansard*, clviii. p. 461), would have been made by the Bill which the present Government submitted to the House in 1860. . . . At present we have, speaking generally, a constituency of which between one-tenth and one-twentieth, certainly less than one-tenth, consists of working men."

It will be observed that when the hon. Gentleman was asked to define what he meant by a sensible and considerable addition of the working classes he referred back to what he had said in 1860, and repeated the opinion he had then expressed. What, then, did he say in 1860? He said:—

> "You will have a total borough constituency, on what I think the most liberal, the most extravagant estimate, in virtue of the present Bill, of 650,000. It is estimated that of 450,000, which now constitutes the entire borough constituency, about one-ninth belongs to the labouring classes, either as freemen, or scot and lot voters, or here and there £10 occupiers. Perhaps they are about 50,000, and perhaps they would be three-fourths of the 200,000 which, on an extravagant supposition, may be added to the constituency. The labouring classes might be 200,000 in a borough constituency of 650,000—that is, they would be less than one-third of the whole borough constituency."—[3 *Hansard*, clviii. 642.]

What do we find now? Why, that these figures and facts which the Chancellor of the Exchequer assumed were a mere delusion. But we have got this further most important fact, that, according to the view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1860 and 1864, an infusion of the working classes into the borough constituency, to the extent of somewhat less than one-third of the whole, would have been a sensible and sufficient infusion, with which he would be satisfied. That being so, I would ask the attention of the House to the way in which the Government has dealt with the statistics of the present Bill. In Her Majesty's gracious Speech from the Throne we were told that statistics were in course of collection, and that a Bill founded upon them, and therefore to be justified by them, would be offered for the consideration of Parliament. What happened? After six weeks' delay—I do not say it was too long—the Blue-book was laid upon the table of the House, and on the 12th of last month the Bill was introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who then made known to us the resolution the Government had come to with regard to the statistics. Having spoken of the error of 1860 and 1864, he said, "We felt that if we were really to come to issue upon the facts of the case, we must endeavour to make ourselves, and to make Parliament as well as ourselves, masters of the facts appertaining to it." That was the view of the Government on introducing the Bill; and I now come to the argument used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in support of a £7 borough franchise rather than a £6. The argument was this, the right hon. Gentleman said we have taken statistics, and we have endeavoured to find out from those statistics what addition a £6 franchise would make to the working classes in a constituency, and we find that the addition would, in our opinion, be too much. I may remark here that I was surprised the other night to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that the Government had carefully avoided introducing the expression "classes" into this discussion, and that that expression had come from the other side of the House. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER dissented.] I do not see how the right hon. Gentleman, who teems with addresses upon this subject, could well have avoided it; and I think he will find that I am quite accurate in what I have stated. The statistics were founded upon the question of classes, and the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer followed in the course laid down by those statistics, and founded itself on what those statistics proved. But a few days after they were presented, however, hon. Members desired more information on the subject, and said the statistics were not satisfactory—were not full; and they put questions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What did he say then? We were told that it was not a question of statistics at all, and—that we were treating the matter as if there was an invading army coming upon us—that we were excluding our own flesh and blood, and debarring our fellow-Christians from coming among us. It was with some astonishment, too, that I heard the right hon. Gentleman make some remarks the other night respecting the number of "idle, empty, mocking words" which had been spoken in the course of our discussion upon this subject. But, Sir, if in one year a Minister of the Crown rises in his place and tells the country and the working classes that every man has a right to a vote in this country until the contrary is shown, and in another year the same Minister rises in his place, and, advocating the admission only of those who live in houses of £7, speaks at the same time of those who desire some information as to the number to be admitted as if they were objecting to the admission of any, to the admission of an invading army, to the admission of their own flesh and blood, and to their fellow-Christians; and if he raises in the country, as he must, the idea that his view is that, no matter what the qualification may be, every person in the country is to be treated in reference to the franchise as if he had a right to it,—I want to know where are the idle and where the mocking words? I will now take the Chancellor of the Exchequer's view of these statistics, founded upon his own figures, and in doing so I will present to the House only what I conceive to be the necessary consequence of his own argument. Now, why was it the Government did not fix upon a £6 franchise? Here is what the Chancellor of the Exchequer says upon the subject:—

> "If a £6 rental were added, I find that this would be the result. A £6 rental, calculated upon the most careful investigation, and making every allowance and deduction that ought to be made, would give 242,000 voters, whom I should take as all belonging to the working class, making a gross total of 428,000 persons, which would, in fact, place the working classes in a clear majority upon the constituency. Well, that has never been the intention of any Bill proposed in this House. I do not think it is a proposal that Parliament would adopt. I cannot say I think it would be attended with great danger, but I am sure it is not according to the view or expectation of Parliament. And although for my own part I do not think that much apprehension need be entertained with respect to the working classes, yet this I fully admit, that upon general grounds of political prudence it is not well to make sudden and extensive changes in the depository of political power. I do not think that we are called upon, under the circumstances, to give over the majority of town constituencies into the hands of the working class. We propose, therefore, to take the figure next above that—namely, £7 clear annual value."

What then is the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? The right hon. Gentleman says, taking a £6 franchise, you would have, in addition to the present constituency, a constituency amounting in all to 791,000 voters; and of these 428,000 would belong to the working classes, and therefore the working classes would have more than one-half of the whole by 32,500 votes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, in words about which there can be no mistake—I do not give my own opinion —that the Government are of opinion that to give the working classes a majority in the borough constituencies was never proposed before, and has never been intended by Parliament, and never would be received by Parliament; and that, moreover, it is not the proposal which the Government are prepared to make. Now, let us start with that. There can be no mistake about it, or about the principle of it. It is nothing to the point to say, that the working class will or will not vote together; that question I leave till afterwards. Let me, for the present, turn to the £7 franchise. What was the calculation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to the £7 constituency? The result of his calculations was this—taking the £7 franchise, you will have a total of 692,000 voters, and of these 330,000 would belong to the working classes. Therefore more would turn the scale, and would bring the case, with regard to the £7 franchise, up to the point at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer found the £6 franchise would give to the working classes a majority—which he did not desire they should have. But observe, first, an error which has crept into the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a very important error it is. The House will remember that the Chancellor of the Exchequer propounded a rule of three sum. You were to take the number of occupiers above £10 as one term; as the second, the registered number of £10 electors; then the number of occupiers between £7 and £10; and the fourth term of your proportion would give you the number to be enfranchised by a £7 franchise. In adopting as his second term the number of electors at and above £10, the Chancellor of the Exchequer forgot to reckon all the electors that will be added by the repeal of the ratepaying clauses, and by the admission of the compound householders. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave us 60,000 as the number which would be enfranchised by repealing the ratepaying clauses, and by admitting compound householders. Add, therefore, 60,000 to the second term of the rule of three sum, and it will stand thus:

639,000 : 511,000 : : 206,000 : 164,000.

You have, therefore 164,000 voters enfranchised, all of whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes to be of the working classes. But you have already in the constituency 126,000 of the working classes, and you will have the 60,000 additional which I have already mentioned. You will thus, at a £7 franchise, have a total of 350,000 of the working classes. So, then, accepting the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, you have 350,000 out of 692,000; and therefore, speaking in round numbers, you have the working classes in a majority. But it does not stop here. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he expected the repeal of the ratepaying clauses would add 25,000; but we have no facts on this point in the statistical returns. We have, however, something to guide us. The hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) was considering the other day this question of the repeal of the ratepaying clauses, and he said that he thought that was one of the most important parts of the Bill in his view, because it made the £7 franchise as good as a £6 10*s*. franchise. If that is so, and the repeal of these clauses entitles as many persons as a £6 10*s*. franchise, that would give you 50,000 voters in place of 25,000. If I go further, and look at the statements I see in the press supporting this Bill, I find that the calculations made put the number very much higher than even 50,000. I will, however, take those figures, and supposing that you put that 50,000 in place of 25,000 added by the repeal of the ratepaying clauses, the consequence would be that you will have upon a £7 franchise the working classes in a majority very nearly the same as the Chancellor of the Exchequer supposed there would be if a £6 franchise were adopted. Observe, this is not a theory of mine. I am not propounding a theory whether it is dangerous or not dangerous to have the working classes in a majority in the borough constituencies, but I am taking the words of the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated to the House, that the Government do not desire that the working classes shall have a majority, that they are not prepared to recommend they should, and that they do not believe Parliament would consent to it; but the moment the estimates of the Chancellor of the Exchequer are corrected by the Returns, you will find that the working classes at once come into a majority, and the very result which the Chancellor of the Exchequer deprecated ensues. This, of course, has reference only to the borough constituencies. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must have been reconsidering the question, for I observe that at Liverpool he is reported to have said he would not look at the borough constituencies, but that he would take the proportion of the working classes upon the register, forming the whole borough and county constituency, and then, lumping the constituencies, the working classes formed —as of course they might well be supposed to do—a much smaller proportion. After what we have heard to-night from my right hon. Friend, the House will be of opinion, that we have no correct information as to the proportion of the working classes in the county constituencies. But I object to go into the question. I have shown that the view which was presented to the House in the first instance was correct. There are obvious reasons for keeping separate the constituencies in the boroughs and the counties; and what we have stated to us upon the authority of the Government is, that in the borough constituencies alone the Government consider it an unsafe measure which would give the working classes a majority of the constituencies. But then the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill) says, "You must not take the question of the number of voters, for you may have great constituencies containing large minorities. What you must look at is the seats, not the number of voters." Let us refer to the number of seats and see how the matter stands. I do not argue the point as to the exact number being 133 in which the working classes would have a majority if this Bill were to pass; but I believe, so far as I have examined the Returns, that that number is very nearly right. I will take 130 for the sake of round numbers, and out of 334 that is no doubt a minority. But suppose that by the Bill for the Redistribution of Seats twenty-five more seats are taken from one side and put on the other by the disfranchisement of boroughs in which the working classes have not a majority and their transference to boroughs where the working classes would have a majority, the 130 is at once increased to 180, and the working classes would at once have a large majority in the English boroughs. Of course we must suppose it would be the same in Ireland and Scotland; and, upon the whole, the working classes would have a majority of seats as well as of constituencies. But I must demur altogether to the view of the hon. Member for Westminster. He said that my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton) was entirely in error when he stated that even a large minority of a constituency might in the long run insure the return of a Member favourable to their own views. The hon. Member for Westminster is, of course, perfectly right in point of arithmetic; there is no way in which a minority of one-third can outvote a majority of two-thirds. That is perfectly true in arithmetic; but in real life it is perfectly untrue. Everyone who knows anything about working-class constituencies knows it is not true. Let me illustrate it by this very simple observation. Take this House as divided into three parts, occupied by Tories and Whigs, and a third party—one third of the Members—holding certain views of their own, either connected with the working classes or not, or having certain objects they have very much at heart, or certain measures they desire to carry. What would be the consequence? Do you think that one-third would go into the division against the other two-thirds to accomplish their desires? They would do something very different. They would see that they held the balance between the two other parties, and they would adjust themselves to the one side or the other—they would make a condition of giving their support that they should receive some assurance from the one or the other side that their views would be adopted and their measures promoted; and the result would be, that, by degrees, one party or the other would accept their measures to a greater or less extent, the opinions of the minority would be represented and expressed, and in the long run these opinions would be certain to prevail. So in the case of constituencies. They do not do it by arithmetic, but they avail themselves of the necessity of one party or the other to accept their support in consideration of their opinions being adopted. As it has been observed, when once the opinions of a class are adopted, that class is fairly and fully represented. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us, and he has challenged contradiction, that at the time of the passing of the Reform Bill the working classes formed a greater part of the constituencies of the boroughs than they do now. He says that the class which ought to have been increasing as a proportion of the constituencies has been really diminishing. How does the Chancellor of the Exchequer maintain this assertion? He says of the freemen at the time of the Reform Bill, 54 per cent—that is 34,000 were working men; of the scot and lot voters, 60 per cent—25,000 were working men; and of the £10 householders, 15 per cent were working men, the whole making 87,000 or 31 per cent. The working men of the constituencies now only number 26 and some fraction. Now I can, I think, give a satisfactory answer to that statement. I say, in the first place, that these proportions of freemen and scot and lot voters and £10 householders are entirely imaginary; that they stand on no foundation whatsoever, and that there are no Returns which would justify us in accepting these figures. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not indicate how they were to be arrived at, and it would be impossible for him to ascertain that 15 per cent of the £10 householders on the first registration under the Reform Act were working men. I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman, moreover, how it is that he has come to this conclusion, seeing that he thought in 1860 the working men did not constitute one-tenth of the £10 householders. But suppose these statements to have some foundation, do we not know perfectly well that freemen and scot and lot voters were condemned by the Reform Bill? Were they not proved to be so corrupt that you desired to exterminate them, except in the cases of freemen by birth or service; and do we not know that, since 1832, fully 180,000 of them have been extinguished, and have been replaced by £10 householders, who belong to the working classes? But it is said that the working classes will never unite to vote together, and that we need not, therefore, trouble ourselves about the question of their being in a majority or a minority. Well, if that be your opinion, why, I should like to know, did you not adopt a £6 franchise, the reason for not adopting which you stated to be that it would have the effect of placing the working classes in a majority? With what consistency can the Government, having come down to the House and shown that no £6 franchise should be adopted, because it would give a majority to the working men, turn round on us and say, "You must not consider whether the working men are a majority or not, because they will never vote together." I entirely agree with those who think that working men would act very much in this respect like other classes. I am happy to say that, in the part of the country with which I am best acquainted, a very large majority of the working men are very staunch Conservatives; and I have no doubt that in other districts they are divided in political opinion. What I maintain is that, when you take a class as a class, when they come to deal with questions in which they are specially concerned, they will act much as members of my own or any other profession would do—that is, in accordance with the overwhelming sense of their own interest. Let me take, for example, questions of taxation, or let me suppose that the hon. Member for Birmingham and those who concur in his views should urge them to seek for the abolition of the law of primogeniture, and for the greater subdivision of land, do you think the working classes might not be induced to unite in furtherance of those objects? Again, there are the relations subsisting between employers and the employed, with respect to which even a man of education like Mr. Odger seemed to entertain the opinion that if this Bill, which he characterized as an excellent Bill, passed, the agricultural labourers would get more than 8*s.* a week, while work, moreover, would be provided for every person who was willing to work. Is it not likely that, if such a question were before the House of Commons, the working men would vote together upon it as a class?

I will, however, mention another subject upon which they might vote together, and upon which their union might be much more dangerous,—and that is, the further derangement of the balance of the Constitution by means of a still further increase of political power placed in their own hands. It is thus that the lever spoken of by the hon. Member for Birmingham might be effectually brought into play. The working classes would naturally take views of the question leading to their own aggrandizement, while they would have the support of those Members who are in favour of the principle of more extended suffrage than this Bill professes to give. Upon this point scarcely any doubt can, in my opinion, be entertained. I believe, so far as I am able to judge from the meetings to consider the measure which have been held throughout the country, that those who support it do so, not because they look upon it as a settlement of the question, but because they regard it as a step towards the further extension of the franchise—as a simple mode, in short, of arriving eventually at universal suffrage. The hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Baxter) told us the other evening that, at a meeting held recently in Dundee, a very temperate resolution was passed approving this Bill, and not seeking to go beyond its provisions. Now, I happen to have read an account of that meeting and the speech of the hon. Member himself, and I find by it that a year before a meeting of the same persons was held at the very same place; that they passed unanimously a resolution in favour of universal suffrage, and that they were very anxious to do the same thing again this year; and they probably would have done so but that they were informed by the hon. Gentleman that they would, if they took that course, be doing a very foolish thing; that it was better for them to wait their time and approve the present measure. They took the hint, and they accordingly approved the Bill and passed the resolution in its favour to which he called our attention. But the hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs told us that he attended a meeting of his constituents in favour of the Bill, and that nothing whatever was said at that meeting in support of universal suffrage except by one man, and that he was put out of the room. I find, however, that the meeting was attended, not only by the hon. Gentleman and his colleague, but by Dr. Jones, who moved a resolution to the effect, that a petition be prepared and signed by the chairman, to be presented to the House of Commons in favour of the Bill, adding that in so doing he regarded it merely as a crumb, but that as it was endorsed with the name of John Bright there was a guarantee that it was entitled to their support. These remarks seem to have been received with enthusiastic cheers, in which, I suppose, the hon. Gentleman himself joined. The meeting would also appear to have broken up very pleasantly, those present contenting themselves with this crumb of comfort, but evidently expecting to receive a loaf at some future time. But let us look for one moment to what is said of this Bill by persons who have no immediate interest in the matter, and who are competent to form with respect to it an unprejudiced opinion. I find one of the most intelligent of the journals published in New York, after first discussing the question of the proposed qualification, dealing with it in this way:—

> "Such a qualification in New York would include almost every male member of the community, except vagabonds, servants, and strangers. If the features of the Reform are correctly reported, it will strike the American mind as a most generous and comprehensive measure, certainly widening the suffrage quite as far as wisdom would justify. If it pass, it will gradually change the whole character of Parliament and of English political life. Henceforth, unless the distribution of boroughs be very unjust, the Liberal, Democratic, progressive party, headed by Mr. Bright and his friends, will have a prodigious increase of power. Four hundred thousand fresh voters, well distributed, would hold almost the balance of power in future elections. How they are to be distributed we do not know. This is the beginning of an Americanizing process in England."

Such are the views taken of the Bill by the meeting to which I have referred, and by a disinterested American journal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, I may add, has told us that the statistics showed that the working classes were very unequally divided between the different boroughs; that in some they are 5, in some 6, in some 10, 12, and 15 per cent of the constituency. Now, one would suppose from his speaking in that way that he was about to propose some plan to remedy these inequalities. This Bill, however, leaves them untouched; for if you add a certain number of voters to the 10 and the 15 per cent you leave the proportions precisely the same as they were before. Taking the constituencies as they stand, the working classes would have under the Bill a majority in boroughs in England and Wales, and in Scotland and Ireland, too—the very result which the Chancellor of the Exchequer says the Government did not wish the House to accept.

I will now say a few words with respect to what has fallen from the hon. Member who last addressed the House,—namely, as to the manner in which the Government propose to deal with the whole question of Reform. It is saying nothing but what the majority of the House think when I state that, on this point, the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn was both unanswerable and has been unanswered. When I say "unanswered," I will make one exception. The hon. Member for Westminster did give an answer, and to anybody looking at the question from the same point of view I have no doubt the answer was perfectly satisfactory. The hon. Member said, "Here is a Bill which will enfranchise 200,000 borough voters. You are apprehensive that possibly 200,000 or 300,000 more may possibly be enfranchised, when the effect of the redistribution of seats is felt, but I am of opinion that the more enfranchised the better."

Mr. J. STUART MILL: I said nothing of the kind.

Sir HUGH CAIRNS: I should be sorry to misrepresent anything that fell from the hon. Member, but I understood him to say that every considerable enfranchisement in itself was good.

Mr. J. STUART MILL: I said that the enfranchisement which this Bill gives is an absolute good; and that if it produced an improved Legislature, that Legislature might be entrusted to make the redistribution of seats.

Sir HUGH CAIRNS: But what I want to know is—How are you to know the number to be enfranchised under the Bill? If the Government had said that they were not going to destroy the seats at all, then I agree with the hon. Member that he might have told how many voters we were going to have; but you might as well try to tell the quantity of water in a given place, by means of a vessel without a bottom, as strive to tell the number of voters which will be created under this Bill, unless you have some *data* as to the number of seats to be distributed. The hon. Member says he is satisfied that the redistribution of seats should be left to another Parliament, elected after the enfranchisement under this Bill: but I believe that the great majority of this House are determined that the Parliament which alters the franchise should also decide the redistribution of seats. But how do the Government answer the speech of the noble Lord, the Member for King's Lynn? The Secretary for War said the other night that no person could understand the Amendment, and that was his only answer. I do not think that the noble Marquis did justice to his own ability; for I think that if he had applied his judgment he would have been able to understand it; and I never saw the sagacity of the noble Marquis more exhibited than in the account he gave as to what it was that led to the introduction of this Reform Bill. I thought it a remarkable fact that one who had so recently joined the Cabinet should have so exactly understood what it was that led the Government to introduce the Bill at all. He told us that the prime object of the introduction of this Reform Bill was to prevent the Government feeling uncomfortable. I am afraid, however, that the result has not been entirely as the noble Marquis anticipated; because he added that the Government never reckoned on the degree of opposition which had been manifested with respect to the division of the question into different Bills. But we have another account from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Layard) as to what led to the introduction of the Bill; and I wish to know which is to be adopted. He said that Lord Russell was bound to people like himself to bring in a Reform Bill. Well, then, there is the real author of the Reform Bill! The Under-Secretary also took a little liberty with Lord Russell, for he said that it was quite obvious that during Lord Palmerston's life a Reform Bill never could be brought in, but that Lord Russell was not a man to desert his principles. That, I suppose, means that Lord Russell, when serving under Lord Palmerston, was quite willing to desert his principles; but he would not desert his principles as soon as he was placed at the head of the Administration himself. In answer to the Secretary for War I will venture to state what the Amendment means. It embraces two very simple propositions. It affirms, in the first place, that the House is ready to consider the question of Reform with a view to its settlement; and, in the next place, it affirms that, inasmuch as the Government have told us that they contemplate other measures of Reform besides the present Bill, the House should not be called on to discuss this isolated portion until it has the whole scheme before it. Then the Secretary of State for the Home Department asks whether we are for a redistribution of seats or not? I answer that question by asking another—what is your redistribution of seats? As the Government do not tell us what is their redistribution of seats, the question put by the Home Secretary was an idle one. But there is no reason why this side of the House should have any apprehension with regard to redistribution of seats conducted on fair and careful principles. We are sincere in saying that in a final settlement of the Reform question a redistribution of seats must form an element, and we desire to know in what shape the Government introduce that redistribution as an element. Here is a Bill which, we are told by the Chanceller of the Exchequer himself, is based on a principle which can be tested only by numbers. The Government, he told us, want to extend the franchise to the working classes, but not to give them the majority of the constituencies. But how is all this to be ascertained? The statistics are based on the existing constituencies; but you cannot advance a step unless you have the whole scheme before you—until you know not only what will be the numbers of the country constituencies and what of the borough constituencies, but also what will be the effect in every separate case of the Bill for the redistribution of seats. The Government intimate that the whole system of Parliamentary representation should be reformed, and that the seats for boroughs and counties should be altered; but before explaining what the nature of the redistribution should be, they call on the House to consider the question of the borough and county franchise as an abstract question, and to affirm that there is something in the eternal fitness of things which makes it proper that the borough franchise should be fixed at £7 and the county franchise at £14, and they require the House to consider that question without reference to future seats or constituencies. Suppose that in 1832 the Government had come down to Parliament and said that there were a great number of rotten boroughs which ought all to be disfranchised, and the seats handed over to large towns, and that alterations should be made both in counties and boroughs; but that they would not tell Parliament what they meant to do until Parliament said that £10 was the proper borough qualification—what would have been thought of such a course of proceeding? I cannot tell how many seats a Bill for redistribution may affect: Bills have been brought forward affecting various Members: a Bill was introduced in 1859 which affected twenty-five seats; then another Bill was introduced by Lord Russell in 1854 which affected fifty; and the hon. Member for Birmingham proposed what he said was a moderate measure affecting upwards of ninety. I am entitled to suppose—for aught I know to the contrary—that your Bill may affect as many as ninety seats, or one-fifth of the whole borough seats in England and Wales; and I ask is there any difference in principle—there may be a difference of degree—between that and coming down to the House and saying, "We mean to redistribute all the seats in the House—we wont tell you how—and we ask you to affirm an abstract franchise first?" Let us take the counties by way of illustration. I want to know, Is the franchise which you propose for them to return 162 Members as at present, or 200? It makes all the difference whether your county franchise is to be one under which 162 or 200 Members are to be returned. But I go further. At present in the counties of England there are some thirty or forty populous towns which are unrepresented, and there are also on the outskirts of represented towns large inhabited places which are towns in themselves. Both of these districts are now included in the counties, and have a constituency voting for the county Members. It makes all the difference in the world whether you leave all these places in the counties as at present, or whether you—if I may use the term—eviscerate them from the counties, and thereby reduce the number of the county voters. The towns of which I have spoken and the places on their outskirts contain, I venture to say, as many as one or two millions of inhabitants, and could produce for the counties 100,000 or 200,000 electors. You might by a skilful manipulation of these districts actually reduce the country franchise as you propose to do, and yet at the same time diminish the whole number of county voters. Well, is it not worth while telling us—are we not entitled to be told—about this? What is the use of telling us that you propose to lower the qualification to £14 when you will not tell us the area which is to yield these county voters? And observe, that if the area of these new towns and outskirts of old towns remain part of the counties, they will yield £14 voters, but if they are made parts of boroughs then they will yield £7 voters; so that in the one case you would have something like double the number of voters that you would have in the other. I may sum up the matter in this way—with regard to the occupation franchise, whether in the boroughs or in the counties, the question is, to which does the occupied area belong? Is it to be an occupied area that belongs to a borough or to a county? Because upon the answer to that depends the whole question of the number of the constituencies and the manner in which this Bill will affect the urban and the rural constituencies of the country. I want to know where is the key which answers all these questions? The key is the Redistribution Bill; but where is that Bill? We are told it is in the box of the Government. Therefore what the Government do is this, they say "Here is a Bill which requires a key—which you can't read and can't understand without the key; we have got that key in our box; we wont let you have it until you have passed the second reading; when you have passed that we will produce the interpretation, and then, and then only, you shall see what you have done." Confidence indeed! Surely confidence is a quality with respect to which there ought to be some reciprocity. You ask us to put confidence in you, and you will not extend that confidence to the House of Commons, nor, indeed, show it that common courtesy with which you should treat it when you present a measure to it—namely, to be kind enough to explain to it and allow it to understand what your measure is. Well, we have had two pieces of advice given to us by Members of the Government in the course of these discussions. One of them proceeded from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Poor Law Board (Mr. Villiers). He said the Government had taken the proper course —that the right way was first to determine the number of voters and then distribute the Members among them. That is the view of the matter which is taken in the Cabinet. Now, I will answer that by a very short proposition to the right hon. Gentleman. He will most probably speak in this debate, and I will promise to succumb to his advice if he will undertake to tell me, by some magical process which I am unable to understand—how you can ascertain the number of voters without knowing what the constituencies are to be? That is a very simple challenge. Another piece of advice was offered us by one of the Under-Secretaries of State (Mr. Layard), viz. "Vote now for the second reading, and then you may vote against the third reading, if you like. You will get the explanation between those two stages. You may vote for the second reading now, and if you don't like the explanation when you have got it, you can turn round and vote against the third reading." Now, I have heard various proposals made on the one side and the other for the more convenient discussion of Bills in this House; but this is the first time I ever heard a Government proposing, in regard to a grave and important measure of this character, that the House should be called upon, without explanation and without the possibility of understanding it, to vote for the second reading, and should be assured at the same time, on behalf of the Government, that they will regard it as a perfectly consistent thing for the House to turn round on the third reading of the same Bill and vote against it.

But suppose the Bill to pass. We are told that the Government hold that this Parliament can deal afterwards with the question of the redistribution of the seats. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the numbers to be enfranchised by this Bill would be greater than those which were enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1832. He stated that the highest estimate ever made of the numbers enfranchised under the Reform Act was 300,000, but that this Bill would enfranchise more. Now, there are new views of the Constitution presented to us every day, but I own it is quite a new view of the constitutional government of this country to hear that, after the electoral body throughout the kingdom has been altered, and altered to an extent to which it was not altered at the time of the Reform Act—after 400,000 have been added to that body—still the Parliament elected by the old, the extinct, the outrooted constituency can go on and transact all the ordinary business of the nation. I do not speak now of the redistribution of the seats alone, but of taxation and every act of Government which has to be conducted through the medium of Parliament. I want to know, Is it consistent with sound constitutional principle that a Parliament elected by one constituent body—and which constituent body has lost its power, which is so wholly altered that it may be absolutely undistinguishable — that such a Parliament, its moral power and influence being ended, should go on and deal with the taxation and government of this country? Do you think the country at large would be satisfied with a Parliament which had already proclaimed that it had not been elected by the constituency which ought to elect Members of Parliament? Do you think that in any time of pressure or of difficulty it would be tolerated that questions of legislation or taxation should be dealt with by a Parliament of that kind? I apprehend it would not. But suppose that this Parliament next year proceeded to redistribute the seats. There might be a great difference of feeling in the country as to whether that redistribution was a good one or not. Do you think that redistribution under such circumstances could ever be accepted as a final one? Don't you think that the first moment you had a dissolution and a new Parliament what we should hear from hon. Members opposite would be this: "You have made a redistribution of seats, forsooth; but don't you remember how that was done? It was done by the old Parliament before the new constituency was brought into operation: we wont accept it as permanent." And I have an authority in support of that view, because the hon. Member for Birmingham has himself said the same thing. In an address to the people of that town in January last year he said:—

> "I think it would be a very good plan to have a reduction of the franchise in one Bill, and then to have a new Parliament, and that that new Parliament should proceed to redistribute the seats, because if the old Parliament should do that, the redistribution could not last even for the smallest possible space of time."

Let me go farther. Suppose this Bill becomes law, and in 1867 the Government brings in a Bill for redistribution of seats. Suppose Parliament and the Government differ—who is to decide that question? It must be one of two bodies. It must either be the new constituency, or it must be the present constituency. The hon. Member for Westminster says he hopes it may be the new constituency, and a Parliament elected by it: at all events he said, that inasmuch as you are satisfied that the new Parliament would be competent to tax and govern the country, it would be competent to redistribute the seats also. Now, if I might with great respect offer an observation on such a remark coming from one who is so great a master of argument, I would say, that simply begs the whole question in dispute. We are *not* satisfied that a new Parliament chosen in the way supposed should tax and govern, and for this reason —because this new Parliament would be elected by a constituency the franchise for which is to be reduced by this Bill; whereas, our argument is that you ought not to reduce the franchise except in connexion with the redistribution of seats, and that one and the same Parliament should do the whole. Well, then, I say it must either be the new constituency—a course adverse, as I believe, to the feeling of a large majority of this House—or the old constituency; and then you get into the difficulty pointed out by my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), which no one has yet answered,—you appeal to the constituency to elect a provisional Parliament to redistribute seats, and then come to an end. But then you say, it must be the old constituency, and for this inexorable reason, that the registration requires it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said:—"You cannot have a registration till this year, even if this Bill passes;"—there can be no registration till 1867, and therefore you could not have an election till after that registration. But if you have no registration till 1867, in the name of goodness, why pass this Bill this year? What is the reason that you cannot introduce your whole measure together, and why do you press a Bill of which the highest condemnation it has yet received is that, if passed, it will be a dead letter till next year, when alone it can be acted upon? It seems to me that in this respect the position of the Government is now very much worse than when the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the Bill, on the 12th March. I want to refer as shortly as I can to the position of the Government, and the mode in which they have dealt with the Bill for the redistribution of seats. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was understood to say the other day, that some Members of this House talked of the communications between the hon. Member for Birmingham and the Government as if they were subterranean communications—something very awful and secret. Now, I am not aware that any Member of this House has ever spoken of these communications as secret or subterranean communications. On the contrary, we who see what goes on before our eyes in this House, have rather been in the habit of thinking of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, imbibing from the hon. Member for Birmingham those lessons of wisdom, moderation, and fairness which he is so well qualified to teach. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would have us to believe that these communications are always open and manifest; and, I may add, they are most effective. The only thing surprising to me is that these communications—so very frequent and valuable—should not have been made by the hon. Member for Birmingham inside the Cabinet rather than from the outside. But to that we have nothing to say. But how stands the question about the decision of Government as to Parliamentary Reform? The noble Lord at the head of the Government admitted that the hon. Member for Birmingham recommended them to divide the measure into two. The Chancellor of the Exchequer shakes his head; but what said the Secretary at War the other night? He said the hon. Member recommended us four things, and we adopted one of them. But when one man adopts the advice of another, and when he who gave that advice bases it on a particular view, and for the attainment of a particular object, the natural inference is that its adoption is with the same view and directed to the same object. Well, then, the hon. Member for Birmingham says his reason was, that there would be a much better redistribution of seats by the new Parliament elected under this Franchise Bill than by the existing Parliament. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, when introducing the Bill, gave us a reason for introducing it in this form. He says the Government had no time to do more, having regard to the number of days available for Government business; there would be time to pass only one measure, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was careful to say that he thought pledges for future services very objectionable. He said:—

> "Now, I have ever been averse—and I think that aversion is justified by general observation and experience—to dealing in pledges for future Sessions. Such are the number and variety of the circumstances which must affect the position and duties of the Government of an empire like ours, that we must, in my opinion, look to the future itself to determine the proper opportunities for dealing with this important question. This, however, I am free to say, that while I am convinced the group of questions bound up with the complex subject of Parliamentary Reform are beyond handling in one Session, and especially in what remains to us of the present Session, yet I cannot have the slightest doubt that if the Government find it to be their duty to follow up by a direct sequel the proposition which they now make, the present Parliament will be perfectly competent to discuss and decide whatever measures we may bring forward in that direction."

Therefore, there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was that we have no measure ready but this; we agree in theory that all these matters form part of one general measure; we give no pledge; but next Session, if we think well, you can deal with the question as well as any other Parliament. One can understand that view. But what I cannot understand is this—the new ground which the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes up at Liverpool. At the meeting in Liverpool the right hon. Gentleman throws over the idea of want of time, or of not having any other measure connected with Reform ready, or of refusing to give any pledges for a future Session; but what he says is, "Knowing those with whom we have to deal, we have said, before we produce this portion of our plans, before we put into the hands of opponents fresh means of destruction by using one portion of the plan to make obstacles against the other, before we do this, we say give us a pledge of your general intentions by uttering your voices in favour of the second reading of the Bill." Now this is a wholly different view of the case which the Government presented to us in this House respecting the question of Reform. It is in effect saying to us, "We have got the other measure ready; we have it prepared, we know what it is; but we wont tell you what it is, because we know the untrustworthy and base sort of persons we have to deal with, who are sure to make an improper use of the information, and therefore we will keep it a profound secret till you have voted the second reading of this Bill."

That may be a very good Parliamentary manœuvre—I don't think it is; that may be a very justifiable stratagem—I don't think it is; but there is one thing in which we must all agree,—that a Bill which is conducted in this way is not a Bill as to which the best epithet in the world is that given by the hon. Member for Birmingham, which has been so often repeated—namely, that it is "an honest Bill." A Bill which requires for its success a Parliamentary manœuvre and stratagem may be a good or a bad Bill, but it cannot be a very honest Bill. Well, then, I say, tell us one thing or the other. Are you going to have a redistribution of seats or no? If not, we understand now the basis of the arrangement. If you are, let us know what it is to be before assenting to the second reading of the Bill; and let us have the assurance that both Bills shall go on side by side, in order that the whole question may be disposed of, if not for ever, at least for our lifetime. But it is said, if this Bill stands over to another year, agitation will arise. Now, in the first place, agitation is just as likely to come from your leaving over the question of the redistribution of seats, as from leaving over the question as a whole. I can quite understand the Government shrinking from a continued agitation after what has taken place in the last recess —that is to say, four Cabinet Ministers, and four Members of the Government not Cabinet Ministers, going down and holding meetings of their own supporters, addressing those public meetings with great eloquence, and promising solemnly to support their own measure; using, too, very uncomplimentary language about every one who does not agree with them. That being the notion of the Government of the way in which a recess ought to be spent, I can quite understand their shrinking from the notion of spending the autumn in the same way. They probably do not like an agitation of that kind. But, Sir, I do not think agitation, which means public discussion, is so bad a thing, or a thing to be deprecated. I believe that in this country public measures are improved by being discussed and canvassed, and I am not afraid of agitation of that kind. We have had a wonderful example of how little an agitation of an awkward kind is possible in this country at the present time. During the recess I read in the newspapers a letter addressed to the people of Birmingham, and purporting to be written by an hon. Member of this House; but when one read the letter, one felt that it could not possibly be written by any Member of this House. It was an able letter, and evidently the production of an educated man who possessed great command of nervous language. It was altogether a most wonderful performance; because, though not very long, it managed in a short compass to commit three flagrant offences: it offered a gross calumny on the whole House of Commons; it insulted, in the most offensive manner, some individual Members of the House; and, in addition to that, it invited all the people of Birmingham to commit a breach of the law. It calumniated Parliament because it said:—

> "Parliament is never hearty for Reform or for any good measure. It hated the Reform Bill of 1831 and 1832. It hated the Bill which repealed the Corn Law in 1846. It does not like the Franchise Bill now upon the table."

It would be very odd if it did.

> "It is to a large extent the offspring of landlord power in the counties, and of tumult and corruption in the boroughs."

It is very well for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne that he did not say that.

> "It would be strange if such a Parliament were in favour of freedom and of an honest representation of the people."

Any one who has sat for any length of time in this House must know that to be a gross calumny. Then it talked about a "dirty conspiracy" on the part of some hon. Members; and, finally, this was the breach of law which it asked the people to commit:—

> "What should be done, and what must be done under these circumstances? You know what your fathers did thirty-four years ago, and you know the result. The men who in every speech they utter insult the working men, describing them as a multitude given up to ignorance and vice, will be the first to yield when the popular will is loudly and resolutely expressed. If Parliament Street, from Charing Cross to the venerable Abbey, were filled with men seeking a Reform Bill, as it was two years ago with men come to do honour to an illustrious Italian, these slanderers of their countrymen would learn to be civil, if they did not learn to love freedom. . . . If the population of the Birmingham district would set apart a day, not for 'humiliation,' but for a firm assertion of their rights, in great meetings or in one vast gathering, they might sustain this Franchise Bill and beat down as by one blow the power that threatens to bolt the door of Parliament against the people."

I need not waste words by explaining that this was simply inviting people violently to break the law. [An hon. MEMBER: "No!"] The hon. Member says "No," but perhaps he is not aware what the law is. There is no lawyer in this House who would not say, if what was here suggested had been done, that it was a clear breach of the statute law of this country. But my reason for referring to the letter was this. Here is a letter written in good English, addressed to the people of Birmingham, doing everything to inflame their passions and provoke them to commit a breach of the peace. But what was the effect of it?

Why, it had not the slightest effect: and I want the House to observe how utterly this country is above and beyond—and I rejoice to think that the working classes are beyond—things of this kind. I think the greatest insult that can be offered to the working classes is offered by those who write and speak to them as if they were classes and people who ignore argument and do not appreciate moderation; as if they were persons to be driven and incited by words of the kind that I have read. But we know what would have happened some thirty or forty years ago. The man who wrote that letter would have been found out, he would have been brought to the bar of this House, and would have been committed, I dare say, to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms; while an operation would have been performed upon his letter which would have been of a kind not very complimentary. But now nobody in this House takes the slightest notice of it; it falls perfectly without effect upon the people to whom it is addressed; and it is treated by the rest of the world with the contempt it deserves. Well, everything, I maintain, is much better in consequence of the full and fair discussion of public measures.

But we are told that the noble Lord at the head of the Government says, "This is a vote of want of confidence," and, according to a report which I have seen, he said it would be well for those who were inclined to support the Amendment to remember what they might lose if there was a change of Government; and he added some very flattering observations about the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and some still more flattering observations about himself. Now, I quite admit that it is in the power, I do not say the right, of every Government to treat any motion that may be made in this House, even a motion for the adjournment of the House, as a vote of want of confidence; but at the same time, when a motion is proposed which does not profess to be a vote of want of confidence, when the Member who offers it does not offer it as a vote of want of confidence; above all, when such a Motion comes from a Member of this House not less distinguished for his long and faithful adhesion, by himself and his family, to the great Liberal party, than for his high and exalted patriotism—when a Motion of that kind, so proposed and so offered to the House, is treated by the Government as a Motion of want of confidence, one cannot help suspecting that this mode of treating it arises from an indisposition on the part of the Government to meet the Motion upon its own intrinsic meaning and merit. But, Sir, I ask what is the subject upon which we are required to vote, and what is the responsibility in which we are invited to share? I will not adopt the expression which fell the other day from a speaker at a meeting in favour of the Bill, who said that the time had come when the House of Commons must recast the Constitution of the country; but it is beyond a doubt that we are asked to effect a change in the Constitution of this country greater than any which has been made during the past generation, and the influence of which, for good or for evil, for weal or for woe, may last for generations yet to come. And I will ask, Is not this the most responsible, the most important—nay, the most momentous duty which the House of Commons can be called to discharge? If it be not, I want to know what mean those warnings, as solemn as they were eloquent, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who spoke of the manner in which this Bill would become a crisis, a landmark, a turning-point, in the history of the country; but if it is, then I ask how can the convenience—I will not say the caprice—of a Minister be put for a moment into the balance against the discharge by every Member of this House of his duty upon this matter according to the dictates, not of the Government, but of his own opinion and his own conscience? I cannot help using words which I remember hearing from a late and very distinguished Member of this House upon a very similar occasion—I mean the late Lord Herbert:—

> "In twenty years hence no person will ask who was the Minister of this country twenty years ago, but everyone will ask what is the Constitution under which we live? Has it handed down to us the liberties which our fathers enjoyed? Does it enable us to transmit to our children the blessings which we ourselves have received?"

That is the question which will be asked; and it is because I believe that Her Majesty's Government, in the way they are treating this question, are dealing with the question of Parliamentary Reform in a manner that is precipitate, that is blind, and therefore that is reckless, that I give my vote in favour of this Amendment.

On Motion of Mr. Graham, Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday.*

Mr. Speaker having retired, the Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that Mr. Speaker, in the present state of his health, was unable to return and resume the Chair at this late hour:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

CONVICTS' PROPERTY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Attorney General, Bill to abolish Forfeiture for Treason and Felony, and to make other provisions in relation thereto, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Attorney General and Sir George Grey.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 105.]

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT, &c., BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Attorney General, Bill to amend and consolidate the Law relating to Bankruptcy in England, and to abolish imprisonment for debt on final process, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Solicitor General, and Sir George Grey.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 106.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPLEMENTAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders under "The Local Government Act, 1858," relating to the districts of Winchester, Burton upon Trent, Longton, Accrington, Preston, Bangor, Elland, Halstead, Wadsworth, Canterbury, Dartmouth, Dukinfield, Stroud, and Bridlington; and for other purposes relative to certain districts under the said Act, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen and Sir George Grey.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 107.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS

Tuesday, April 17, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Took the Oath*—The Lord Westbury.

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases* (70); Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland)* (71).

Third Reading — County Courts* (55), and *passed.*

Sir Hugh Cairns

ELECTORAL RETURNS.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Lord CAMPBELL, in rising to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to examine the Electoral Returns laid upon the Table with a view to the Changes they suggest as desirable or necessary in the Rights of Voting; and to inquire into the Conditions upon which the Occupation Franchise may be lowered with Advantage in Counties or in Boroughs of England and Wales."

after a tribute to the labours of Earl Grey upon the Committee of 1860, and a statement of the circumstances under which the Motion was presented said: My Lords, in order to establish a proper case for some inquiry on the franchise, it is only necessary to advert to the parity of circumstances which marks the present year and the year 1860, when at the instance of the noble Earl your Lordships did resolve upon appointing it. Now, as then, a measure of organic change has been submitted to the other House of Parliament. Now, as then, the noble Earl the first Minister, at that time the Foreign Secretary, is regarded as its most assiduous promoter. Now, as at the time when the Committee of 1860 was appointed, the debate upon the second reading is advancing slowly in the House of Commons. Now, as then, electoral statistics have been laid upon the table and become an object of anxiety and controversy. Now, as in 1860, the correcting, the enlarging, the moderating power of this House over the Bill when it comes before your Lordships may be essential to the safety of the public. Now, as then, that power would be strengthened by the preliminary labour of inquiry. The labour must itself increase the credit and authority of this House among the public. It must give greater weight to the conclusions at which your Lordships may arrive. At the same time, it tends to ascertain what the conclusions are on which a stand ought to be made in reference to any Bill which comes before you. My Lords, the circumstances in which we now find ourselves as regards representative Reform, are, in the main, identical with those in which we stood in 1860. In one grand respect, however, the identity is broken. At that time Lord Palmerston presided in the councils of Her Majesty. His power was a guarantee against the progress in the House of Commons of any rash or ill-considered scheme for altering its structure. Among superficial men his knowledge of the subject has been questioned, as if it had not occupied his thoughts or entered into the pursuits with which he was conversant. In point of fact, he was a master on the question of Representative Reform, if that man deserves to be considered as the master of a question who, on a long series of transactions which arise from it, is never hurried into error. Can a severer test of knowledge be imagined or applied? In the year 1829 Lord Palmerston sacrificed his office and left the Duke of Wellington, in order to transfer the disfranchised rights of East Retford to a county; a step he never could have possibly repented of. As a Member of the Cabinet he gave the Bill of 1831 a powerful and luminous support, in which he represented the enlightened judgment of the age and that which has come after. He maintained an attitude of firm and silent opposition to the democratic schemes which Mr. Hume in later years occasionally mooted. When, in 1852, a crude and dangerous proposition was submitted by the Government, which no one was disposed to advocate and no one ready to confront, amidst the general excitement and perplexity he came forward and relieved them by handing to a common fate the Bill and its promoters. In 1859 he gave a temperate resistance to the measure of Earl Derby; a resistance in which he was sustained by Parliament and by the public. His services in 1860, when he arrested the unhappy project of that year, are too familiar and too recent to be cited. Such was his career on Representative Reform. And in that long career can any flagrant error be detected? Did he once miscalculate the interest or misinterpret the opinion of the country. We had, therefore, in 1860 a security of which the present moment is deprived. The circumstances are not exact in their identity. And does the difference weaken or enhance the case for an inquiry? Does it add to, or diminish the necessity for, caution? Does it make it more or less important that the deliberative function of your Lordships on Reform should be raised above the chance of failure and the possibility of weakness? My Lords, the reasons for appointing a Committee have now been stated to the House narrowed as they are by what took place in 1860. If, however, I am asked what kind of useful labour might devolve upon it, it would not, I think, be difficult to answer such a question. It ought, in the first place, to throw light on the political conclusions to which the statistics on the table point, and which, instead of being summed up in some intelligible form, are left to the toil of every person who examines them. On this defect an able and interesting pamphlet has appeared from Mr. R. Dudley Baxter, a gentleman of great experience in figures, and well known by his evidence before the Committee of my noble Friend in 1860. I refer your Lordships to his work that I may not detain you on this topic. The task of the Committee would also be to complete the labours of the old one, in which, as your Lordships are aware, many glimpses were thrown on questions not entirely explored, and no Report was made as to the changes which appear to be desirable. As regards the county franchise they may ascertain the new limit, if there be one, consistent with the purity of contests, the ascendancy of freeholders, and a restraint on the expenditure of candidates. The purity of contests, by which counties have been happily distinguished over boroughs, is illustrated in a Return presented to your Lordships, and for which we are indebted to Lord Belper. It appears that during the last thirty years not a single county Member has been unseated for corruption. Such a distinction, it will be allowed on all hands, ought not to be endangered. The policy of retaining a majority of 40*s*. freeholders, in relation to the occupying voters or fifty pounders in the counties, has been repeatedly insisted on by the noble Earl at the head of the Government. It is usually allowed that the drawback as to counties—it might be termed even the blemish—consists in the immense, although not the illegitimate, expenditure they lead to, from the dispersion of the voters, the numbers of the polling places, and many other causes. No change which tended to increase these burdens should be very hastily adopted. As regards the borough franchise, no doubt the task of the Committee would be more delicate and vital. They ought to ascertain what direct extension is consistent with the principles established in 1832. The various solutions by which it has been proposed to do justice to the claims of labour, without bringing all classes under its control, should be deliberately sifted. And here, my Lords, I cannot help remarking with regard to the borough franchise a mode of thinking as delusive as it is unfortunately prevalent. Your Lordships must have heard it constantly assumed that we have only to compute the number any vertical extension will add to the constituencies, in order to ascertain the wisdom or the danger of conceding it. With a simplicity which must delight projectors of such changes, their adversaries usually begin by granting the very thing which ought to be established, but which seldom is—namely, that they are likely to endure without a further alteration, and that nothing has to be examined beyond the total they would bring at first upon the register. To your Lordships I feel certain the more important question will appear, not how many voters will such and such a vertical extension in the borough franchise bring about, but how many years, so far as we can reason on the future, will the change remain inviolate and permanent. Sismondi, the historian of the Italian republics, an ardent friend of liberty wherever it has flourished, well pointed out that the lower suffrage is more difficult to guard against ulterior encroachments than the higher one. When you admit a class whose circumstances are uneasy, they desire laudably, perhaps, by new organic change to reach the tangible advantages which the possession of a vote has not been able to confer upon them. The truth has had its illustration in this country. In counties hardly any agitation against the limit of £50 has been exhibited. In boroughs the limit of £10 has always, with a part of the electors, been more or less an object of impatience. This is not an argument against vertical Reform. It does not show that a high qualification is better than a low one. It merely tends to the conclusion that an arbitrary limit of £5, £6, or £7, will be taken by itself more destitute of all pretensions to finality than that for which it is a substitute. The great and interesting problem for a Committee to resolve with regard to any given change in the borough franchise is whether it contains within it the germ of household suffrage, by which I mean the principle that all householders shall vote upon an equal system, not to be confounded with the principle of all householders possessing votes upon a system graduated or unequal. As regards household suffrage, as the phrase is generally used, it may be shown by the statistics on the table, or by a Return I have with me here, dated 1857, that it involves an absolute and unmitigated transfer of power from the middle class to the numerical majority. But if any given change would tend directly or demonstrably to such a transfer, the point for the Committee to approach would be by what collateral securities could such a tendency be balanced.

My Lords, in order to appreciate the vast importance of any step in vertical extension of the borough franchise, it ought to be perpetually before us, that the step, whatever it may be, will be the first, and therefore must determine as a precedent those which may come after. In 1832 the £10 limit upon which the Parliamentary majority, and therefore the Empire rests, was called into existence. Since then no change has been enacted in it, so far as England is concerned. The first extension will control our future policy upon it. If it can once be said the borough franchise was extended without securities against a downward march to universal suffrage, that downward march is unavoidable because those securities could never be attained. No toil, therefore, can be too anxious or too circumspect in preparing the first scheme by which the borough franchise is extended. And this consideration, I submit to your Lordships, places beyond all doubt the wisdom of appointing a Committee. Of course, I am prepared to hear that the statistics on the table are all sufficient in the knowledge they impart. My Lords, I trust I have already shown incidentally that the task of the Committee I suggest is not a task which Returns, however full, however perfect, could anticipate. But if required formally to meet such an objection, it would not be difficult for any one to point to a variety of questions which must be faced in lowering the borough franchise, and which no statistics could in any way explore. No statistics can explain to you how far the new electors are likely to be influenced by agitators—how far to have opinions of their own. No statistics can explain how far they would oppose the views of masters who employ them—how far they might be expected on the contrary to vote as the capitalist dictated. Statistics tell you nothing of the venality or purity of any class which you enfranchise. So, too, with regard to the prospect of their seeking further alterations in the limit, or resisting further alterations in it, statistics are entirely irrelevant. On these points we stand in need of light—on these points statistics cannot possibly afford it. My Lords, there are more considerations arising from the borough franchise which might be stated here in favour of inquiry, and which, indeed, I thought of stating. It is better, perhaps, to pass them over, lest I should trespass too long on the indulgence of your Lordships. The case being now, I trust, sufficiently established, I only wish to guard it against one or two impressions to which it seems to be in some degree obnoxious. In spite of the experience we have had in former years, it is still a kind of fashion to demand some large final and comprehensive project of Reform, and to object to any separate amendments of the system formed in 1832. This feeling would of course beget aversion to an inquiry of which the town and county franchise is exclusively the object and which appears to countenance the principle of limited Reform as opposed to that of vast and re-constructive legislation on the subject. My Lords, to satisfy these minds, I shall not touch upon the mass of arguments by which a general and re-constructive scheme may be resisted, because if I am not deceived, there is but a single view which recommends it. It is the view that such a scheme would lead to long and permanent repose upon these questions. But it is not a view which seems to bear examination. No comprehensive scheme can lead to permanent repose, or even long tranquillity, unless it takes away the causes of uneasiness and movement. As yet, those causes have been mainly physical distress, which in 1839 or 1840 roused the Chartists into action and European revolution, which in 1848 provoked a democratic spirit in this country. No comprehensive scheme can put an end to, or affect in any manner the occasional recurrence of these causes. But there is yet another larger and more constant in its action. It is the natural ambition of the democratic party in the State to gain a Parliamentary majority. No scheme which Governments can frame, will make that ambition cease, until its object is surrendered. While that ambition lasts, it will exert itself. And so long as it exerts itself, tranquillity on these questions cannot be obtained. The same conclusion may be seen through a medium altogether Parliamentary and practical. No comprehensive scheme can prevent Motions on electoral Reform from being submitted to the Legislature. No comprehensive scheme can prevent Governments from yielding to them when they think their own existence seriously menaced. Nor can any project of the kind prevent a set of men from engaging to bring forward an organic change, in order to recover power when they have quitted it. While these liabilities remain, liabilities with which the last fifteen years have made us too conversant, to aim at what is called a settlement appears to be illusory. And your Lordships will not, I trust, object to the inquiry because its limitation does not sanction hopes which cannot be fulfilled.

My Lords, there is but one other current of opinion, so far as I know, by which the Motion may be thwarted and which I ought, if possible, to state in order to protect the case I have submitted to your Lordships. It has been alleged, not indeed by a large number, but yet by some considerable persons that the course of the noble Earl at the head of the Government on representative Reform has been so just, consistent, and sagacious, that to his hands the topic—vital as it is—may be consigned with quiet confidence and absolute security. No doubt, if this opinion were correct, inquiry would be useless, because precaution would be idle, and the functions of the House might be allowed to sleep under the vigilance of the Executive. The speech delivered by the noble Earl in Downing Street, not long ago, was evidently framed to strengthen that opinion. And if I venture for a moment to demur to it, I wish to take shelter under the manifest authority of that party of which I am but an humble unit and with which the noble Earl has been so long and so conspicuously associated. Why did the noble Earl fall in February, 1853, but because the measure of Reform which he presented in that year took away from him the confidence of those who formerly sustained him. When his friends came back to power in 1852, why was the noble Earl unable to resume the post which the regular routine of public life and the established precedents of history would have given him, but because his conduct upon representative Reform appeared to have disqualified and lowered him? On what other subject had he sunk in general esteem? In 1855 Lord Aberdeen resigned. Another Liberal Administration was composed, of which again the noble Earl was not permitted to be leader. The circumstance could only be ascribed to weakened confidence and alienated friendship. But what had happened to disturb them? In 1859 again a Liberal Administration was created, in which again the noble Earl was doomed to secondary office, thirteen years having elapsed since in 1846, with general consent, he reached pre-eminence and power. What but his conduct on the subject of Reform occasioned this eclipse of his ascendancy and retrogression in his fortunes? But

"And to inquire into the Conditions upon which the Occupation Franchise may be lowered with advantage in Counties or in Boroughs of England and Wales."

But I do not know that this House has yet decided there are conditions on which the occupation franchise may be lowered with advantage. I should have no objection that this House would take for granted the occupation franchise should be lowered; but I cannot presume that the House is of that opinion, and I do not think we should appoint a Committee on the assumption that a matter on which there is a difference of opinion is to be taken for granted. Neither can I think the case made for inquiry now is at all similar to that on which the Committee was appointed in 1860; because, by an Act passed through Parliament since that time, a very great improvement has been made in the assessments, and what is called the "gross estimated rental" corresponds far more accurately with the facts than it did in 1860. There are, no doubt, a certain number of boroughs in which the more accurate tests have not been applied, and with respect to these it will be matter of judgment how many electors will be added by any particular reduction in the franchise. But, as I have observed, there is no Franchise Bill before your Lordships' House. If any Bill is presented to your Lordships for making what my noble Friend calls an organic change, but what I should not call an organic change, I am sure your Lordships will listen with patience, and with a discriminating judgment to any proposals which Her Majesty's Government, and other noble Lords, may submit to you on the subject; that the arguments, both for and against the Bill, will be such as ought to be submitted to a deliberative assembly; and that on both sides there will be such a discussion as will befit the dignity of your Lordships' House and the importance of the subject. With regard to the noble Earl's personal attacks on myself I think it quite unnecessary to reply to them.

On Question, *Resolved* in the *Negative.*

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN.

QUESTION.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY said, their Lordships would have perceived by the Notice upon the paper that it was his intention to ask the noble Earl opposite (Earl Russell) a Question with regard to the employment of children. The Report of the Commission appointed some years ago for the purpose of inquiring into the condition of children and young persons engaged in particular trades and manufactures revealed such a state of facts as to take the House and the country by surprise; that such a state of ignorance, brutality, and vice, could exist in the 19th century in any part of the world. Of those trades some were placed in the schedule to the Act which was passed giving protection to the children employed; and since that time the third and fourth Reports of the Commissioners had been presented and had now been for some time in the hands of Parliament, and for a still longer period in those of Her Majesty's Ministers. The state of things revealed in the fourth Report was even worse than that exhibited by the first and second; and he was, therefore, anxious to obtain from the noble Earl at the head of the Government an assurance that his attention would be given, as speedily as possible, to the important object of affording relief and protection to young persons who were positively perishing under the amount of labour and hours of endurance to which they were now exposed. The noble Earl concluded by asking the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Bill for the Purpose of placing the Children and young Persons mentioned in the Third and Fourth Reports of the Commission under the Protection of the Factory Acts?

EARL RUSSELL said, the statement of the noble Earl very faithfully represented the circumstances, which had occasioned much pain to the Government. The subject was under the consideration of the proper Department; but, at the present moment, he was not able to state exactly what steps it would be thought right to adopt.

House adjourned at half past Six
o'clock, to Thursday next,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, April 17, 1866.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—On London City Corporation Gas, Colonel North *discharged*, and Mr. Staniland *added;* Vaccination *nominated;* Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c., Bills *nominated*.

Public Bills—*Resolutions in Committee*—Harbour and Passing Tolls, &c., Act (1861) Amendment; Customs Duties (Isle of Man) [Harbour Dues].

Ordered—Tithe Rent-charge (Ireland)*; Railway Debentures, &c., Registry; Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)*; Harbour and Passing Tolls, &c., Act (1861) Amendment.*

First Reading—Railway Debentures, &c., Registry [109]; Tithe Rent-charge (Ireland)* [110].

Second Reading—Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland) [111].

Committee—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) [88]; Superannuations (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards)* [108]; Customs Duties (Isle of Man)* [91] [r.p.]

Report—Poor Persons' Burial Ireland [88]; Superannuation (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards)* [108].

Considered as amended—Postmaster General* [25].

THE FACTORY ACTS.—QUESTION.

Mr. FAWCETT said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the Government will introduce their promised measure for the extension of the Factory Acts; and whether the Government has considered the desirability of regulating the employment and education of children who are employed in agriculture?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, in reply to the first Question of the hon. Member, that it was not possible at present to fix a day for the introduction of the Bill. The last Report of the Factory Inspectors applied to a variety of trades, and it would require some time as well as much consideration to deal with the various details connected with the subject The process of investigating them with a view to legislation was, however, being carried on with all due despatch. The Government had no intention at present of dealing with the subject of his hon. Friend's second Question.

COURT OF PROBATE—DISTRICT REGISTRIES.—QUESTION.

Mr. MONK said, he wished to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the proposals submitted to the Treasury by the Judge of the Court of Probate for the future regulation of the Salaries and Emoluments of the Clerks and Officers of that Court embraced the District Registries?

Mr. CHILDERS: Sir, the proposal before the Treasury for a classification of the clerks of the Probate Court applies only to the principal Registry, and has no reference to the District Registries.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.—QUESTION.

Mr. GREGORY said, he rose to ask the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he has received any communication from the President of the Royal Academy on the subject of changes in the constitution of the Academy; whether that communication has been approved of by the Government; and, whether he will order it to be laid before the House?

Mr. COWPER, in reply, said, he had received from the President of the Royal Academy a letter stating that the Academy had determined to make those alterations in their constitution which the Government deemed to be expedient, with the view to rendering that institution more conducive to the purposes for which it was founded. He should be prepared to lay that communication on the table of the House. The proposals made by the Academy were, he might add, entirely approved by the Government.

PRUSSIA AND ITALY.—QUESTION.

Mr. W. B. BEAUMONT said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has reason to believe the statement to be substantially correct in the *Neues Fremdenblatt* (reported in *The Times* of Monday) as to the alleged Treaty of Alliance, offensive and defensive, between Prussia and Italy?

Mr. LAYARD replied, that he had no reason to believe the statement to be correct. Her Majesty's Government had received no intimation to the effect that a treaty had been concluded between Prussia and Italy.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY (IRELAND).

QUESTION.

Mr. AYTOUN said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill during the present Session for the purpose of granting a new Charter to the Queen's University in Ireland, or of altering the composition of the Senate; and, if so, whether the Bill will be brought in at an early period of the Session?

Sir GEORGE GREY, in reply, said, he proposed to introduce a Bill the object of which would be to give effect to the intentions of the Government as stated in the letter of the Lord Lieutenant; but he could not say that the measure, which he hoped to bring forward on an early day, would be of the precise character implied in the Question of his hon. Friend.

THE CATTLE PLAGUE.—QUESTION.

MR. LESLIE said, he wished to ask the Lord Advocate, Whether the new Order in Council, dated the 11th instant, continues to county local authorities the power to regulate the admission of cattle into their respective counties, as to them may, from time to time, seem proper and expedient?

THE LORD ADVOCATE said, in reply, that he had no doubt that the 49th section of the Order in Council referred to, continued to the local authorities the powers which they previously possessed to prevent the introduction of cattle into their respective counties.

NEW COURTS OF JUSTICE.—QUESTION.

MR. HORSFALL said, he wished to ask Mr. Attorney General, Whether in the arrangements of the new Courts of Justice any provision has been contemplated for an increase in the number of Judges?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied that no express provision of that kind had been deemed to be necessary. The arrangements entered into had been based upon existing requirements. It might hereafter become expedient to have extra Courts which would at the present time be useless.

INDIA—CLAIMS ON OUDE.—QUESTION.

COLONEL FRENCH said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether, with reference to the pledge which has been given to this House, that all the public and *bonâ fide* claims against the late State of Oude would be paid out of the revenues of the country, it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to support the Report of the Commission appointed by the Government of India to investigate and report upon the cases of the several claimants; or what steps are intended to be taken for the purpose of adjusting the same?

MR. STANSFELD, in reply, said, he could give no definite answer to the Question at present, as the Report of the Commission had not as yet been received by the Government.

NAVY—DOCKYARD VOTERS.

QUESTION.

MR. OTWAY said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Government adheres to its intention of disfranchising the Artizans in Her Majesty's Dockyards, Arsenals, and Factories?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I have to state, Sir, in reply to the Question of my hon. Friend, that I do not think it would be for the convenience of the House that I should state at the present moment what the course is which the Government are prepared to take with reference to particular clauses of the Franchise Bill. That observation I would apply to all the clauses of the Bill even the most vital, and of course it is still more applicable to a clause which is beside the main purpose of the measure and independent of its essence.

EXECUTION OF MARY ASHFORD.

QUESTION.

MR. KEKEWICH said, he would beg to ask the hon. Member for Dumfries, Why it is that he has withdrawn the Notice which he had given of his intention to put a Question to the Government in reference to the execution of Mary Ashford? He (Mr. Kekewich) was anxious to know whether it was because the hon. Member had ascertained that he was under a misapprehension as to the facts of the case when he gave the notice, which seemed to cast some imputation on the conduct of the authorities implicated in the matter?

MR. W. EWART said, in reply, that his attention had been drawn to the case by the painful accounts of the execution which had appeared in the public press. He had, in consequence, given notice that he would put a Question to the Secretary of State for the Home Department with the view of ascertaining whether those accounts were correct. He had since, however, ascertained that they were very much exaggerated, the only one of the statements made, he believed, which was perfectly accurate being that the unfortunate woman had been led to execution supported by two men. He had not, under those circumstances, deemed it necessary to act upon the notice which he had given, and he should certainly have stated the reasons which induced him to withdraw it, even though no Question on the subject had been put to him.

ARMY—REGIMENTS IN INDIA.

QUESTION.

Mr. O'REILLY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, When the following Cavalry Regiments will return from India: the 7th Hussars and the 2nd and 3rd Dragoon Guards; and what length of time each of these Regiments will have served in India?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON replied that the 7th Hussars would in all probability return home early in the year 1871, after 13½ years' service; the 2nd Dragoon Guards in 1869, after 11½ years' service; and the 3rd Dragoon Guards in 1870, after 12½ years' service. So lengthened a period of service in India arose from the fact that eight cavalry regiments had been sent to India in 1857-8, during the existence of the Mutiny; and that, as it was not possible to commence the reliefs till 1863, it was found necessary to keep a few of those regiments in India for a longer period than usual.

MALT DUTY.—RESOLUTION.

Sir FITZROY KELLY: Sir, I rise to move—

> "That upon any future remission of indirect taxation, this House will take into consideration the Duty upon Malt with a view to its immediate reduction and ultimate repeal."

I have once more to bring this important question under the consideration of the House, and I trust that they will not refuse their assent to the moderate Resolution which I now move. I am myself inclined to think that, considering that the country has now been subjected for a period of twenty-four years to the payment of the income tax, which was revived for the purpose of enabling the Government to remove the duties on all the great necessaries of life, and considering that that object has been attained in respect to every one of those articles with the exception of beer, the beverage of the poorer classes, I might fairly ask the gradual application of the income tax to the repeal of the malt tax. But as I am aware of the difficulties with which I have in this case to contend, and as I do not wish to create any unnecessary opposition, I only invite the House to affirm the Resolution that whenever any such surplus of income may exist as will enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to effect any substantial remission of indirect taxation the malt tax is the first tax with which he ought to deal. I will here briefly direct the attention of the House to the principle on which the financial business of the country has been conducted during the last twenty-four years, first by the late Sir Robert Peel, and afterwards by my right hon. Friend the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, treading in the footsteps of his master and predecessor. Their policy was to repeal or to reduce the duties on all the raw materials of industry and on all the chief articles of subsistence, whenever the state of the public revenue admitted of the adoption of such a course; and I freely admit that they have pursued that policy with great advantage to the country at large. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has recently told us that, as far as he could estimate, the working classes pay one-third or, perhaps, five-twelfths of the total taxation of the country; and, as I believe, according to the best estimate, I can prove that the working classes consume three-fifths of the total quantity of beer consumed by our population, and that the consumer of beer pays, by reason of that tax, fully three or four times the amount paid into the Exchequer, it seems to me that this impost constitutes a charge which it is our special duty to diminish, if possible, at the present moment, when so many Members of this House are strenuously urging upon us, night by night, the interests and claims of the working classes. The malt tax as compared with the income tax or the fire insurance duty, or the tea duty, or the sugar duty, all of which we have reduced within the last few years, stands alone in this respect, that it is a tax upon an article which is almost exclusively consumed by the working and the poorer classes. In the year 1842, the late Sir Robert Peel introduced the income tax as a means of reforming the fiscal system of the country, and repealing or reducing the duty upon all articles of general consumption. That distinguished statesman, in one of the early debates on the subject, used these words, to which he entreated the attention of his right hon. Friend—

> "No one can feel a more intimate conviction than I do that, whatever be your financial difficulties or necessities, you must so adapt and adjust your measures as not to bear on the comforts," [still less, he might have said, on the necessaries of life,] "of the labouring classes of society."

Now, I venture to say that this is a tax, and the only one left, that bears directly not merely on the comforts but on the necessaries of life as regards the poorer and labouring classes. In pursuance of the line of policy announced by Sir Robert Peel in the very first year of his financial administration, the repeal or reduction of taxes was brought about on no less than 750 articles of consumption. He began with those articles in more general consumption. In 1843, 1844, and 1845, Sir Robert Peel continued to act on this enlightened policy, and he believed that at the end of the latter year taxation was either repealed or reduced on 1,000 articles of consumption. It was foreseen by some of the more sagacious among the statesmen of the day, and doubtless by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, that before Sir Robert Peel could advance much farther in this line of policy the Corn Laws must be repealed; for it was quite impossible from year to year, and even in debates on his financial policy, to talk of the repeal of duties on all articles of consumption, and especially on those duties which bore ever so indirectly on the necessaries of life without remembering that there was a tax on corn—on bread itself, the chief article of popular consumption. Accordingly, in 1846, the duty on corn was repealed; but, not long after Sir Robert Peel ceased to be a Minister of the Crown. For a time there was a pause in legislation on this subject; but I am bound to say that from the moment his right hon. Friend took office as Chancellor of the Exchequer that line of policy was revived, and it has been continued to the present day. If I have any complaint to make of my right hon. Friend, it is not that he has pursued the enlightened policy of his illustrious predecessor in the repeal of duties on articles of general consumption, and especially in setting free the trade and commerce of the country, but that while the duties have been either repealed or reduced almost to nothing upon every other article of consumption, this one article of malt alone has been left untouched, unrelieved by any remission of taxation, and on the single occasion on which it has been dealt with by the Ministry of the day, the tax has been actually increased. I will not go through the tariff of Sir Robert Peel; but although 700, or 800, or 1,000 articles have been relieved of duty, this one article of malt has been permitted to go untouched. You have repealed the duties on food, clothing, and indirectly on dwellings; for with respect to houses the tax does not extend to those occupied by the poorer classes. You have repealed the duties on bricks and timber, except a small remnant which is to be dealt with in the treaty with Austria. You have repealed the duties on cotton and wool, the bases of the clothing of the people, the duties on corn, flour, and soap, on cattle and meat, and on provisions of every description. Why should this one article of malt, which, with the exception of tobacco, is the only, I will not say luxury, but necessary of life of the poorer classes, be excluded from the category? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken a distinguished part in repealing duties, and I ask him how he can, consistently with his own principles, retain this tax? It is said that malt and beer are not taxed more directly than some other articles in general consumption—that tea, sugar, and wine are taxed; but when we see the duty on tea reduced to 6*d*. a pound, and the duties on sugar and other articles very considerably reduced, I think that, *pari passu*, the reduction of the malt duty might have been considered. But wine is a foreign article, entirely consumed by the rich and well to do, whereas malt is consumed by three-fifths of the poorer classes of the people. On what principle have you reduced the duty on wine from 5*s*. 9*d*. a gallon to almost a nominal sum, to 2*d*. or 3*d*. or 4*d*. or 5*d*. a bottle on your Lafitte, your finest Chambertin, Claret, and Burgundies, while you retain a tax of some 30 or 33 per cent on beer? It is, surely, contrary to sound principles of taxation to impose a small duty on the beverages of the rich, the production, too, of foreign countries, and to lay a heavy tax of 30 or 33 per cent on a home-grown commodity, which is almost a necessary of life to the humbler classes. But there is another principle violated by the retention of this tax. The greatest writers on political economy, from Adam Smith to John Stuart Mill (I ought to beg the pardon of the hon. Member for Westminster for mentioning him by name, but it is a name that lives in the political history of his country), and all the most enlightened statesmen, have over and over again exposed the impolicy of placing any tax on the raw material which has afterwards to be worked up and pass through various stages of manufacture. The reason is obvious. You impose a tax of 70 per cent on malt in proportion to the barley; but before this tax comes to be paid, and before the article reaches the consumer in the shape of beer, to the tax is added the interest or profit of the maltster, the interest or profit of the brewer, and the interest or profit of the publican, increasing by accumulation at each successive outlay; and the consequence is that the consumer pays not the original 21*s.* or 22*s.* a quarter, but all the subsequent additions and accumulations of interest and profit. But I would now wish to show what is the addition to the price of beer which is really charged upon the consumer by reason of the tax on malt, for this is important as showing the smaller price which the consumers would have to pay for good and wholesome beer, instead of a bad and deleterious article, if the tax were abolished. I am aware that the calculations on this point have been strongly controverted, and when some time ago I asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he could furnish the House with any Return of the annual quantity and price of beer made for sale in this country, I was disappointed to find that no such information could be obtained. In the debate last year I ventured to repeat what had been stated by my noble Friend the Member for Huntingdonshire in the previous Session, that the whole price paid by the consumers of beer in any one year in the United Kingdom was about £60,000,000 sterling. That statement, although uncontradicted in this House, has elsewhere been described as exaggerated. The statement was made on the authority of *The Economist,* an authority which he remembered hearing his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer commend as highly trustworthy upon all questions of finance, and I have never yet heard it positively asserted that this was an over estimate, and it is supported when we consider the returns of the quantity of malt charged with duty. In 1864 this was a little above 6,000,000 quarters, the duty being about £7,000,000. Taking one description of beer with another, a quarter of malt produces about 144 gallons of beer, so that, multiplying the number of quarters by the number of gallons of beer brewed in this kingdom, you get within a small fraction of 800,000,000 of gallons. Now, let us consider the aggregate price paid by the consumer, and here again we are obliged to rely mainly on *The Economist ;* but I have consulted the papers issued from time to time by the Board of Inland Revenue, and also persons the best informed on the subject, and I believe that the average price at which all beer is sold in England is, as near as may be, 1*s.* 6*d.* per gallon. The price at which beer is purchased in public-houses is from 1*s.* 4*d.*, 1*s.* 6*d.*, to 1*s.* 8*d.* per gallon, or 4*d.*, 5*d.*, and 6*d.* a quart. I am aware that some brewers brew beer which they sell for 2*s.*, 3*s.*, 4*s.*, and even 5*s.* per gallon to well to do families of the middle classes, but the larger quantity of beer is sold at 1*s.* per gallon, and therefore I should not be far from the mark in putting the average price of the beer sold throughout the United Kingdom at 1*s.* 6*d.* per gallon. As to the quality of beer, I can only say that I wish that beer such as that brewed by my hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Bass) were more generally consumed by the working classes. Taking the quantity of beer sold to be 800,000,000 gallons, its value at 1*s.* 6*d.* per gallon would be £60,000 sterling, the very sum mentioned by *The Economist.* And now of this sum I hope to satisfy the House that no less than £20,000, or one-third, is paid by reason of the malt tax, while a sum of only £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 goes into the Exchequer, so that the duty in effect increases the price by 32 or 33 per cent. In the first place the quarter of barley costs the maltster 32*s.*, and on that quantity when turned into malt he has to pay an additional sum of 22*s.* for the malt tax, and on the total cost, 54*s.*, he charges the sum of 7*s.* as his profit. Now, the sum of 7*s.* charged as profit must be proportionately divided between the cost of the barley and the amount of malt duty, and the portion charged in respect of the malt duty necessarily increases as the beer passes from the brewer to the publican, and from the publican to the consumer, each of whom charges a profit in respect of the sum originally paid by the maltster as malt duty. According to my calculations, the sum eventually paid by the consumer in respect of the malt duty amounts to 32 per cent, or about one-third of the whole sum he pays for the beer he purchases. That sum being £60,000,000 paid by the public for the beer they consume, about £20,000,000 is attributable to the duty; or, assuming that I have placed the charge for brewing too high, as has been alleged on a former occasion, the sum of £18,000,000 is taken out of the pockets of the people by this tax. Such is the tax which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the enlightened advocate of free trade, and the advocate of the working classes of this country, and who contends that the working classes are entitled to be represented because they pay so large a proportion of the taxes, continues to impose upon them. I hope I am not asking too much in desiring from the right hon. Gentleman an explanation as to how much of the five-twelfths of the whole taxation of the country which the working classes pay he attributes to this tax. I believe I rather understate than overstate the case when I say that three-fifths of the whole of the beer of the country is consumed by the poorer classes. If so, what is the result? Why, by continuing this tax on one of the necessaries of life you place a burden almost intolerable on the class the least able to bear it. Well, you have reduced the tax on wine, which is a luxury, by 40, 50, 60, and 70 per cent, but upon the working classes, the chief consumers of beer, you place a burden amounting to three-fifths of £20,000,000. I believe that if the malt tax were repealed the people would be able to buy their beer at one-third of the price now paid for it. I have not, as yet, taken any part in the debate on the Representation of the People Bill; but as I happen to be the president of a working man's college, and vice-president of three or four other working men's institutions, I may say with sincerity, that having come a good deal into contact with the working classes, I should be glad to see them admitted to a share in the elective franchise, due regard being had to the balance of political power. I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how, after having directed the financial affairs of the country for so many years, and having had such a surplus of revenue to deal with, he can perpetuate a tax which imposes on the labouring class so heavy a burden. What would be the result of the reduction of the malt tax on prices? What I believe, and what I think I can convince the House of, is this, that if the malt tax were repealed the public would be able to buy their beer retail at a large reduction of price. I believe also that the effect, without at all injuring the great brewers of the metropolis, would be to break through the system they adopt of investing money in public-houses, not according to the real value, but letting them at disproportionate rents, while, by reason of the extra amount of beer sold, their profits are enormously increased. My figures have been disputed by the advocates of temperance on the one hand, and by the great brewers of London on the other. Let me state what I have actually done myself, and, let me say, that I could have brewed a much larger quantity for proportionally less. I have myself brewed from ten to twelve quarters of malt, and I will state the result. At the time I made the experiment barley was 32*s.* per quarter, the amount of duty may be taken upon the increase at 22*s.*, 4*s.* is the expense of malting, making 58*s.*, which with 7*s.*, the maltster's profit, makes the price of the malt 65*s.* Then 10*s.*, the price of the hops, would make 75*s.* I now come to the disputed item—the expense of brewing—for which I allow 5*s.*, making in all 80*s.* For this I found that 144 gallons of good and wholesome beer could be obtained equal to what is sold at public-houses at 1*s.* 6*d.* and 1*s.* 8*d.*, and by private houses at 1*s.* and 1*s.* 2*d.* I come to the conclusion that you can get wholesome beer of excellent quality at something less than 7*d.* per gallon; and, if there were no duty, the consequence would be that you could brew beer of a quality superior to that sold at the public-houses at 1*s.* 6*d.* per gallon for less than 5*d.* per gallon. If you go back to the time of James I., when there was no malt duty in England, and when there were no Excise vexations or restrictions, malt and barley were at the same price—16*s.* per quarter—and good wholesome pure ale was sold at 1*d.* per quart at every inn and public-house throughout the country. Is not this conclusive to show that now that barley is only double the price, or 32*s.*, good beer would be sold at inns and public-houses, if there were no malt tax, at 1*d.* a quart. It would be well, indeed, if the Government would direct experiments in brewing good and wholesome beer in small and large quantities, paying no malt duty; and I believe the result would be to show that if the malt duty were repealed beer might be sold by retail at 8*d.* a gallon, and yet allow large and substantial profits to the brewer and the publican. Does it not, then, become us to consider whether some change might not be made, so that the poorer classes of the community may be benefited? Nor must we underrate the importance of supplying to the families of England good beer, instead of the pernicious stuff which is sold at many public-houses. I know a gentleman who has tested several kinds of beer, obtained from public-houses chiefly in Westminster. He obtained samples from twelve public-houses in Belgravia, Chelsea, the New Cut, and other adjacent localities. The price of that beer was 6*d.* per quart; whereas I have shown that good wholesome beer can be produced for less than 7*d.* per gallon. I will refer for one moment to the sample purchased at 6*d.* a quart in Westminster. The alcohol amounted to about 6 per cent, and on further examination it was manifest that eighty-two gallons of water had been unduly added to what had been brewed from the quarter of malt, and that the purchasers had consequently been defrauded to the extent of £8 0*s.* 4*d.* One of the samples was stated to present traces of colouring matter, to be sweet in taste, of a dark colour, and muddy, so that the public were not only deprived of a good healthy article for a fair price, but had imposed upon them one of a deleterious character. I have gone carefully through all the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon this subject, and have failed to discover what the arguments really are upon which he meets this demand upon the part of the poorer classes of the community for a relief from taxation. I entertain the highest and most unfeigned respect for all that falls from the right hon. Gentleman, but I must repeat that I have heard no sound argument from him upon this question. When the right hon. Gentleman had an interview with the deputation which waited on him at Downing Street, he said that this question involved the whole system of taxation upon stimulants, which produced enough to pay the interest upon the National Debt. Now, there is no magic in the term stimulant; and I believe that if we look to health, and even morality, we might well reduce the tax upon beer in preference to that upon tea and coffee. Beer is drunk by the working classes in moderation, and it is not because some persons are drunkards that the whole working classes are to be stigmatized as vicious and immoral. To impose total abstinence upon them, and prevent the hard-working man from indulging in a little beer from day to day, would be a most intolerant course. I cannot, therefore, consent to the proposition of the advocates of temperance societies that beer should be heavily taxed in order to prevent drunkenness. For my part, I believe that the proper course to pursue was to have reduced the tax upon malt *pari passu* with those upon tea and coffee and other articles. I myself voted for the repeal of the Corn Laws, though at the time I thought that the change should have been more gradual, and that the duty upon malt should be remitted *pari passu* with the duty on foreign corn. This course was advocated over and over again by Sir James Graham, Mr. Cobden, Sir Robert Peel, and the now President of the Poor Law Board, the originator of the measure for the abolition of the Corn Laws. At all events, I am clearly of opinion that the relaxation of the duty upon tea and coffee has now gone far enough without some corresponding relief being given in reference to malt. As to the argument upon stimulants, I contend that spirits stand by themselves, and that the Government is justified in imposing upon spirits any amount of duty that is not so large as by re-action to diminish the produce of the tax. In Scotland and Ireland, however, the case might be different, where whisky-and-water is drunk as beer is in this country; and, therefore, looking at the whole question, it is, no doubt, full of difficulty. But for what has such mighty talents been bestowed upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer if not for overcoming difficulties of this kind? The fact that there is difficulty is no reason why the labouring classes should be taxed to the extent of £20,000,000 a year, and such a reply is not worthy of the right hon. Gentleman. As to one other stimulant, tobacco, it is, no doubt, a luxury, but I do not on that account wish to see it taxed excessively, because it is the solitary luxury of the poor man; but I contend that neither tobacco nor spirits ought to be put on the same footing as malt. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated that no benefit would result to Scotland and Ireland from the abolition of the duty on malt. But I believe that the repeal of the malt tax would be attended with very great benefit to Ireland, especially where, upon the eastern coast, it would bring into cultivation a large extent of land which was now occupied as pasture land, and this would tend to enrich the country by enlarging the commerce and increasing the cattle of the kingdom. In reference to Scotland, also, I have heard many persons regret that beer is not there the national beverage; and, perhaps, if the duty on malt were repealed, it would have a tendency in this direction. Looking at the matter as a whole, I am of opinion that the removal of such an embarrassing restriction upon trade and commerce, and manufactures, would be attended with the most beneficial results in the three kingdoms. I see that there is an Amendment upon the paper in the name of the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate), and I also recollect that on a previous occasion he placed an Amendment upon the paper to the effect that the burdens upon land should be equalized with those upon other interests. This Amendment has not been repeated on the present occasion, and probably he has since then looked into the Report of the Committee of 1846, in which they found, as a fact, that the special burdens upon land, such as the tithe, poor rate, land tax, highway rate, and church rate, amounted to 11 per cent upon the annual value of the land. At all events, he now abandons that Amendment. What he proposes now appears to be this, that he would apply all future surplus of income over expenditure not to the remission of taxation, that, in fact, no tax should in future be repealed, but that any surplus should go in reduction of the National Debt. I think that I can leave such an Amendment entirely in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who will agree with it if he thinks that the income tax, the insurance tax, and the malt tax should be permanently continued. In conclusion, I would say, that it is my sincere conviction that the repeal of the malt tax would be attended with great benefit to the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and I hope that the time is fast approaching when those enlightened principles of commercial policy which regulate our commerce will be applied to the malt tax, so that the millions of the poorer classes may participate in the benefits of that policy. The hon. and learned Member concluded by moving the Resolution.

MR. R. JASPER MORE, in seconding the Motion, said, the constituents of hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House were not the only persons throughout the country who took an interest in the repeal of the malt tax. On the other hand, he was glad to find that an increasing number of hon. Gentlemen who support the repeal had been returned in the present Parliament to sit on his side of the House. He believed the House had never realized how great an interest was taken in this question in many parts of the country; and perhaps it was impossible for this to be realized in a House in which there was so large a preponderance of borough Members. There were many counties in which a greater interest was taken in this question than in the questions of Reform and church rates put together, and he believed hon. Gentlemen would support him in saying that this question influenced the seats of county Members at the late Election more than both those questions put together. On few questions, he might add, had so many petitions been presented during the present Session, nor had those petitions been got up like some of those which emanated from the towns, but were signed by thousands of people who were scattered over the counties. He was led, then, to ask why the question excited so unequal an interest in that House in past years? It was not because of any apathy on the part of those who were opposed to the tax out of doors, nor because of any want of able advocacy, for the efforts and ability of the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down in dealing with the subject were fully appreciated by the agricultural classes. This ability had been always supplemented, as it would be tonight, by the high practical knowledge of hon. Gentlemen who sit behind him. Was it, then, the fact, as he had sometimes heard it stated, that an agricultural question could not meet with fair play in that House because the counties were so under-represented? That was a question which would, no doubt, be fully discussed on another occasion. Or was it true that they were received coldly because of the influence of a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer? It was often said that the right hon. Gentleman who now filled that office was prejudiced against the agricultural interests, but he did not think it was reasonable to charge him with being so because he declined to relinquish £6,000,000 of taxation. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks (Mr. Disraeli) was first Chancellor of the Exchequer he proposed the remission of half the amount of the tax; and the substitution, instead, of a fresh duty; but when he held that position for the second time he made no mention of the malt tax in his Budget, nor did he hold out the slightest hope in those agricultural exercitations with which he favoured his constituents in the autumn that he would remit it should he again accede to office. That being so, he did not think that the charge of being hostile to the claims of the agricultural interests in the matter was one to which a Liberal Chancellor was especially open. Then came the question whether the subject was submitted to the House in a shape which would enable a Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with it. The question consisted of two distinct parts. First of the arguments for the repeal, and secondly, the question of how the deficit was to be recouped to the Exchequer. He had observed that hon. Gentlemen, when addressing sympathetic audiences in the country, usually confined their observations to the arguments for the repeal, and shirked the financial difficulty involved in the question; whereas, in the House of Commons, he felt that no consideration or argument could have much effect on the repeal as long as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had the fortress of the deficit of £6,000,000 to shield himself under. He thought that no Resolution on the subject could be practical unless it affected the second half of the question, and therefore he hoped, if they were unsuccessful that night, that the next Motion proposed to the House on the subject would be a substitution of a tax upon brewing. As the Motion at present stood the position of those who were in favour of a repeal of the malt duty was that they were desirous of giving the Chancellor of the Exchequer such support as that, in the event of his having an available surplus, he might regard himself as free to consider whether it would be consistent with his duty to give the agriculturists that remission of taxation which they were promised by a statesman twenty years ago. Whilst the Motion was submitted in its present state he thought it most politically consistent to support a Chancellor of the Exchequer who had remitted taxes without the imposition of new ones. He sincerely trusted that the right hon. Gentleman might add the reduction or remission of the malt duty to his legislative triumphs, and make amongst the farmers, perhaps the only class of Her Majesty's subjects amongst whom he had not made, what the Poet Laureate declares to be the reward of "taking off a tax,"—"an everlasting name."

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, upon any future remission of indirect taxation, this House will take into consideration the Duty upon Malt, with a view to its immediate reduction and ultimate repeal."—(*Sir FitzRoy Kelly.*)

MR. NEATE, while admitting that the agricultural interests had to contend with great difficulties, which they had borne manfully and with good temper, observed that if a sum of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 were to be given away by the remission of this tax, it seemed to him that they might renounce for ever any hope of reducing our National Debt. At the end of the French Revolutionary War the redeemable value of the Debt was estimated at upwards of £800,000,000, and according to the financial accounts of last year it amounted to £775,000,000. That Debt was to be measured not solely by its amount, but by the annual charge, now something like £25,000,000, which it imposed upon the country. That charge was, perhaps, not felt just now to be a very great burden, but a time of difficulty and pressure might arise when the people would ask how it came to be imposed, and why it was continued. The principle of the obligation to pay off the Debt had been asserted at different times. In 1819, a Resolution was passed for setting apart the sum of £5,000,000 annually for that purpose. In 1828 a Finance Committee again asserted the obligation of the country to make a gradual reduction of the Debt, and suggested that at least £3,000,000 a year should be provided for that purpose. The only law passed, however, was that now in force, and which directed the appropriation of a certain portion of the annual surplus for the reduction of the Debt. There were some people who looked at the National Debt as a part of the wealth and property of the nation, though he did not suppose that any Gentleman in that House was so ignorant of political economy as to maintain that proposition. It was no doubt true that there might be too great a hurry to pay it off; and that was the error of the year 1819, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to raise new taxes with the view of providing a surplus for the reduction of the Debt. In the case of an estate, it might be good policy not to pay off a mortgage, but to apply the surplus revenue, after payment of the interest on the mortgage, to the improvement of the estate. When, however, the estate was improved and its productive powers fully developed, then the honest and prudent proprietor would look the difficulty in the face and address himself seriously to the reduction of the mortgage. The present was a time at which we stood, as a nation, in that position. It should be recollected that many persons were now likely to be admitted to the franchise who were not disposed to admit the benefits resulting from the past policy of the country, which had led to the accumulation of the Debt, and were inclined to take advantage of the arguments urged against the obligation to pay it. Many Gentlemen who, if they were in the House at the present day would be sitting on the opposite Benches, had held strange doctrines in regard to the National Debt. Some of them had been led away by the notion that, as the Debt was contracted in a depreciated currency, it ought not to be paid in a metallic currency. It would not, then, be surprising, when such strange ideas, so inconsistent with the interest and honour of the country, could be held by persons holding a high position in that House, if, after a larger infusion of the Democratic element in the representation, these objections to the payment of the National Debt should be revived, and he, therefore, thought it of the greatest importance that an opportunity should be taken to assert in the strongest manner the obligation of the country to pay the Debt. The Amendment he was about to propose did not entirely preclude the repeal of the malt tax, which he thought in many respects an objectionable tax, and he entirely agreed with the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite that the poor man ought not to be required to pay a higher tax on his beer than the rich man on his wine. He was not particularly enamoured of the malt tax, and he had suggested nothing in his Amendment directly in favour of it, but if the malt tax were repealed measures must be adopted to supply the deficiency by other taxation, the landed interest contributing towards that taxation in proportion to the benefit they derived from the repeal of the malt tax. It appeared to him, coupling the conduct of the party opposite in reference to the Reform Bill, with their conduct on the question before the House, that it was evident that that party was determined upon government for the land and by the land. He did not, however, wish to raise party considerations, but merely desired to impress upon the House that this was a question which concerned the honour and safety of the country. He concluded by moving, as an Amendment—

"That in the present state of the taxation and resources of the Country it is the duty of Parliament to make provision for the systematic reduction of the National Debt, and not to sanction any proposal for any repeal or change of taxes which is likely to be attended with a diminution of the Revenue."

MR. J. STUART MILL: In rising to second the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, I hope I shall not be suspected of any disposition to abuse the indulgence which the House has so recently and so kindly extended to me. But I have for some time felt so serious, I may say so solemn a conviction upon the subject which my hon. Friend has brought forward, that it is almost a matter of conscience with me not to let slip an occasion of endeavouring to impress that conviction on some hon. Members of this House. Not long ago it might not altogether unreasonably be supposed that the unrivalled growth of this country in every kind of wealth—the limits of which it seemed impossible to define—was an excuse to us, and even a justification, for leaving our pecuniary obligations, without any serious attempt to reduce them, to weigh upon posterity, whom we might reasonably expect to be better able to support them than we ourselves are. This, however, was at no time a conclusive argument or a sound excuse, because future generations will have their own exigencies too; and we have had an example of it in the fact that not many years ago two years of war sufficed to re-add to our National Debt nearly as much as had been subtracted from it by the savings of fifty years. But, more recently, facts have been brought to our notice, which have been too much overlooked; showing that the excuse we made to ourselves is not admissible in the case of a nation whose population greatly exceeds that which with the existing resources of science can be supported from its own soil; who are therefore dependent for subsistence on the power of disposing of their goods in foreign markets; and whose command over those markets depends upon the continued possession of an exhaustible material. The termination of our coal supplies, though always certain, has always until lately appeared so distant, that it seemed quite unnecessary for the present generation to occupy itself with the question. The reason was that all our calculations were grounded upon the existing rate of consumption; but the fact now is that our consumption of coals increases with such extraordinary rapidity from year to year, that the probable exhaustion of our supplies is no longer a question of centuries, but of generations. I hope there are many hon. Members in this House who are acquainted with a small volume written by Mr. Stanley Jevons, entitled *The Coal Question.* It appears to me, so far as one not practically conversant with the subject can presume to judge, that Mr. Jevons' treatment of the subject is almost exhaustive. He seems to have anticipated everything which can possibly be said against the conclusion at which he has arrived, and to have answered it; and that conclusion is, that if the consumption of coal continues to increase at the present rate, three generations at the most, very possibly a considerably shorter period, will leave no workable coal nearer to the surface than 4,000 feet in depth; and that the expense of raising it from that depth will entirely put it out of the power of the country to compete in manufactures with the richer coal-fields of other countries. I think that if there be anyone in this House, or out of it, who knows anything which will invalidate these conclusions of Mr. Jevons, it will be right for him to come forward and make it known. I have myself read various attempts to answer Mr. Jevons, but I must say that every one of them, admitting the truth of everything said, has only made out that our supplies will continue a few years longer than the term which Mr. Jevons has assigned. It fact, it has now come to this, that instead of being at liberty to suppose that future generations will be more capable than we are ourselves of paying off the National Debt, it is probable that the present generation and the one or two which will follow, are the only ones which will have the smallest chance of ever being able to pay it off. Now, what is the duty which facts of this sort impose upon this country? Are we going to bequeath our pecuniary obligations undiminished to descendants, to whom we cannot bequeath our assets? Suppose the property of a private individual had come to him deeply mortgaged, and that the bulk of it consisted of a mine, rich indeed, but certain to be exhausted in his lifetime, would he think it honourable to waste the whole proceeds of the mine in riotous living, and leave to his children the payment of the debt out of the residue of the estate? Then what would be vicious and dishonourable in a private individual is not less dishonourable in a nation. We ought to think of these things while it is still time. This country is at present richer and more prosperous than any country we ever knew or read of, and it can without any material inconvenience or privation set aside several millions a year for the discharge of this important duty to our descendants. I do not think we are much to blame as far as we have yet gone. It was perfectly right to get rid of all very bad taxes, all those which produced a greater quantity of incidental mischief than advantage to the revenue from their imposition. Thanks to the progress of opinion, and thanks also to the enlightened and far-sighted Minister who has administered our finances for some years back, this work has been nearly performed. There are very few taxes remaining which are utterly unfit to exist. If there are any, they do not yield so large a revenue but that we may hope, without much difficulty, to get rid of them also. The bulk of our revenue is derived from a comparatively small number of imposts, each yielding a considerable sum, and none of which, I think, is now very seriously objectionable in principle, or greatly mischievous in practice, any further than is inevitably incident on the payment of taxes. I think it is perfectly legitimate to try experiments upon these taxes, if there be any chance, by lowering the amount, to increase the revenue. It is also legitimate to vary the mode of imposing taxes; for example, by levying them at a later stage in the production of the article, by which means we may get rid of objections such as some which have been brought forward by the hon. and learned Member opposite. But if we are to abolish any tax which yields a revenue of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000, merely in order to have the satisfaction of expending the amount in some other way, it will be, as it appears to me, a criminal dereliction of duty. If we are able either by increasing our resources or by a retrenchment of our expenditure to dispense with the malt tax, how much wiser and worthier it would be if we were to set apart this tax as a fund for the extinguishment of our Debt. I beg permission to press upon the House the duty of taking these things into serious consideration, in the name of that dutiful concern for posterity, which has been strong in every nation which ever did every thing great, and which has never left the mind of any such nation until, as in the case of the Romans under the Empire, it was already falling into decrepitude, and ceasing to be a nation. There are many persons in the world, and there may possibly be some in this House, though I should be sorry to think so, who are not unwilling to ask themselves, in the words of the old jest, "Why should we sacrifice anything for posterity; what has posterity done for us?" They think that posterity has done nothing for them: but that is a great mistake. Whatever has been done for mankind by the idea of posterity; whatever has been done for mankind by philanthropic concern for posterity, by a conscientious sense of duty to posterity, even by the less pure but still noble ambition of being remembered and honoured by posterity; all this we owe to posterity, and all this it is our duty to the best of our limited ability to repay. All the great deeds of the founders of nations, and of those second founders of nations, their great reformers—all that has been done for us by the authors of those laws and institutions to which free countries are indebted for their freedom, and well governed countries for their good government; all the heroic lives which have been led, and all the heroic deaths which have been died, in defence of liberty and law against despotism and tyranny, from Marathon and Salamis down to Leipsic and Waterloo; all those traditions of wisdom and of virtue which are enshrined in the history and literature of the past—all the schools and Universities by which the culture of former times has been brought down to us, and all that culture itself—all that we owe to the great masters of human thought and to the great masters of human emotion—all this is ours because those who preceded us have cared, and have taken thought, for posterity. Not owe anything to posterity, Sir! We owe to it Bacon, and Newton, and Locke, and Bentham; aye, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and Wordsworth. I have read of an eminent man—I am almost sure it was Dr. Franklin—who, when he wished to relieve the necessities or assist the occasions of any deserving person by pecuniary help, had a way of his own of doing it, and it was this. He said to them, "I only lend you this; if you are ever able, I expect you to repay it; but not to me: repay it to some other necessitous person, and do it under the same stipulation, that so the stream of benefits may still flow on, as long and as far as human honesty can keep it flowing." What Franklin did from beneficence, in order that the greatest possible amount of good might be extracted from a limited fund, our predecessors, to whom we owe so much, have done from the necessities of the case. The debt of gratitude due to them is such as makes it at times almost an oppressive thought that not one tittle of that vast debt can ever be directly repaid to those from whom we have received so much. But, like the objects of Franklin's beneficence, we can indirectly repay it, by paying it to others—to those others whom also they cared for, and for whom, and not merely for us, their labours and sacrifices were undergone. What are we, Sir—we of this generation, or of any other generation, that we should usurp, and expend upon our particular and exclusive uses, what was meant for mankind? It is lent to us, Sir, not given: and it is our duty to pass it on, not merely undiminished, but with interest, to those who are in the same relation to us as we are to those who preceded us. So shall we too deserve, and may in our turn hope to receive, a share of the same gratitude.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the present state of the taxation and resources of the Country, it is the duty of Parliament to make provision for the systematic reduction of the National Debt, and not to sanction any proposal for any repeal or change of taxes which is likely to be attended with a diminution of the Revenue,"—(*Mr. Neate,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. READ said, it might seem presumption in him to follow one of the greatest living philosophers (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), but he must trust to his practical knowledge on the subject to make some amends. It did strike him that the learned and eloquent essay they had just heard on coal fields and the National Debt had specially nothing to do with the malt tax. He could not for the life of him understand why, when farmers asked for their fair share of the reductions in taxation which had been so general, they should be met by such an argument now used for the first time. The hon. and learned Member for East Suffolk (Sir FitzRoy Kelly), in introducing the subject, had spoken of it in such exhaustive terms that it only remained for him to view it in its agricultural aspect. Farmers sought for the repeal of the malt tax to enable them to enjoy some of the advantages of free agriculture which other classes derived from free trade. As a class they had obtained very few of those benefits which resulted from free trade. They might, as consumers, have their tea and coffee a little cheaper; but, as the great producers of food, they had, of course, been injured rather than benefited. Their great production, wheat, had been reduced in price something like 10*s.* or 12*s.* per quarter; and although they had received a remunerating price for meat, yet their loss of stock had been very serious indeed. They sold barley at 4*s.* a bushel, but after undergoing the process of manufacture that 4*s.* was made into 8*s.* As a member of the deputation which on this subject had gone to the Chancellor of the Exchequer it was allotted to him to point out how the duty affected the growers of barley; and he did this by reference to his own farm. Last year he grew 200 acres of barley, and sold it for malting purposes at about £1,400. The duty that would be charged on it would be nearly £1,000. This duty bore most unfairly on different classes of barley, and was specially injurious to the growers of the inferior class. This inequality had been felt, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had last year introduced a Bill providing that barleys should be malted by weight; but the Excise had entirely destroyed the good which the right hon. Gentleman wished to confer, and there was hardly a bushel of British barley malted by weight instead of measure. The best barleys would always command a very ready sale, and he knew a very considerable maltster who was ready to enter into a contract to pay 5*s.* per quarter more for barley if the duty were repealed than he was now paying. He need not say that an advance of 6*d.* a bushel on barley would be equal to about £1 an acre on all the barley grown, and when they considered that the agriculturists had lost 50*s.* per acre on their wheat, he did not think the House should grudge the boon which was now asked. He did not concur with the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate) in saying that if the agriculturists obtained a little advance in price, landlords would take the advantage of it. If there was anything in that argument, how was it that with the reduction that had taken place in the price of wheat, there had been no corresponding reduction in the rent of land? He thought they might rest with perfect security on the good sense and kindness of their landlords that they would not take one single 6*d.* of the reduction in the duty in the shape of advanced rent. The hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate) had attempted to frighten them by telling them they would be inundated with foreign barley. They were to a certain degree inundated with it already, and the repeal of the malt tax would not add much to the quantity of foreign barley. Some very considerable maltsters malted one-eighth and some even one-fourth of the whole quantity; and one of the principal brewers had used upwards of 45,000 quarters of foreign barley this year in manufacturing malt. He did not think they would have any large quantity of foreign malt imported into this country if they had a free trade in it, because the foreigner had neither the capital, the climate, nor the conveniences which were requisite to enable him to make much more malt than he now did. He need not tell the House that the exports of beer continued to increase, as did also the exports of malt; and the duty which the consumer of beer had to pay in England was not only returned on the exported article, but the cost of collection was also remitted to the foreigner who might consume the malt. The duty enhanced the price of malt in a remarkable manner. He had a Return for the year 1795, when the duty on malt was just half what it was now, and on comparing that with the Return for 1862, he found that the price of barley was 2*s.* a quarter less, and the price of malt 22*s.* more at the latter period than at the former one. The high duty depreciated the price of barley. Towards the close of the Great War the duty varied very much. From 1814 to 1816 the old war duty on malt remained—namely, 4*s.* 6*d.* per bushel, and the price of barley was 33*s.* 8*d.* per quarter. During the next three years the duty was reduced to 2*s.* 5*d.* per bushel, and the price of barley rose to 49*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. In the three years which followed, the Government increased the malt duty to 3*s.* 7*d.* per bushel, and the price of barley fell to 26*s.* 9*d.* In the next three years the duty was lowered to 2*s.* 7*d.*, and the price of barley rose to 34*s.* 10*d.* It was a curious fact how these duties greatly curtailed consumption. Even so slight an increase in them as 5 per cent had a remarkable effect in that direction. Our present 5 per cent was imposed in 1840, and the consequence of that was that 4,000,000 of bushels less were malted than in the five previous years, while the price of barley was reduced 3*s.* per quarter. Again, in 1855, during the Crimean War, when the duty was 4*s.* there were only

30,000,000 bushels malted, while the price of barley was 34*s*. 9*d*.; whereas, when the present rate of duty was restored, in 1857, they made 38,000,000 bushels, and the price of barley rose to 41*s*. 1*d*. per quarter. The duty on malt might be taken at 70 per cent, while the duty on tea, at the average rate of 1*s*. 8*d*. per lb., was 30 per cent. It was most unfair to class beer and spirits together; but, if that was done, it should be remembered that the duty on foreign brandy had within the last twenty years been reduced 500 per cent, and that on English gin had been increased 157 per cent, and English gin was principally made from British grain. During the last twenty years upwards of £150,000,000 had been remitted in the shape of Customs duties, besides something like another £40,000,000 of Excise duties, making together nearly £200,000,000. During the same period malt had paid to the revenue something like £100,000,000. With regard to the feeding qualities of malt, his experience as a farmer had been varied and considerable. He had found that a large quantity of indigestible and unpalatable hard food was made both palatable and digestible by a fair admixture of malt with it, and that its effect upon young stock and sickly animals was perfectly marvellous. Calves and lambs made great progress when fed upon it. In his own county Mr. Salter had raised a large flock of lambs with sweet wort instead of milk, which under present circumstances it was rather difficult to obtain. The Government would of course refer him to the experiments of Mr. Lawes, but those experiments had been conducted upon totally wrong principles—that was to say, they proceeded on the idea that malt should be used largely as a substitute for other food. It was wrong to give 4 lb. a day to bullocks and 1 lb. to sheep. He should never have thought of giving more than 2 lb. a day to bullocks and ¼ lb. to sheep. As to pigs, they had stomachs which could digest anything. Malt should be used rather as a good, sound, healthy condiment than as a substitute for oilcake and other food. He complained that the malt tax restricted cultivation, and made the farmers grow certain crops where they would much prefer growing others. He would like to dispel the idea that if they had cheap corn they must as a necessary consequence have cheap meat. The consequence of having cheap corn was that as a matter of course some land must be laid down in grass, and that was held out to them as the only means by which they could compete with the foreigner. He contended that arable land in the south, east, and centre of England, and in parts of the Lothians would produce as much meat as if it were laid down in grass, and that the country has now the benefit of all the corn produced upon that land. Of course, under grass there would be much less expenditure by the farmer in manual labour. The cheapness of corn had in a measure, even upon land that was under the plough, reduced the quantity of stock kept; because it was impossible for the farmers—and it was the small farmers generally who reared stock—to meet their fixed payments from the corn they sold, so they must prematurely sell a portion of their young cattle, which thus caused a diminution in the quantity of stock. That process commenced about 1850, and had been going on gradually. The pressure was not felt during the Crimean War, but it had been felt lately; and of course the disastrous cattle plague had considerably augmented it. His hon. Colleague, himself, and one or two other Members of that House had presented 273 petitions from various parishes in East Norfolk, and signed by 13,000 of its inhabitants. There was this difference between the labourer in the town and the agricultural labourer, that whereas the former got bad and adulterated beer, through the operation of the malt tax, the latter got none at all except at hay seasons and at harvest time. Nothing would so much conduce to the sobriety and comfort of the labouring population as their being enabled to procure cheap and wholesome beer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer lately told them most forcibly of the amount of indirect taxation paid by the poor man. The right hon. Gentleman said the labouring man paid largely in the shape of duty on spirits and tobacco, and as he did not add also "on beer," it followed that if the consumer did not pay the duty, then the farmer did. In fact, the whole system connected with beer was a gigantic monoply. It began with the maltster and went through the brewer until it reached the consumer. The labouring man should have his fair share of beer, and now that the price of meat had risen so much beer was more than ever necessary to him. It was said that there was no possibility of the labouring men brewing beer in their tea-kettles, but out of twenty men whom he employed on one farm last harvest seventeen did brew at home, and he need not say they were the best men by far. Beer was in fact requisite to the labouring man if he were not well fed. For some time he persisted in not giving his men beer, and gave them money instead, but he found that a "wet groat went further than a dry shilling," and he was obliged to abandon his system. When the farmers went to the Chancellor of the Exchequer he said that economy must be practised before there could be a remission of the malt tax. He, as a young Member of that House, had entertained a wonderful notion of the power that certain Liberal Gentlemen must exercise over the Estimates. He had expected to see on such occasions the Benches opposite filled with hon. Gentlemen arrayed against the Government and always paring down these Estimates. With the exception, however, of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton), whose consistent liberalism and economy must have won him the admiration of the House, he had not heard a single Member of those who so strongly advocated economy out of that House move the reduction of a single Vote in that House. He had also thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have been the person to exercise that economy; but as the right hon. Gentleman told the House that it was the duty of the Independent Members to carry economy into the Estimates, he was afraid there was no chance of reducing the Estimates by £6,000,000 in any such manner. Of one think, however, he was certain—that beer ought to be free. It was the produce of our own soil and the drink of the agricultural labourer. He would, however, argue the question on the supposition that it could not be wholly free, and that it was necessary to provide a substitute. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer think of a duty of 1*d*. per gallon on beer? Something of that sort was proposed by a deputation who waited on the right hon. Gentleman early in the Session. He told them it was an impossibility; but had he not carried out the principle by his remission of the hop duty and imposing a licence on the brewers of 3*d*. per barrel? By that remission the hopgrowers had pocketed all the duty they had previously paid, and had received 20*s*. per cwt. more than when they paid the duty. The hop duty, by means of brewers' licences, amounted to £300,000, and he had reason to think that if the brewers' licences were increased by 3*s*. per barrel that would bring, for brewers' beer alone, £3,800,000, and if they allowed anything for the increase of consumption and licences for private brewers, there would be no difficulty in raising £4,500,000. He would not advocate a beer tax, but as hon. Members on his side had been taunted for not finding a substitute, he begged, with due respect, to throw out this suggestion for the consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The plan would be attended with this difficulty, that they must inflict a licence upon private brewers. It might be so much on the assessment of a farm, or house, and so much on the beer they brewed, and Parliament might exempt all cottages and houses under £7 value, as that was a favourite figure with the right hon. Gentleman. By some such measure the Chancellor of the Exchequer might reduce the price of beer by 25 per cent, and the public would have very much better beer. The cheapest article of which beer could then be made would be malt, and there would then be no reason for using sugar and the various adulterations that were now so extensively practised. He thanked the House most cordially for the patience with which they had heard him. He trusted that he should never talk on a subject he did not understand, and as that rule was put forward by the hon. and gallant Member for Berks (Colonel Loyd Lindsay) early in this Session, he would only add that from what he had seen during the present Parliament, he believed that rule was not invariably acted on in the House of Commons.

Sir EDWARD BULLER said, there was a difference of opinion as to the precise effect of this tax. He could not endorse the opinion of the hon. and learned Member that while the amount spent in beer was £60,000,000, £20,000,000 of it were occasioned by the aggravation of the tax; nor could he agree with the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Milner Gibson) that the duty on the barrel of beer was only an addition of 12½ per cent to the consumer. The duty on the barrel instead of being only 6*s*. per barrel, was when it reached the consumer 12*s*., and as the price of a barrel was 48*s*. they must deduct the 12*s*. from 48*s*. before they got the figure of comparison—the cost price. This showed that the tax was really one-third of the price, or 33 per cent. It was astonishing to hear the praises that had been lavished on this tax. In fact, if it was all that it had been described to be, it was like the quality of mercy, that blessed him that gave and also him that took. While it benefited the Exchequer it benefited the farmers and growers of barley—

> "O fortunati nimiùm si bona sua nôrint
> Agricolæ!"

If farmers could only look through the spectacles of the brewers, they would gladly acknowledge the blessings of this tax. The great mistake that the President of the Board of Trade made was, that he put the tax, when the beer found its way to the consumer, at the original price at which it was levied; but it was a well understood law in political economy, that whatever might be the tax upon a raw material, it must be increased by the profit of every new set of hands through which it passed before it reached the consumer. According to this, the duty must be increased 10 per cent by the maltster, and 50 per cent by the brewer, and 33 per cent by the retailer, so that altogether the entire increase would be 93 per cent on the duty, and about 52 per cent on the price. Thus the brewer might brew ten bushels of malt at 80*s.* and hops at 16*s.*—the expense of brewing was about 5*s.*, to which he would add 6*s.* per bushel, on account of the competition between German yeast and his grains; but he would have 110 gallons at 96*s.* This he would sell at 146*s.* 8*d.*, and the difference between the producing and the selling price would be 52 per cent upon the cost of production. But if he retailed it, it would sell at 183*s.* 4*d.*, or nearly 100 per cent. If the taxation was taken into account, it would show a difference of 40 per cent, for it would cover a deduction from 183*s.* 4*d.* of 53*s.* 7*d.*, the amount of the tax upon this quantity of beer. It was thought a safe estimate that 33⅓ per cent would be the difference between the price at which beer was now sold, and that at which it would be sold if the malt tax was not to continue. He thought he had shown that the tax was very heavy, and that it was oppressive, and it was still more so when it was compared with the duty upon wine. The duty upon claret at 36*s.* is 2*s.* per dozen, or about 5 per cent, and on the finer kinds of claret, such as ambitious hosts produce when they entertain prelates of the Church and Ministers and ex-Ministers of State and set their best wines before their most honoured guests, the price being 144*s.* per dozen, the duty on such wines almost vanished altogether. He certainly felt that they were all much obliged to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for reducing the duty on claret, and thus allowing the light wines of France to be brought into the country. Poets and moralists had sighed over the preference given by our fiscal system to port over claret—

> "Firm and erect the Caledonian stood,
> Prime was his mutton and his claret good;
> Let him drink port! the wily Saxon cried,
> He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

Now, if there was this difference between claret and port, there was a still greater difference between malt liquor and whisky. And now he would come to deal with the question that it was impossible to reduce the duty on malt without at the same time reducing the duty on whisky. When he formerly sat in the House he was accustomed to hear Chancellors of the Exchequer say that as to whisky there was but one rule, and that was to extract from it the maximum of revenue. He knew it was no part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's duty to take into account moral considerations; but if he could by his fiscal legislation produce a beneficial effect on the moral and social condition of the people, he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would be glad to do so. He had one or two other observations to make on this subject, but he would be very brief. He might say that he never before knew a tax press upon a trade which the traders were not anxious to remove. But in the present case, though the consumers could not force a repeal of the tax, though the farmers were restless and impatient, the brewers were happy, prosperous, and contented; and it was not difficult to account for this. He would not say that the tax made the trade a monopoly, but it certainly tended to restrict competition. For the natural effect of a tax of 20*s.* upon what was worth 40*s.* was that £60,000 was required to carry on a brewery, which, if there was no tax, could be equally well carried on with a capital of £40,000; and this prevented competition in the trade, and gave the brewer a power of advancing the price, to the disadvantage of the consumer. If they repealed the tax either the brewers would continue to employ the same capital and one-third more beer would be produced, or one-third of the capital at present locked up in the trade would be set at liberty. As to the agricultural part of the question, he did not attach much importance to the increased price which the growers would receive for their barley if this duty were repealed, because, in the first place, he did not think that increase would be much; and, in the second, he believed that what increase there was would soon find its way into the pockets of the landlord. But that was not the great advantage which the farmer would receive. He believed that malt was of the greatest value to a farmer when judiciously applied. He agreed with the hon. Member for Norfolk (Mr. Read) who had just spoken that for young and for sick cattle malt would be invaluable. Another advantage would be that coarser varieties of barley, which were called "bigg" in the North of England and "bere" in Scotland—varieties which could not now be malted because of the duty—could then be used with advantage. Then the consumers would get a great advantage, and there were no greater consumers than the farm labourers. He quite agreed that the wet groat went farther than the dry shilling. Hon. Gentlemen who, like himself, were employers of agricultural labour, must frequently have seen the hay-field on some cold or wet day turned into a place of jollification by the judicious supply of a little beer. In fact, beer was a necessary of life. If protracted labour was to be kept up they must give a generous diet. And be it remembered that all these advantages would go into the pockets of the farmer; for though it was true, as he had said, that an increase in the price of the produce of the land raised the price of the rent, yet he never heard that the farmer's rent was raised because the necessaries of life had become cheap. He did not want to exaggerate his case. He did not believe that the labourers would brew their own beer if the duty were repealed. The age of brewing malt in tea-kettles was past. But the labourer would get his beer cheap and good. If the tax were 33 per cent on the produce, then he had a right to say that the abolition of the duty would reduce the price of beer one-half, so that beer which was now 6*d.* per quart would be 3*d.*, and beer at 4*d.* now would be sold at 2*d.* And he had no fear that this would lead to additional drunkenness. Whether beer was cheap or dear, if a man could not often get it, generally when he did get it he would make the most of it, and he believed that when the labourer had the free use of malt liquor he would learn from experience that if he was to enjoy his beer he must take it in moderation. He asked the House to repeal the tax because it was oppressive and partial, because it was more in amount than any existing tax upon an article of prime necessity, and because it pressed more particularly upon the working classes of the country. On all these grounds, then, he felt it his duty to support the Resolution.

Mr. SURTEES said, he felt that the able arguments that they had listened to that evening in favour of the repeal of the malt tax applied with even greater force than similar arguments last year, because since that time about £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 of taxes had been repealed which were said to press upon other interests in this country. He would endeavour, with the leave of the House, to point out one of the many modes in which the malt tax operated prejudicially to the interests of the grower of barley. Formerly it was the custom for maltsters to attend the country markets and themselves purchase the barley they required, paying the farmer for it the following week; but since the Chancellor of the Exchequer had reduced the time for the malt credits the maltster required a larger amount of capital to enable him to transact the same amount of business as formerly, or he must do a smaller amount of business with the same capital. Well, what was the result? The maltster now not unfrequently, when he attended the country market, stood by, looking on, and when a farmer took a sample of barley to him, worth, say, 35*s.* per quarter, the maltster would offer only 32*s.* The farmer would not accept the offer, but eventually took his sample to a person called a "tranter"—that is, a barley merchant, and sold it, perhaps, at 34*s.* per quarter, and the tranter thus might buy hundreds of quarters, and pay the farmers for them the following week. But what happened then? The tranter would immediately sell the identical sample of barley for 35*s.* or 36*s.* to the very same maltster who had just before offered the farmer only 32*s.* per quarter. And why? Because, owing to the malt tax and the short malt credits, the maltster was often called upon to pay the malt duty before he had been paid for his malt, or perhaps before he had sold it, and the tranter would give the maltster three or four weeks' credit, and at the end of that time, if the maltster's finances were not very flourishing, the tranter would take a bill at two or three months. Therefore, the maltster would give the tranter more money for the barley than he would the farmer, and thus the monopoly caused by the malt tax, which had always been felt to be a great grievance, had been increased and intensified in an immense degree. With regard to the question of the adulteration of beer, he had no doubt there were many most respectable and honourable brewers and publicans who would not condescend to adulterate their beer; nevertheless, adulteration was carried on to a great extent, and a chief cause of it was the high price of malt caused by the malt duty. He did not profess to be able to mention the names of all the various articles used in the adulteration of beer, but hon. Gentlemen had, perhaps, heard that tobacco was used; that salt and sugar were used; that quassia, wormwood, coculus indicus, and other articles most injurious to the health and constitutions of our countrymen were used, and he thought the House would agree with him that they ought to do their best to discourage that adulteration. He believed if they were to repeal the malt tax they would not only remove a very great inducement to adulteration, but malt, which was the best article from which to make beer, would be sold at its natural and cheapest price. Now, free trade might be very good trade if it was fairly and justly carried out, but when they allowed malt made in this country to be sent abroad free of duty, which malt might be made into beer for the use and benefit of the labourers of foreign countries, whose goods might be brought into competition in English markets with those of the English manufacturer, it was scarcely fair that for the same article the English labourer should be called upon to pay a heavy duty. And, again, malt might be sent abroad duty free, and used by foreigners in feeding their cattle, which might afterwards be brought into this country to compete with animals belonging to British farmers, who were not allowed to use malt unmixed unless they paid a heavy tax upon it. The permission to use malt mixed with linseed was simply valueless. The Returns up to 1865 in the ninth Report of the Inland Revenue Office showed that about twenty-eight persons had made entry of malt houses for making malt duty free; but probably one-half of these malting houses would be closed during the year ending the 25th of March last; and no wonder, when the quantity of malt mixed with linseed which they delivered was under 9,000 quarters. He would not attempt to foretell what would be the amount of increased consumption of malt if the duty were repealed, but he might mention that during the Russian War, in 1854, the malt tax was increased by 10*s.* per quarter, and he could inform the House what was the effect of that addition to the duty. In 1851, 1852, and 1853, the duty on malt was 21*s.* 8*d.* per quarter, and 5 per cent, and the quantity of malt that paid duty was, in 1851, 41,337,415 bushels; in 1852, 41,072,486 bushels; in 1853, 42,039,752 bushels. Well, from the 8th of May, 1854, the duty was increased by 10*s.* a quarter, and was continued until the 5th of July, 1856, and during those years the quantity of malt that paid duty fell, in 1854, to 36,819,360 bushels; in 1855, to 33,887,564 bushels; and in 1856, to 36,980,040 bushels. But in the three following years, when the extra 10*s.* was removed, and the duty had returned to the original amount, the quantity of malt that paid duty increased to, in 1857, 40,301,514 bushels; in 1858, 41,605,654 bushels; and in 1859, 44,219,257 bushels. These figures, he thought, spoke more eloquently, and were more convincing than any of the arguments which the Chancellor of the Exchequer used upon the spirit duties, and, therefore, not only as a matter of justice to the producer of barley, but also in the interest of the consumer, he would ask the House to support this Resolution. When the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke respecting the Franchise Bill in those terms of sympathy respecting those of "our own flesh and blood" who had suffered destitution and almost starvation, he would ask him to prove that he was sincere—to prove that he was in earnest in desiring their welfare—by supporting this Motion, which he ventured to think would be a boon much more practical, much more substantial, and which would be appreciated by them in a much higher degree than the suffrage that he was prepared to offer to them.

MR. POLLARD-URQUHART could not see why malt had not been dealt with in the same way as other articles, the duties upon which had been repealed during the last twenty-four years. Glass, sugar, timber, soap, wine, paper, ribands, gloves, playing cards, and other things had been the subjects of the repeal of taxation, and it was difficult to say why the arguments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to curtailing the comforts of the poor, restricting employment, and promoting industry, which had been advanced in favour of the remissions already made, did not apply as much to malt as to any other article. With respect to adulteration, he might remind the House there was convincing evidence that beer was equally as much adulterated as wine, and, as beer was the drink of the poor, its adulteration ought to concern the House more than that of wine, which was merely a luxury for the wealthy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to infer from the quantity of beer consumed that people drank more than was good for them; but, although the same sort of argument might have been used respecting wine, the drink of the rich, it did not operate to prevent the remission of duties. Many gamblers had ruined themselves with playing cards, but yet the duty upon them was remitted. He did not admit the justice of the argument, that it would be scarcely fair to Ireland and Scotland to repeal the duty on malt without also remitting that upon whisky, because one reason why those countries did not consume malt was, that the poorer people were obliged to content themselves with whisky-and-water. They abstained from beer for much the same reason that men did from claret when it was beyond the reach of the multitude. Perhaps, the real reason why the malt tax had not been dealt with before was that it would have been necessary to make a large remission all at once. It would not be worth while to remit less than half the tax, or £3,000,000; and it seldom happened that our income exceeded our expenditure by more than £1,000,000. He could not but regret that the malt tax was not dealt with before the income tax was reduced below 7*d.* in the pound, because the country had become accustomed to that amount, and the back of the bearer, so to speak, was used to the burden. Nearly all payments and agreements during the preceding twenty-five years had been adjusted on the supposition that that scale of taxation would continue, and its retention would not, therefore, have imposed any hardship upon any class. He thought the Motion of the hon. Member for Oxford ought to have been brought forward before the last remission of 3*d.* upon the income tax. That reduction in the income tax amounted to about £4,000,000, and half the existing tea duty, amounting to about £2,000,000 a year, had also been taken off. He was as anxious as the hon. Members for Oxford (Mr. Neate) and Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) that the National Debt should be reduced, but he believed that the time for such a step would not have arrived until the malt tax and other obnoxious duties had been reduced or repealed. Indeed, in spite of the Emancipation of the Slaves, the Irish Famine, the Russian War, and other serious drawbacks, our National Debt was at the present moment smaller than it was at the time of Napoleon. In point of fact, it had been reduced from £830,000,000 to £785,000,000. A good deal, however, might still be done in the way of converting perpetual annuities into terminable annuities, and as some of these would expire, he believed, next year or the year after, the money thus set at liberty might be applied to the repeal or the reduction of some of our most obnoxious taxes —one of the foremost among which was the malt duty. The repeal of taxes during the last twenty-five years had increased our national wealth to £28,500,000 a year, according to Sir Stafford Northcote; much more than would in all probability have been the case if our surpluses had been applied to the reduction of our National Debt; and he believed that the malt tax might be dealt with without a realization of the apprehension of those who were in favour of its continuance.

Mr. BEACH said, that if the Amendment were adopted it would operate against the reduction of any tax unless it could be shown that no diminution of revenue would take place as the result of the remission. He was reminded by the speech of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) of the circumstance that at the time of the French Treaty many of the Gentlemen sitting on the Opposition side of the House argued that it was scarcely expedient to sanction the free removal from this country of coal, which was one of our most important products, in exchange for merely foreign luxuries. He was not however one of those who took a vindictive pleasure in the success of prediction when it was not for the benefit of the people, but he could not help being reminded of the arguments that had been used on that occasion. The hon. Member called the plan of Mr. Pitt for reducing the National Debt unfortunate. It was not unfortunate in its conception, for it was cordially approved of by Mr. Fox and the leading statesmen of the time, but in its result — and why? Because the war which Mr. Pitt expected to be of brief duration extended far beyond his lifetime and that of his illustrious opponent. He was not disposed to quarrel with the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate) for his views. The hon. Gentleman said that in the many years of peace we had had the National Debt had been very little reduced. That was certainly true, and he thought it much to be regretted; but whatever measures the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have desired to adopt for the reduction of the National Debt, the right hon. Gentleman would always have found great difficulty in resisting the pressure put upon him by those who were anxious to secure the reduction of particular taxes, and whatever public spirit might have been displayed in the right hon. Gentleman's propositions, regard for the present would always have favoured the postponement of their consideration. But the malt tax pressed to an unusually heavy extent upon both the producers and the consumers, and it was strange, to say the least of it, when articles of foreign productions were so freely relieved from taxation that a duty which weighed so heavily upon a most important domestic produce should be allowed to continue. The tax had existed for so long a period that many were accustomed to consider it as a tax of only trifling amount; but supposing the produce of an acre of barley to be only five quarters—no extraordinary quantity on land adapted for this purpose—and supposing the barley was grown once in four years, the amount of duty on an average which was raised from that acre would be £1 7*s.* 1*d.* every year —more, indeed, than was generally paid in the shape of rent to the landlord. He would not exactly say that the result was a deterioration in the value of the land, but the tax certainly acted as a discouragement to its cultivation. Barley was the second most important produce of the English soil, and it was of importance to the good cultivation of land that it should be encouraged, because agriculturists very well knew that it was not an exhaustive crop, and that it grew very well in harmony with turnips, which was one of the most useful crops the agriculturist could grow. The duty was not of recent growth, for it had been in existence during the last 150 years, but the consumption of malt had greatly decreased as compared with the population of the country. The quantity of malt that paid duty in England and Wales in an average of twelve years ending 1720 was 24,191,000 bushels annually, and the annual average during twelve years ending 1816 was only 23,197,000, the actual decrease being 994,000 bushels annually, although the population of the country had nearly doubled in the interval. The reason for this decrease might be found in the circumstance that the tax paid in the one instance was 6¾*d.*, and in the other 4*s.* 5¾*d.* It was true that some other articles had come into competition with malt, but if the tastes of the country had not been interfered with by the imposition of such a heavy tax the consumption of malt would in all probability have kept pace, at all events in some measure, with the increase in the population. It was urged that Ireland and Scotland were not so greatly affected by this question. What had resulted from the reduction of the duties in those countries? In 1822 the duty, both in Ireland and Scotland, had been greatly reduced. In Ireland it was reduced from 3*s.* 6¾*d.* to 2*s.* 7*d.* Well, the average amount of the tax for three years before the reduction was £291,318; and the average of the three years after the reduction was £283,221. Therefore, the amount brought in to the revenue was very little less than it had been before. In Scotland, in the same year, the duty was reduced from 3*s.* 7¼*d.* to 2*s.* 7*d.* The average produce of the duty before the reduction was £207,717, and after it £332,115; so that though the duty was reduced the amount actually realized by the revenue was very greatly increased. He thought, therefore, that the benefits arising from a reduction of the tax had been sensibly and materially felt in those countries. In this country, too, a similar result had followed the reduction of the beer duty. The aggregate of the three years before that duty was reduced was 79,042,281 bushels, while the aggregate of the three years after it was reduced was 98,412,251 bushels. When other duties had been reduced a great increase of consumption had followed, but in the case of malt it was said that the increased consumption which would be caused by a reduction of the duty would not pay—at least, not to any considerable extent — for the loss which the revenue would sustain. For his part, he was of opinion that that was a great mistake, because the authorities of former times had frequently concurred in saying that the consumption of malt would increase in the event of any sensible reduction being made in the amount of the duty. Take the case of one of the articles which was said to compete with malt. With a duty of 2*s.* 2*d.* per lb. upon coffee, the average annual consumption of that article from 1805 to 1807 was 1,113,000 lb. The duty, however, being reduced to 7*d.*, the average annual consumption for the next five years was 7,177,000 lb., and the duty rose in amount from £121,698 to £209,334. Surely that might encourage them to imagine that a like result would follow the reduction of the duty on malt. Why was that alone to be excluded? He was of opinion that both consumers and producers would derive benefit from its reduction, and that the improvements that had taken place in agriculture would alone enable the country to supply a very far greater quantity of barley than had ever yet been grown. There were other causes also which would enable the country to contribute a larger amount of barley. For instance, since the year 1710 the Inclosure Acts which had been passed had brought into cultivation in Great Britain and Ireland upwards of 7,000,000 acres, and about 5,000,000 in England and Wales alone. He would direct the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to an authority which that right hon. Gentleman would scarcely question. In 1835, a Commission was appointed to inquire into our whole fiscal system, and at the head of that Commission was placed Sir Henry Parnell, a man who possessed a rare knowledge of the subject. In their Report they stated that at the outset they entered upon the consideration of excisable articles with the idea that, however much the duty on other articles might be reduced, it would be very inexpedient to reduce the duty on malt. But that opinion was greatly altered by subsequent inquiry, and they declared in their final Report that—

> "If there were no factitious cause for elevating the price of barley, arising from the direct effect of a duty on foreign barley, or from the indirect effect of duties of other kinds on foreign corn, we should not feel any hesitation in saying that the proper way of dealing with the malt duty would be to reduce it one-half. But nothing, in our opinion, can be more unwise than to reduce duties on articles which are fit subjects for taxation without at the same time taking care to secure the most abundant supply that is possible to be secured of the materials which are necessary for their production."

Now, since that Report was written the duties on foreign corn have been swept away, and every facility had been given for securing an abundant supply of foreign barley. Ought we not to hope, therefore, that the recommendation of the Commission might now be taken into consideration? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had largely availed himself of the other recommendations made by them. They recommended that the duty on soap, paper, hops, bricks, and glass should be removed, and their recommendations concerning those articles had been acted upon. Then, as to the malt duty, the Commissioners said, with respect to the future—

> "If the duty were reduced to one-half, there seems to be reason to expect, provided that a sufficient supply of barley could be obtained, that the reduction would not be followed ultimately by any loss of revenue."

He thought that passage would startle those who maintained that only a very trifling increase would follow the reduction of the malt duty. There were few men who had directed their attention to this subject whose words were more deserving of the consideration of the House and the country than those of the Commissioners of 1835, and he hoped they would not be without effect on the future course of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in dealing with this important question.

MR. BUXTON said, he did not intend to go into the general question, but he could not pass by without protest the astonishing and outrageous assertions which had been made respecting the profits made by brewers on the capital invested in their business. The calculations of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for East Suffolk had produced a somewhat soporific effect upon him, and as the statement of the hon. Gentleman mingled with his dreams he almost thought he was in Paradise. The hon. and learned Gentleman had spoken of 50 or 60 per cent profit, and made out that the tax of £6,000,000 received by the Exchequer acted as a burden to the consumer of more than £20,000,000. Now, he would appeal to the common sense of the House as to whether it were possible that any hon. Gentleman should lend £10,000 to a maltster, and that in the course of three months that sum should by some magical process increase itself to between £30,000 and £40,000. The malt tax was paid upon malt which, probably within three months, on the average, would be sold in beer. Now, was it possible that the sum paid to Government as malt tax should re-produce itself with such rapidity as to yield to the maltster, the brewer, and the publican a profit amounting to three or four times its original amount? It was altogether impossible. The hon. and learned Gentleman and the hon. Member who followed him on that side of the House had both based their extraordinary calculations on the idea that the cost of brewing amounted only to 5*s.* a quarter. Now, there might be some truth in that statement if by brewing was meant merely mixing hot water with the malt; but every one who possessed any aquaintance with the subject must be aware that the brewer had various other expenses to incur. He did not remember what the cost of brewing the hops and malt might come to, but it was a comparatively small amount. The immense expense attending the sale of beer to the public arose far more from the distribution and other causes of charge than from the brewing. He had put down some of these items, and he found that the brewing, distribution, and all other incidental expenses connected with the manufacture of a quarter of malt into beer for public consumption amounted to 25*s.* The firm with which he was connected paid £30,000 a year in wages. Besides salaries and wages there were other very large expenses connected with a brewery. For a large brewery premises covering some acres of ground were required; a perfect army of horses had to be maintained; there were discount and bad debts, casks, the cost of water, which was very large, because steam engines were employed, rates, and taxes, &c. He found that, taking a number of years, the total expenses were from 22*s.* to 25*s.* per quarter of malt. The monopoly of the brewers was often spoken of in that House and elsewhere, but it was a great mistake to suppose that such a monopoly existed in London, where they owned but a small number of the public-houses. As regarded advances to publicans, there were various trade reasons connected with those advances. He need not trouble the House with details, but the usual course was this:—A man came to a brewer and said,—"Such a house is to be sold; will you advance me a portion of the money necessary for its purchase? You will have the security of the lease." On representations such as that a brewer advanced money to the publican, but the latter, at any moment he pleased, might go to another brewer and get him to make a loan to pay off the previous one, or might raise money in any other manner to pay a brewer to whom he did not wish to be any longer indebted, and might then at once transfer his custom. If the great profits were made by the London brewers which some Gentlemen seemed to suppose, there would be a dozen great companies started within a few months to take the trade out of their hands. He admitted that a vast quantity of adulterated stuff was sold to the people, and that was a great evil; but the beer was adulterated after it left the breweries. Publicans because they could make up beer from materials on which they did not pay a heavy duty, might use those materials, and, under these circumstances, there was no doubt a great deal of adulteration. For his part, he believed the malt tax was a very mischievous tax. It did great harm to the farmer, to the brewer, and, above all, to the consumer. It would be a great relief and benefit to the country when it could be done away with; but, though he held that opinion, he was not disposed to support the Motion of the hon. and learned Member, because in these matters they must trust very much to the Government, and with such a Chancellor of the Exchequer as the right hon. Gentleman who now presided over the public finances of the country he felt that the Government were not indisposed to do what they could for the relief of the industry of the country and of the community at large.

Mr. DE GREY had to apologize to the House for occupying their attention when so many older Members better qualified to discuss this question might more profitably have claimed to be heard; but it was a question in which his constituents took so deep an interest that he felt he should not be justified in remaining altogether silent upon the occasion. As having the honour to represent the great barley growers of West Norfolk, he must claim the indulgence of the House; and as their advocate, he ventured to say that they were entitled to be heard when they claimed justice from Parliament upon a question which they conceived and rightly believed most materially to affect their interest. They asserted that the pressure of this tax was a most serious interference with the arrangements by which their business was carried on. They were prohibited from converting the produce of their land to such purposes as might be most advantageous; and, above all, they justly complained that good faith had not been kept with them, and that the promise made to them by the great apostle of free trade, Sir Robert Peel, that the repeal of the malt tax should follow the repeal of the Corn Laws, had not been kept. He believed these complaints were in the main just. He knew they were honest. The hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir FitzRoy Kelly) had reminded the House that the late Sir James Graham, the late Mr. Cobden, and he believed he was right in saying the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Poor Law Board had all expressed themselves as concurring in the opinion of Sir Robert Peel; and Mr. Cobden, in a remarkable letter which had been published, compared the case of the British agriculturist, who, after raising a bushel of barley, was compelled to pay a tax of 60 per cent before he was permitted to convert it into a beverage for his own consumption, with what he had seen in foreign countries, and said that he could call to mind nothing so hard and unreasonable. He went on to say that the cultivators of vineyards in France and the growers of olives in Spain and Italy would never tolerate such treatment of their wine and oil, and that the most remarkable feature of the present case was that it was a flagrant exception to an otherwise universal rule. He further stated that all the financial measures which he had recommended had been carried out with this one flagrant exception. These recommendations had been made in 1848, and he made a striking observation in the words that he was

> "Not sanguine enough to hope that the agriculturists will be more fortunate during the next fifteen years than they had been during the last."

Those fifteen years had elapsed; the farmers had gone on urging their claims with more or less perseverance, and hoping almost against hope; but he did sincerely trust that they might hear some expression from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that evening which would give them some assurance that the farmers were nearer to obtaining that justice at his hands than they were when those remarkable and almost prophetic utterances were made. This was not a question which concerned agriculture alone. Every labourer, whether he were agricultural, artizan, or mechanic, had an interest in this question. If our legislation had made his bread cheap, it had made his meat dear; and did hon. Members remember the very strong argument which had been used to induce the landed interest to accept free trade, "You must not tax the food of the people?" He asked them were they not by this tax taxing the food of the people? "Oh, no," they said, "this is a luxury." What! was a man's daily meal a luxury? And was the gallon of beer which the poor man brewed in his cottage to be taxed as a luxury? He knew it had been argued that cottage brewing was merely imaginary; but he gathered from a very interesting letter which was published by Mr. Herman Biddell, of Ipswich, in February, 1865, that in that neighbourhood the system was almost universal. At harvest time it was very general in most of the eastern counties, and he could answer for his own neighbourhood, that the labourers found no difficulty in brewing at their own homes with such appliances as they had at hand. In many places it was the custom of the farmers to give their men a small quantity of malt for their own brewing, and with this they brewed a good wholesome and nutritious beverage, which supported them far better during a hard day's work than the adulterated beer which they bought at the public-houses. This, then, was another effect of the tax upon malt, it discouraged the system of cottage brewing, and thereby encouraged the consumption in rural districts of adulterated beer, which was necessarily injurious to health; while in the towns it encouraged the consumption of ardent spirits, the injurious and demoralizing effect of which was an established and undeniable fact. Nor was it wholly irrelevant to refer to the large and increasing consumption of opium among the poorer classes. Was it for the sake of revenue that they taxed the poor man's little plot of barley before the fire which baked his bread was allowed to brew his beer also? He was not going into statistics to prove exactly how much this tax diminished the price of barley, or how much it increased the price of beer. Many calculations had been made on this subject, but he feared statistics were of that plastic nature that they might be moulded to suit an argument, and that if he were to attempt to strengthen his by those means he should invite contradictions such as had fallen to the lot of all those who had attempted to make these calculations on whichever side of the question they had endeavoured to argue. But he would take it that a tax which raised £6,000,000 principally from among the poorer classes of consumers and the not very wealthy occupiers of land must fall heavily on small incomes. If this were a mere question of some small addition to the price of barley, he might hesitate to press the repeal of this tax so strongly upon the House; but at the present moment the agriculturist had strong claims upon their sympathy; the value of the produce of his land had been lowered by the enormous importation of foreign corn, and he had learnt to look to his cattle as some compensation for his losses on this head; but, owing to the misfortune which had befallen him in the breaking out of disease among his cattle, and the restrictions which Parliament had necessarily been obliged to place upon their free movement, this resource had almost failed him, and owing to the legislation which he had vainly endeavoured to contend against, while foreign cattle had been freely brought into the market, his own had been excluded, and he had had to meet again an undue competition with the foreigner. Of this he did not complain. The circumstances were peculiar—perhaps unavoidable. All he asked on behalf of the farmers was that on the mere question of revenue unnecessary restrictions should not be placed upon the disposal of his produce, and that taxes should only be levied upon the fruits of his industry under circumstances of the greatest necessity. He might say that the disease in consequence of which the farmer had suffered had been the immediate effect of legislation; but he should be sorry to say one word which might be construed as in any degree adverse to the general principles of free trade. All he asked was that those principles should be applied when they were in favour of the farmer, as they had been most ruthlessly applied whenever they had been against him. He thought that he had shown that there were good and sufficient reasons for the abolition of the malt tax. He now came to the objections which were made to its repeal, and he was at once met by an observation which he believed he was not incorrect in attributing to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that if they repealed the malt tax they struck at the root of the whole system of indirect taxation of the country. The right hon. Gentleman enumerated the duties upon tea, coffee, sugar, wine, spirits, and tobacco, placing them in the same category as malt. He must confess he was surprised to find the malt tax in such company; for, with the one exception of spirits, which, for reasons to which he had adverted, he put out of the question, those duties were all Customs duties, levied on imported articles, while the malt tax was an Excise tax, levied upon home produce, and ought more properly to have been classed with the duties on bricks, glass, and paper, all of which had been repealed; while, as an Excise duty, the malt tax was left alone, with the one exception to which he had alluded. For the sake of its future existence it was necessary to find it some other associations, and this was why they found it clubbed with a number of Customs duties with which it had only one incident in common—that of being an indirect tax. They were told that if they repealed the malt tax they must repeal the Customs duties also. Now, this was a mode of reasoning which, no doubt, from inexperience he was unable to follow, and he believed it to have very little force. The other objection he admitted to be a more difficult one to meet—namely, the large amount which this tax produced. They were asked, of course, how they proposed to replace that sum. But the question of the repeal of the malt tax must necessarily be dealt with from that side of the House as an abstract question, and it was in that sense the Resolution before the House proposed to deal with it. If the right hon. Gentleman had the will to do anything in this direction, he would not want any prompting from that (the Opposition) side of the House; but he might say in passing, that he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not adopt a suggestion which had been made, that this tax should be compensated by a duty upon beer, for he thought that would in a great measure neutralize the value of the boon which the absence of the exciseman would confer upon the labouring classes. They were not told this year to expect any very considerable surplus. No doubt their position had been much weakened by the course pursued by the right hon. Gentleman in his last Budget; but was it too much to ask that as the surplus last year was mainly devoted to the reduction of indirect taxation for the benefit of the rich, the surplus of the present or future years should be devoted to the reduction of indirect taxation for the benefit of the poor? There was only one more point to which he would allude, and that only in a few words. It was the proposition which formed the Amendment of the hon. Member for Oxford. No doubt, if the taxes pressing heavily upon particular industries were repealed, it would be the first duty of this great nation to reduce the pressure of the National Debt; but if those who advocated the repeal of the malt tax were to wait for that which they claim until the National Debt had been paid off or materially reduced, he thought they had not miscalculated when they believed the cause of the farmer and the workman did not meet with much sympathy at the hands of Her Majesty's present Government.

Mr. M'LAREN said, the Gentlemen opposite had clearly proved that in the case of an indirect tax there were separate profits charged thereon by the original producer, the middleman, and the retailer, all enhancing the price, and raising it by an amount in excess of that received by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the points thus established were not peculiar to the malt tax. They applied to all indirect taxation. Having been for many years a member of the Liverpool Financial Association he rejoiced to hear the principles of that body so clearly enunciated on the other side of the House. The tax was discussed as one affecting the working classes, but many other articles besides beer were consumed by the working classes, remission of taxation with regard to which would be equally or more beneficial to them. The tax upon beer and that upon sugar equally produced about £6,000,000 to the State, and as regarded the burden upon the consumer he could not see that a shadow of difference was made by one article being produced abroad and the other at home. The tax upon malt, like that upon sugar, was about 33 per cent, but the tax upon tobacco and grain whisky was at the rate of 600 per cent; and therefore in the case of tobacco and spirits, the loss to the public through the several profits of producer, middleman, and retailer, was enormously greater than in the case of malt. A pound of tobacco cost about 6*d.*, and the duty was 3*s.* 2*d.* A gallon of grain whisky cost about 1*s.* 8*d.*, and the duty was 10*s.* So far from wishing to see the tax upon spirits reduced, he should like to see it kept up to the highest point consistent with the maintenance of the revenue, and he was disposed to think that it was up to that point already, and, perhaps, a little beyond it. The tax upon malt liquors might be fairly compared to the tax upon whisky, as both were intoxicating drinks, and if the relative amounts of alcohol were compared he believed that, quantity for quantity, the tax upon the alcohol in the spirits was very much greater than the tax upon the alcohol in the beer. If the duty upon malt were reduced the greatest injustice would therefore be done to the producers of spirits, and the burden on the poorer classes would not be removed so much as it might be by the remission of some other taxes. Malt liquors, no doubt, were chiefly drunk by working men, but the adult male population of all classes did not constitute above a fourth of the entire population, and from these, again, must be deducted the large number who refrained on principle from all intoxicating drinks. A reduction in the sugar duties, which produced the same amount to the revenue, on the contrary, would benefit the entire population; for every one, from the infant more than a few days old, was a consumer of sugar, whilst, certainly, not one-half of the people would be benefited by the repeal of the duty on malt. For that reason he thought the tax ought to be allowed to remain. Of the principles expressed by the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment he cordially approved. It was discreditable to a rich country like this that no serious effort had been made to reduce the National Debt. Such an attempt was popularly regarded as impossible; in fact, one rarely heard it spoken of except in a jocular manner. It was talked of as an absolute impossibility—as if a mountain were proposed to be removed. But if they could spare the duty upon malt and devoted two-thirds of it to that purpose, he thought, with a real desire to pay off half the National Debt, they might do so in about sixty years. What they needed was to convert one-half of the National Debt now bearing interest at 3 per cent into terminable annuities at 4 per cent. As the interest on half of the Debt was only £13,250,000, increasing the interest from 3 to 4 per cent would only require £4,500,000 a year; and thus by converting one-half of the Debt into terminable annuities it would vanish in about sixty years. That would be a great measure for any Finance Minister to introduce into the House of Commons. He, therefore, heartily approved of the Amendment, and if there were £6,000,000 to spare they had much better apply a large portion of it in the way proposed than in reducing the malt duty, which, after all, would only lead to a reduction in the price of beer to the working classes of about a farthing a pot.

Mr. DU CANE did not rise to discuss the question of how far the support of the Resolutions of the hon. Member for Suffolk would carry out the principles of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association. All he would say was that he was glad to hear that the hon. Member opposite was going to support the Resolutions of his hon. and learned Friend (Sir FitzRoy Kelly); and all he could say further was that he hoped they would be both successful in getting rid of the malt tax, and then there would be time to argue how far they could agree with respect to other matters of taxation. Nor did he rise to follow that able, eloquent, but somewhat discursive speech of the hon. Member for Westminster. We had hitherto been told that the repeal of the malt tax was a subject of the dullest and most prosaic character that could be discussed in the House; but he thought the hon. Member for Westminster had just achieved the highest oratorical triumph which he had as yet gained in the House, for he had managed on the dry and prosaic subject of the malt tax to interpolate an eloquent dissertation on the blessings of posterity from the days of Marathon and Salamis down to those of Leipsic and Waterloo, and he had further managed to connect the subject with the illustrious names of Newton, Locke, and Bacon. But when the hon. Member for Westminster descanted on the gradual deficiency in the supply of the coal-fields of the country he felt that the hon. Member was bringing us down to an era of more recent date than the days of Marathon and Salamis, and he (Mr. Du Cane) was reminded of the days when he took a somewhat leading part in opposing the passing of the French Commercial Treaty—a treaty which, besides placing English beer on an unequal footing with French wine, left the gradual supply of our coal-fields to the tender mercies of the French nation. Every argument which had been adduced by the hon. Member to-night had been then advanced on that (the Opposition) side of the House. But hon. Members opposite, in their zeal for the passing of the French Treaty, did not at that time think of the posterity that was to come after them, and were ready to leave posterity for a few hundred years to come to shiver through the inclemency of an English winter, and cry, "Poor Tom's a cold," whilst they did not by any means bless the memory of their ancestors. He did not wish on the present occasion to go into the general question, but would make a few observations on one particular point, and that was how the malt tax affected the interests of the farmer. The complaint of the farmer with respect to the malt tax was this—that at the present time, when the price of wheat was so low as to be barely remunerative, and there was, moreover, a gradually increasing importation from America and elsewhere, the farmer would, most gladly, if he could, make up the balance by growing less wheat and more barley. That was the plain case of the farmer. But the Excise laws stepped in and rendered all but a superior class of barley a mere drug in the market. The real value of the barley crop to the farmer was so well set forth last Session by one of the ablest and most practical agricultural authorities in the House (Mr. Caird) that he hoped he might be permitted to read a short extract from the speech delivered on that occasion. The hon. Member said—

> "Of all our crops, barley is the most friendly to the farmer. It is the shortest time in the ground, is the least exhaustive of soil, is sown at the best season for clearing and cultivation, whilst it affords the best preparation for grass, and is the most suitable to be followed by green crops. Barley promotes good husbandry, and the price of meat in this country must become a matter of increasing importance. The rise in the price of meat during the last ten or fifteen years is equal to nearly £20,000,000 per annum."

Here was far more than an equivalent for the loss of the malt duty to the revenue. If by a change in our mode of agriculture we could to some extent meet the increasing demand for butcher's meat, we should be fully compensated. He (Mr. Caird) went on to say—

> "The barley farmer can scarcely be a bad farmer. His corn crop is not only less severe on the land, but is succeeded by green crops and grass. It would be an immense advantage if barley could to a large extent be substituted for wheat."

These remarks were made by Mr. Caird before the country was visited by the cattle disease, and if he did not speak in the spirit of prophecy his words had increased at least a hundredfold in importance. Even if the rinderpest should disappear to-morrow the worst consequences of the visitation had yet to be experienced. The effect of the visitation at this moment did not represent merely the loss of so many pounds of solid food or solid gold withdrawn from the capital of the country; it represented the loss of the future source from which the supply of stock was to be derived. It was the future and not the present that would be most affected by the cattle plague, and every effort would be required to supply the loss which it had entailed upon us. With such a prospect as this before us it seemed to him the height of impolicy to maintain such a restriction as the malt tax on the productive resources of the country, when its repeal would help the breeders of stock to recover for the country what it had lost by the rinderpest. He was well aware that at the present moment there was a great difference of opinion between Mr. Lawes on the one hand and the great body of agriculturists on the other as to the respective merits of malt and barley as fattening food for cattle. But even if Mr. Lawes' reports were reliable, and even if it were evident that the fattening properties of barley were greater than those of malt, yet as the malt tax was a restriction on the cultivation of barley as well as on malt he maintained that the farmer ought to have the discretionary power to use his own soil, and that the malt tax ought to be equally removed. But the House would remember that there was something peculiar in the manner in which the experiments of Mr. Lawes were laid before it last year. They made their appearance very much after the fashion of a certain book of statistics on another subject, which had been recently presented. They came about a day or two before the discussion which they were intended to influence. The House entered into the discussion almost without having had time to look into the Returns, and at a time when it was impossible to give them anything like a fair answer. But during the year which had since elapsed Mr. Lawes' experiments had been subjected to the test and scrutiny of almost every practical agriculturist in the country. He could not speak for the agricultural world at large, but he could speak for his own constituents, many of whom were large barley growers and cattle feeders, and amongst them he found only one concurrent and unanimous opinion, and that was that the experiments of Mr. Lawes had been conducted in a partial and unsatisfactory manner, and were contrary to the experience of nearly every large cattle-breeding farmer. He had received a number of communications on this point, but the one that set forth most clearly the case against Mr. Lawes was a letter which had been forwarded to him by Mr. Seaman, a veterinary surgeon at Saffron Walden, who stated that Mr. Lawes' experiments were unaccompanied by substantive facts, and that all farmers were pretty well agreed that raw barley given to sheep as they were usually fed was poisonous. He stated that one farmer who used raw barley for feeding sheep in 1864 lost twenty-five in the course of ten weeks. Mr. Seaman's experiments in food had been conducted on a most extensive scale for many years, and he gave an exact account of the character of malted barley he employed. Mr. Seaman also expressed his willingness to pay compensation for all sheep which died from eating malted barley, and challenged Mr. Lawes to do the same with reference to sheep fed in accordance with his plan on raw barley. He did not know whether Her Majesty's Government intended to accept the challenge offered to Mr. Lawes; but if they should accept it he would be happy to bet pretty heavily on the side of his friend Mr. Seaman. All the opinions he had heard about Mr. Lawes' experiments agreed that they must have been made with brewers' malt. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether in the present position of the cattle-breeding branch of the agricultural interest, the case presented in its behalf was not deserving of his serious consideration? There were certainly rumours that the halcyon days of large surpluses and favourable budgets were gone by, and that instead of listening to the glowing descriptions from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to which they had been accustomed, they would probably find themselves in the position of Canning's needy knife-grinder, when he made the confession, "Story, I have none to tell, sir." But when a burden cannot be altogether removed at least its pressure may often be made more light; and he would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, surplus or no surplus, he could not convert the tax on malt into a tax on beer, so that it might bear pretty equally on all classes of the community? He was sure he might venture to say that a large majority of the farmers of this country would be satisfied with such a concession. Great difficulties, no doubt, stood in the way, but in the case of a man of such great powers in finance as the Chancellor of the Exchequer these difficulties ought not to be considered insurmountable; and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give them some hope of such a scheme. If, at the present time, the nursing of his weak and somewhat tender franchise Bill took up all the hours of the right hon. Gentleman, he (Mr. Du Cane) hoped that—

> " When the hurly-burly's done,
> And the battle's lost or won,"

if the victory should incline to his side, and the right hon. Gentleman should remain Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would take such a scheme of commutation into his impartial consideration. He had addressed himself to this question without wishing to rest what he said on feelings of party, and he should regret if this question were ever to be dealt with as a party one, or as one not affecting the interests of all classes in the country.

Mr. AYRTON stated his intention to support the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the course it was expected he would pursue, although he did not desire to press upon the right hon. Gentleman the acceptance of the precise terms of the Amendment. If any person, whether a spirit-drinker or a seller of beer, were to ask him what he would do with reference to the repeal of the malt tax, he would be content to give him this short answer, "So long as the House of Commons encourages our present expenditure, the people must bear their share of the taxes, and they must pay them either in meal or in malt; and I think it far better for them that they should pay in malt than in meal." He thought if Gentlemen opposite had as much regard for the agricultural classes in the counties as he thought hon. Members on their side showed for the working classes in the towns, when they gave such an answer as that he had stated, that they would not be so solicitous to obtain the repeal of the malt tax. Throughout the reports of the investigation into the state of the labourers of England made by the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners appeared painful evidences of the effect upon the rural population of the country of the drinking of beer, which was found to be one of the chief causes of the state of degradation into which they had fallen, and he did not deny that such was the case in the towns. If there should be a remission of the duty on malt, it ought to be for the benefit of the consumers; but the people who would be the chief gainers by its repeal would be the farmers. An attempt had been made to draw an analogy between the duty on malt and that formerly imposed on hops, but, in his opinion, it had signally failed. The tax on hops embarrassed the cultivator in all his transactions, whereas barley was not subject to duty until it got into the hands of the maltsters. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, he maintained, did not seem entirely to have shaken off their Protectionist views, and argued in favour of the repeal of the duty on grounds upon which they were no longer justified in dealing with it, as a mere farmer's question. If they looked at the addresses issued to the electors previous to the last General Election they would see that a remission or repeal of the malt tax was dwelt upon as likely to prove a great benefit to the agricultural interests. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Suffolk in complaining of the tax seemed always to keep out of view the important fact that it was a tax levied upon an article which was used for the purpose of brewing intoxicating drinks. His hon. and learned Friend had stated that according to the analysis which had been made there was 6 per cent of alcohol in every gallon of adulterated beer, and it might be assumed that in beer which was not adulterated the quantity was nearly 10 per cent. But, be that as it might, 6 per cent of alcohol was equal to 12 per cent of proof spirit, so that there was in every gallon of beer a commodity which could not be bought in its original form of spirits without the payment of a shilling duty, and yet the hon. and learned Gentleman was indignant because a small duty was paid on malt. He thought it might be said of the agriculturists that they never knew the happiness of their own position, and they ought to be thankful that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not put a duty on beer proportionate to that upon spirits, for both articles contained a considerable infusion of alcohol. But then it was said that spirits were bad only when drunk as spirits. He, however, could not see the difference between those vicious classes of the community, as his hon. and learned Friend had called them—adding that he referred only to the Scotch and Irish—who drank spirits-and-water and those who drank the decoction which was called beer. Yet the man who chose to take the former had to pay at the rate of 10*s.* a gallon for his spirits. And when it came to be a question on what commodity it was most desirable to levy a tax, having regard to the best interests of the people, he must say that he thought beer came next after gin as a beverage, the drinking of which did the least good when drunk in moderation and the greatest amount of harm when drunk in excess. He thought he might add that hon. Gentlemen opposite would be conferring a great boon upon the country if, instead of trying to procure cheaper beer for the working classes, they would seek to do for them that which had already been effected for the population of towns—to make it illegal for their employers to pay them their wages in any commodity except money, but above all in the commodity of beer. The greatest benefit had resulted in towns from the adoption of that system for working men, who were now taught to apply their wages to their own benefit and that of their wives and children. Instead of that system, however, the practice prevailed to a very large extent in the agricultural districts of paying men in harvest time, when they should endeavour to husband their resources, to a great extent in beer. [Sir FitzRoy Kelly: What sort of beer?] He should rather ask his hon. and learned Friend, who, from constant study, had become so wise in the literature of the subject for information upon that point; but he found the usual allowance to be "two quarts of beer daily, at one penny per quart." It appeared there was still beer to be had at that very moderate charge, as in the days of King James; but whether it was a bit better now than then was not stated in the record from which he had derived his information. But, be that as it might, the fact remained that it was in many parts of England the practice to pay working men their wages in beer, and malt also; and he could under those circumstances well understand that the farmer might imagine that if the duty were remitted the remission might in some way or another find its way into his own pocket, though if there were any truth in the principles of free trade they would find themselves to be mistaken. For his own part, he could not help regarding it as greatly to be regretted that barley, instead of being wasted in the manufacture of drink, did not enter much more into consumption as an article of food; and he would impress upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer the expediency of maintaining the whole of the malt tax rather than accede to the Motion under discussion for the purpose of accomplishing the end which was suggested by his hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, in one of the most generous, eloquent, and noble speeches which had ever been delivered on the subject in that House. It must be some satisfaction to hon. Gentlemen opposite who were so afraid of Liberal constituencies to find that it was from Westminster a voice had been sent to warn them against the improvidence which they were so anxious to recommend to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Those hon. Gentlemen were not, in his opinion, sufficiently alive to the way in which the permanent taxation of the country must press upon them as inheritors of the soil of England, otherwise they would not underrate the importance of endeavouring to diminish the National Debt, with respect to which a vast change was taking place, inasmuch as in consequence of the great increase of securities offered to those who had money to invest, that Debt was no longer resorted to as the only means of investment. There was in the country not only an immense amount of funds connected with railways, but £150,000,000 worth of obligations had been brought from India into the market at a high rate of interest. Consequently, people were not seeking the public debt as an investment for their money, and the public funds were depreciated to such an extent as astonished those who wrote about finance. Was it not an evil to have in times of prosperity the public funds in a condition such as they had not been in for years past? The only remedy was to retrench the amount within the limits of the demand. It was unfortunate that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been defeated in his efforts to reduce the National Debt, but it was the duty of the House to encourage the right hon. Gentleman in a firm system of finance, and not to give way to these claims for remission of taxation, which were founded on no sound principle, and would be, if complied with, injurious to the great mass of the people.

Mr. HUBBARD said, that as the malt tax had been in existence for five generations, there was no man living who inherited property except that which was subject to its operation. There was, therefore, no ground for regarding it as a grievance upon individuals. Neither was it a greater upon consumers connected with land, more than on other consumers connected with other industries. On the contrary, he supposed that the swarthy blacksmith of Wolverhampton or Birmingham, or the coal-heaver of the Thames would consume four times as much malt liquor as the agricultural labourer. No doubt the tax sometimes prevented the cultivation of land in the manner which the occupier might have preferred. And certainly, if the tax prevented the employment of land to the best advantage this involved a national loss. The question however was, whether the benefits derived from our fiscal system, as a whole, did not counterbalance the mischief arising from the restrictions it imposed upon certain trades? The comparisons which had been made between the ratio of the taxation upon beer and that upon wine he regarded as arbitrary and irrelevant. Then it was argued that because we had free trade a tax on malt was intolerable; but that seemed to be equivalent to saying that because we had free trade we were to have no taxes at all. The principle of free trade properly understood did not require the removal of all Customs duties, but only the removal of such duties as favoured a certain class of producers to the disadvantage of others. He was not, nor, perhaps, was any one, an advocate for the malt tax in itself; it was a question of comparison between this tax and others, and they should consider whether the majority of the people desired its removal. There was nothing like a general call for the removal of this tax; and, indeed, last Session there was a Bill in this House, approved of by many persons, which would have prohibited the sale of all intoxicating drinks in certain districts. He himself believed that there were duties which were much more onerous than the malt tax, and which should be removed before it, though if the Chancellor of the Exchequer should find himself in a position to part with the malt tax he (Mr. Hubbard) would in that case support such a proposition. His hon. and learned Friend (Sir FitzRoy Kelly), however, was not satisfied with this, but called upon the House to pledge itself now that the Government should be bound to remove the malt tax on the earliest opportunity. He (Mr. Hubbard) could not join in that demand, especially as he himself had a Notice on the Paper in favour of repealing the fire insurance tax, an imposition which was utterly indefensible. The sugar duties, in his opinion, had also a prior claim for remission over the malt tax, seeing that sugar was used as an article of food by every man, woman, and child in the kingdom. This being so, he regretted that he could not vote for the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend, which would amount to this, that there should be an instruction to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in preparing his next Budget. He regretted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have on a former occasion appealed to the nationalities of Irishmen and Scotchmen for the rejection of this Motion; for if it were dangerous to evoke class interests it was surely most dangerous to evoke national jealousies. As to the Amendment of his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Neate) he quite agreed in the duty of diminishing the National Debt, but he made this stipulation, that so long as there were taxes which were unjust, oppressive, or obstructive to the comforts of the people —and he admitted that the malt tax came within the category—they ought to apply themselves to the improvement of the revenue, and to the abrogation of such taxes before they entered upon the very proper but less obvious duty of diminishing the National Debt.

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH said, that the greater part of the observations which had been made in opposition to the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend, and certainly the whole of the declamation of the hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets, might have been spared if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had only taken the suggestion of his hon. Friend the Member for North Essex (Mr. Du Cane), and substituted a tax on beer for that on malt. The consumers of beer had not called for the repeal of the malt tax, although the tax was indirectly imposed on them, and it would be only consistent with the principles which had guided the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the last ten years to lay this tax on the consumers. The reduction of the tax was imperatively demanded as an act of justice to those who had so long agitated for its repeal. The farmers who produced barley laboured under an intolerable grievance in conducting their business, for they frequently could not sell their produce for malting, because under the present system it could not to the profit of the maltster be converted into malt. The farmer looked on this tax much as a cotton manufacturer would on an import duty on cotton, or a coal owner on an export duty on coal; and so long as the tax remained there would always be an idea of injustice. A tax on beer sold by brewers at the rate of 1*d*. per gallon and a license duty on private brewers would probably produce a revenue of not less than £4,000,000, and therefore a reduction of the duty to the extent of £2,000,000 might well be made, with a prospect of a further reduction. He thought it most unfair and unjust to raise the question of the National Debt with reference to the claim for the repeal of this particular tax, which was the only one which had not been reduced.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I will say a word first, with the permission of the House, in regard to the Amendment which has been moved by my hon. Friend, and I venture respectfully to ask him to withdraw his Amendment. I was very sorry that my hon. and learned Friend described himself as unable, from not having expected the subject to be opened to-night, to do full justice to the matter. I may say, likewise, the admirable, the remarkable speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster had but one fault with reference to the subject to which it referred, and that was its brevity. But the question raised by the Amendment is, I think, by far too important to be dealt with in a manner purely incidental to the subject. And I am bound also to observe, and I think my hon. and learned Friend the Mover of that Amendment will concur with me, that there would be something invidious in taking a particular tax out of the category for reduction, and setting it aside for affecting permanently the reduction of the National Debt. The question raised by the Amendment is one which I hope will not be pressed to a division at present; not because it is not a matter fit to be entertained, but, on the contrary, on account of its importance; and I will go one step farther, and say on account of its urgency, for I am very strongly persuaded that it is a subject that should be fully unfolded before the House and taken into its consideration, and I may venture to say that it is my intention to take the opportunity of offering some observations to the House upon it when I make my financial statement. No decision on this occasion would, I think, be satisfactory in connection with this question. Well, I pass to the Motion made by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for East Suffolk, and I am afraid he will be thinking I repeat an old formulary when I once again make the protest I have made scores of times with regard to committing the judgment of the House by anticipation in respect to the disposal of an unknown surplus to one particular claim among various competing claims which at the time are not brought before the House. On no occasion while I have had a seat in Parliament have I to my knowledge voted for any proposition of such a nature. All these proposals labour, in my opinion, under what I may call an original sin which is entirely incurable. They are attempts to commit the House to conclusions, while the House has not in its possession the means of judgment; and their only effect can be to fetter the future action of the House, and create embarrassment and disappointment among those who have fair claims on the public Exchequer. But particularly I am bound to say this is an objection which is fatal against the Motion of my hon. and learned Friend at the present time, because it is a Motion which aims at dealing with a gigantic sum. The malt tax at present amounts to between £6,500,000 and £7,000,000, and yet my hon. and learned Friend calls on us to vote—

> "That upon any future remission of indirect taxation this House will take into consideration the duty upon Malt, with a view to its immediate reduction and ultimate repeal."

But there is no operation that can be affected on the duty on malt at an immediate cost of less than £2,000,000 or £2,500,000. That is the very lowest sum for the first step that may be reasonably contemplated. How can the House be called to pledge itself that when there may be half a million or three-quarters safely and prudently disposable in remission of indirect taxation it is to be fettered by a previous pledge not to listen to any other claim, because it is bound to take into consideration the remission of the duty on malt, which it cannot take into consideration unless it has £2,000,000 or £2,500,000 to give away? My hon. and learned Friend will say that his Motion is not meant to embrace the case of a limited or moderate surplus of that kind. But that, at any rate, is a matter of private construction and interpretation. The terms of the Notice are perfectly clear. They absolutely pledge the House to devote, not as against direct taxes, but as against indirect taxes, any surplus revenue whatever to the reduction of the duty on malt. Although the effect of that might be that the surplus in our hands might be ineffectual for touching the duty on malt, and still quite sufficient for touching other duties, yet because of this pledge that surplus could not be made use of at all. These, in my opinion, are the grounds why this Resolution should not be entertained. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Essex, who spoke with his usual ability just now, alluded to a rumour that the state of the public finances was not very flourishing. The state of the public finances is to my mind perfectly satisfactory. Those who recollect that by the legislation of last year we were compelled, by the nature of our laws, and our fiscal system, in adopting the changes which then found their way to our statute-book, to dispose by anticipation of a million and a half of the revenue of the coming year, will not be surprised to learn that, as there has been no material reduction—indeed, I think no reduction at all—upon the whole of the Estimates for the year, there can be no large sum at the disposal of this House. But if that be so, why should my hon. and learned Friend at this time ask us—unless it be for the purpose of giving a momentary and rather delusive satisfaction to his constituents, to bind ourselves by a Resolution that can have no present or even proximate effect? Surely, it is hardly worthy the legislative dignity of this House that it should be persuaded to embark upon such a proceeding. The question, however, having been raised and discussed, I must advert shortly to one or two points upon which great stress appears to have been laid. As far as I have been able to gather from this debate the sentiments of hon. Gentlemen opposite, many of whom have addressed the House with great ability, and to one of whom in particular (Mr. De Grey) I have pleasure in referring, as I believe he addressed us for the first time, and I hope he will have many opportunities of addressing the House, with increasing satisfaction to us and to himself—as far, I say, as I could collect the general feeling in the minds of Gentlemen opposite, it was this—that it was a hard case that when almost all other duties now forming part of the public revenue had been subjected of late years to review the duty upon malt had not been so treated. That was a sentiment which appeared in many of the speeches that we have heard, and I am not at all surprised that it should have done so. It was said, in simple phrase, that this article also might take its turn. Now, in the first place, it must be recollected—although I do not mean to dwell upon it—that there are exceedingly important exceptions to that observation. The duty on tobacco remains without any diminution whatever; and the duty on spirits has undergone a small increase in England and a very large increase both in Scotland and Ireland. But, Sir, we must not only consider whether the duty on malt has recently been dealt with as other duties have been; we must consider its relation to other duties in reference to the nature of the commodity and the amount and the other incidents of the burden. Why is it that malt, when considered with reference to the amount of the burden laid upon it, has not been recently a claimant for remission, or, at least, has not been able to present in that point of view the same claims for remission as tea, sugar, and many other articles? Why, Sir, it is because this particular commodity obtained its remission nearly forty years ago, and long before it was dreamt of reducing the duty on tea, on sugar, or on most of the articles in which the comfort of the people was involved. Those articles were left burdened with an enormous taxation, while £3,000,000 of the public revenue were given away in the abolition of the beer duty. Therefore, it was no wonder, considering that such a step should have been taken at such a time, that the claims of malt, whatever they may be, have since then been postponed, because, in point of fact, relatively, they were met in anticipation. But is the taxation upon malt at this moment excessive or unjust, considered with reference to its amount, and judged upon these assumptions: first of all, that the total revenue to be raised is a revenue required for the wants of the State; and secondly, that we are to look to the extent of the burden in conjunction with its other circumstances, and to the character of the article on which it is laid, in determining what share of taxation it ought to bear. Upon these principles let us look at the duty upon malt. That duty I believe to be at present, on a fair and liberal estimate, in almost exact correspondence with duties on tea and sugar. I think it is less; certainly it is not greater; but for the present, to avoid controversy, I wish to take it as being equal to those duties. Well, Sir, we really hear hon. Gentlemen rise almost into enthusiasm upon the virtue of beer. I am not here to deprecate it. I never have adopted that tone with respect to the comforts or the luxuries—call them what you like, but if it were our own case, I think we should say for ourselves that they were necessaries —of the other classes of the community. But hon. Gentlemen are sometimes not satisfied with placing upon the humble ground of almost physical necessity the indulgence or the use of these commodities, but beer is held up by them as if it were positively an evangelizing power. If, they say, you will only take away the malt duty, beer will be both cheap and perfectly free from adulteration; and it will regenerate the community. That is really the sense of many of the speeches which have been delivered to-night, in perfect good humour and with perfect sincerity; but I must say I think that tone of sentiment is considerably overstrained. I am not here to denounce the use of beer as a vicious indulgence. It may undoubtedly become so, but it is not to be so regarded in general. Still, it is pressing the claims of that excellent commodity a great deal too far, when it is put forward as one of the greatest instruments and missionaries of civilization. As my hon. Friend the Member for the Tower Hamlets has said, there is a great deal of alcohol—by which we mean proof spirits—in beer. Look at how the alcohol in beer is treated as compared with the alcohol in spirits. By much the greater part of the alcohol which is drunk in this country is in beer. In beer not less that 60,000,000 gallons, not of pure alcohol, but of proof spirits, are consumed; while in what we call spirits, the quantity of alcohol consumed is about 26,000,000 or 28,000,000 of gallons of proof spirit. Now, the 60,000,000 gallons consumed in beer pay to the revenue £6,500,000; and the 26,000,000 or 28,000,000 of gallons in spirits pay to the revenue about £14,000,000. That is to say—we say to the consumer of beer not only as compared with the consumer of neat spirits, but as compared with the consumer of "toddy," or of spirits mixed with water, "If you choose to consume your alcohol in the shape of spirits, you must pay 10*s.* per gallon; but if you consume it in the shape of beer, you will have only to pay one-fourth of that rate, or even less." Surely there is not in that state of things any *primâ facie* case of injustice. Then, as regards wine, why my hon. Friend knows that the quantity of alcohol consumed in wine is comparatively insignificant. It is not one-twentieth of the quantity consumed in beer. I believe it is not more than the quantity which is used in the manufacture of that much admired beverage for which the name of a Member of this House is so distinguished. If you are to compare the taxation upon beer with that upon wine, I say then you must compare those incidents of beer and of wine which go together, and in respect to which the two articles bear some analogy; and, if you do that, you will find that the alcohol in wine as well as in spirits is much heavier taxed than is the alcohol in beer. With regard to the Act which was passed by this House last year, to enable maltsters to have their grain tested either by gauge or by weight as they pleased, instead of being bound to one method, as under the ancient law, the hon. Member for East Norfolk, if I understood him rightly, stated that the regulations imposed by the Excise had been so severe that the measure has been entirely inoperative, and that he did not believe a single quarter of malt had been made under it. The hon. Gentleman has been misinformed, for the new law has been in operation for a very short time; but out of the 9,300 malthouses in the United Kingdom not fewer than 419 in England, besides a few in Ireland, have been worked under that Act, and 2,225,000 bushels of malt have been brought under its operation. The information, therefore, received by the hon. Gentleman has been very erroneous, and he can have the facts embodied in the form of a Return if he wishes. Sir, my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham has found fault with me for raising, as he says, national jealousies between the three kingdoms on this subject, and for appealing to the Members for Scotland and Ireland to resist the repeal of the malt duty. Now, I beg to inform my hon. Friend that he has entirely misconstrued and misapprehended the effect of my reference to that subject. I have never sought to enlist the votes of the Members for Scotland and Ireland against the repeal of the malt duty on the grounds of national jealousy. But my duty is this —when a demand is made upon the public Exchequer, to consider before meeting it in the House of Commons what other demands it must, if it be acceded to, necessarily entail, and the state of the case I find to be this, that whereas the national drink of England is beer, and a sum of £6,000,000 of duty is paid by England upon that beer, the corresponding beverage of Scotland and Ireland is not beer, but is whisky, which is far more heavily taxed than beer. When, then, English Members ask for relief from £6,000,000 in favour of their commodity, it is my duty to consider what the effect of granting that relief will be upon Scotland and Ireland, with regard to the taxation laid upon their national beverages, and if my hon. Friend is of opinion that while the English beverage should be freed from all duty we could continue to levy 600 per cent upon the national beverage of Scotland and Ireland, he has a very different estimate of the Members for those countries than I have. Such a thing is impossible, totally impossible in my opinion. Of course, my hon. Friend has his own opinion, and he may think that Scotland and Ireland would be perfectly contented to pay their £3,000,000 a year upon the spirits drunk by the labouring classes of those countries, while in England beer would be entirely freed from duty, but I am bound to say that I regard the idea as entirely chimerical. The foreseeing these things, the pointing out these other claims, is a totally different thing from endeavouring to excite national jealousies upon this subject. There would be no national jealousy at all, but there would be a claim to be treated upon the principle of equality, and it is that claim which I wish to keep in view. Sir, I have spoken now with reference to taxation upon the article of alcohol where found in the product of grain. That leaves open a very important question, which has assumed, to my satisfaction, greater prominence in the speeches of several hon. Gentlemen than it has done on any former occasion. The hon. Member who last addressed the House, the hon. Member for Essex, and likewise the Member for East Norfolk, referred very distinctly to the subject of a substitute for the malt duty in the shape either of a beer licence or a beer duty. But I hope those hon. Gentlemen will remember this—the Mover of the Resolution has given no countenance whatever to that proposal. The hon. and learned Gentleman stands, and is if he pleases perfectly entitled to stand, upon this simple ground—"I bring my objections against this tax and call upon the House of Commons to repeal it. As to finding a substitute, that is the duty of the executive Government." That has virtually been the language of my hon. and learned Friend, and that language he is quite entitled to hold. In like manner, one hon. Gentleman who ably supported him distinctly entered his protest against the idea of substituting a tax upon beer. Now, I do not at all disguise from myself that there are enormous difficulties with regard to such a substitution. I frankly own that I do not know at the present moment how these difficulties are to be overcome. I do not say that they are insuperable, but if they are to be overcome it must be by a general concurrence of views on the part of the different classes and parties who are concerned in the question, of which concurrence there is at the present time no distinct prospect. Some hon. Gentlemen may think it is in the power of those who conduct the finances of the country to devise schemes of the kind; but I feel quite certain that any scheme that could be devised by the Government would have no chance of meeting with the approval of Parliament unless Parliament were in a state of mind generally prepared to join in overcoming whatever difficulties would have to be encountered. I have never said at any time, nor do I say now, that that substitute, if it were practicable, would not be attended with very great advantages. I quite admit the soundness of the principle in levying the tax upon any article at the latest stage, the stage immediately preceding consumption. I am quite convinced that it is desirable, if possible, to leave barley absolutely free from all restraint up to the time at which it leaves the hands of the farmers. I do not, indeed, know that I should be able to concur in the views of those who think that the agriculturist suffers very heavily as matters now stand from the pressure of the malt duty; but I am quite aware that there are differences of opinion on the point, and I should be very glad to see the whole handling of the grain by the farmers left absolutely free. No plan of the kind, however, can be adopted except with a very general concurrence of opinion and a general co-operation among all parties and classes who would be affected thereby. I do not know that I need trouble the Committee at present with any further remarks on the general question, but the question of a substitute is vital to the whole matter. Surely, my hon. and learned Friend cannot think that it would be wise for the Government to throw out a number of these vague pledges to the country with reference to one of the very largest among all the branches of the public revenue. The malt duty is at the present time the second or third in importance among the branches of public revenue, and we ought not to throw out vague pledges with respect to which it is perfectly uncertain when we can redeem them. If it were a mere question of the form of the tax, that would be another matter; but the hon. and learned Gentleman asks us not to change the form but to vote for the application of all surpluses if they go to indirect taxation to the reduction of the duty on malt with a view to its ultimate repeal, and I am bound to ask my hon. and learned Friend in return the old question put by the Duke of Wellington, "How is the Queen's Government to be carried on?" There is no prospect, as he knows, of our being able to part with so enormous a sum of money; and, barring a substitute, I must tell my hon. and learned Friend that he is really, as was said by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, the most effective advocate of the doctrine of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association; for it is impossible to exempt this one great article of the comforts of the people from taxation in whatever form, and at the same time continue to levy £30,000,000 in Customs and Excise upon their comforts in other quarters. If, therefore, you provide no substitute, it would be, as I have ventured to call it on previous occasions, the death-warrant of indirect taxation. What the consequences of that would be I leave my hon. and learned Friend to consider. In my opinion, it is a change which is one of the vastest which could be proposed in this House. I believe it to be a change beyond human power in any proximate circumstances to carry into effect. I do not say it is a change which this Motion pledges us to make, but I think the Motion tampers with the important considerations that are involved in it. Both upon this ground, therefore, and also upon the ground that this discussion is one wholly speculative, inasmuch as the House has not the means, and has at present no anticipation or prospect of the means, which would possibly enable it to take any step in this matter, which involves so very serious a loss of revenue, I hope that the House, without in the least degree expressing any obstinate determination to adhere under all circumstances to the present form of the tax, will not agree to the Motion of my hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. NEATE said, he would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put.

The House *divided* :—Ayes 150; Noes 234: Majority 84.

AYES.

Adderley, rt. hn. C. B.
Anson, hon. Major
Bagge, W.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Barnett, H.
Barrow, W. H.
Barttelot, Colonel
Bass, M. T.
Bateson, Sir T.
Beach, Sir M. H.
Beach, W. W. B.
Benyon, R.
Beresford, Capt. D. W. P.
Bourne, Colonel
Bovill, W.
Bowyer, Sir G.
Bridges, Sir B. W.
Bromley, W. D.
Brooks, R.
Bruce, Lord C.
Bruen, H.
Buckley, E.
Buller, Sir E. M.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir P.
Campbell, A. H.
Cartwright, Colonel
Cavendish, Lord E.
Cecil, Lord E. H. B. G.
Cholmeley, Sir M. J.
Clive, Capt. hon. G. W.
Cobbold, J. C.
Cole, hon. J. L.
Cooper, E. H.
Cowper, hon. H. F.
Cox, W. T.
Cubitt, G.
Dering Sir E. C.
Dick, F.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dodson, J. G.
Dowdeswell, W. E.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. W. E.
Dunne, General
Du Pre, C. G.
Dutton, hon. R. H.
Dyke, W. H.
Dyott, Colonel R.
Earle, R. A.
Eaton, H. W.
Egerton, Sir P. G.
Fane, Lt.-Colonel H. H.
Fane, Colonel J. W.
Farquhar, Sir M.
Fellowes, E.
Floyer, J.
Foley, H. W.
Forester, rt. hon. Gen.
Foster, W. O.
Freshfield, C. K.
Galway, Viscount
Gaskell, J. M.
George, J.
Gilpin, Colonel
Goddard, A. L.
Gooch, D.
Goodson, J.
Grey, hon. T. de
Grove, T. F.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, Viscount
Hartopp, E. B.
Harvey, R. B.
Henniker, Lord
Herbert, hon. P. E.
Hervey, Lord A. H. C.
Hodgson, W. N.
Holford, R. S.
Holmesdale, Viscount
Hornby, W. H.
Howes, E.
Huddleston, J. W.
Humphery, W. H.
Hunt, G. W.
Jervis, Captain
Jolliffe, H. H.
Kelk, J.
King, J. K.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knox, Colonel
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Lennox, Lord G. G.
Leslie, C. P.
Lindsay, hon. Colonel C.
Lindsay, Colonel R. L.
Long, R. P.
Lowther, hon. Colonel
Lytton, rt. hn. Sir E. L. B.
Manners, rt. hn. Lord J.
Martin, P. W.
Miller, S. B.
Miller, T. J.
Mitford, W. T.
Mordaunt, Sir C.
More, R. J.
Neeld, Sir J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Noel, hon. G. J.
North, Colonel
Paget, R. H.
Parker, Major W.
Phillips, G. L.
Pollard-Urquhart, W.
Portman, hon. W. H. B.
Pugh, D.
Read, C. S.
Rebow, J. G.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rolt, J.
Royston, Viscount
Russell, H.
Russell, Sir C.
Sandford, G. M. W.
Schreiber, C.
Sclater-Booth, G.
Scott, Lord H.
Selwin, H. J.
Selwyn, C. J.
Severne, J. E.
Smith, S. G.
Somerset, Colonel
Stanhope, J. B.
Stanhope, Lord
Surtees, H. E.
Sykes, C.
Taylor, Colonel
Thorold, J. H.
Treeby, J. W.
Trollope, rt. hon. Sir J.
Walcott, Admiral

Western, Sir T. B.
Whalley, G. H.
Whiteside, rt. hon. J.
Whitmore, H.
Williams, F. M.
Wise, H. C.
Wyndham, hon. H.
Young, R.

TELLERS.

Kelly, Sir F.
Du Cane, C.

NOES.

Acland, T. D.
Agnew, Sir A.
Akroyd, E.
Allen, W. S.
Anstruther, Sir R.
Antrobus, E.
Armstrong, R.
Ayrton, A. S.
Aytoun, R. S.
Bagnall, C.
Bagwell, J.
Barclay, A. C.
Baring, T.
Barnes, T.
Barry, C. R.
Barry, G. R.
Bazley, T.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beaumont, W. B.
Beecroft, G. S.
Biddulph, Colonel R. M.
Biddulph, M.
Bingham, Lord
Blennerhassett, Sir R.
Bonham-Carter, J.
Bouverie, rt. hon. E. P.
Brecknock, Earl of
Bright, Sir C. T.
Bright, J.
Briscoe, J. I.
Browne, Lord J. T.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, rt. hon. H. A.
Buxton, C.
Candlish, J.
Cardwell, rt. hon. E.
Carnegie, hon. C.
Castlerosse, Viscount
Cave, T.
Cavendish, Lord F. C.
Cavendish, Lord G.
Chambers, T.
Cheetham, J.
Childers, H. C. E.
Clinton, Lord A. P.
Clinton, Lord E. P.
Clive, G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collier, Sir R. P.
Colthurst, Sir G. C.
Colvile, C. R.
Craufurd, E. H. J.
Crawford, R. W.
Crosland, Colonel T. P.
Crossley, Sir F.
Dalglish, R.
Davey, R.
Denman, hon. G.
Dillon, J. B.
Duff, M. E. G.
Duff, R. W.
Dundas, rt. hon. Sir D.
Dunkellin, Lord
Ellice, E.
Esmonde, J.
Evans, T. W.
Fawcett, H.
Fenwick, E. M.
Fildes, J.
FitzGerald, Lord O. A.
FitzPatrick, rt. hn. J. W.
Fitzwilliam, hn. C. W. W.
Foljambe, F. J. S.
Forster, C.
Forster, W. E.
Fort, R.
Fortescue, rt. hn. C. P.
Fortescue, hon. D. F.
Gavin, Major
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gilpin, C.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gladstone, W. H.
Glyn, G. G.
Goldsmid, Sir F. H.
Goldsmid, J.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gower, hon. F. L.
Graves, S. R.
Gray, Sir J.
Greville, Colonel F.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Gridley, Captain H. G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Grosvenor, Capt. R. W.
Hanbury, R. C.
Hankey, T.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, J. D.
Hartington, Marquess of
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, Captain A. D.
Headlam, rt. hon. T. E.
Henderson, J.
Henley, Lord
Herbert, H. A.
Hibbert, J. T.
Hoare, Sir H. A.
Hodgkinson, G.
Holden, I.
Holland, E.
Hood, Sir A. A.
Horsfall, T. B.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Hubbard, J. G.
Hughes, T.
Hughes, W. B.
Hurst, R. H.
Ingham, R.
James, E.
Jardine, R.
Jervoise, Sir J. C.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Kekewich, S. T.
Kinglake, A. W.
Kinglake, J. A.
Kingscote, Colonel
Kinnaird, hon. A. F.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, E
Labouchere, H.
Laing, S.
Lamont, J.
Lawson, rt. hon. J. A.
Layard, A. H.
Leeman, G.
Lefevre, G. J. S.
Legh, Major C.
Lewis, H.
Locke, J.
Lusk, A.
Mackie, J.
Mackinnon, Capt. L. B.
Mackinnon, W. A.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, D.
Maguire, J. F.
Mainwaring, T.
Marjoribanks, D. C.
Marshall, W.
Martin, C. W.
Matheson, A.
Matheson, Sir J.
Milbank, F. A.
Mill, J. S.
Mills, J. R.
Milton, Viscount
Mitchell, A.
Monk, C. J.
Monsell, rt. hon. W.
Montgomery, Sir G.
Morley, S.
Morris, M.
Morris, W.
Morrison, W.
Murphy, N. D.
Neate, C.
Nicol, J. D.
O'Brien, Sir P.
O'Conor Don, The
Ogilvy, Sir J.
Oliphant, L.
O'Loghlen, Sir C. M.
Onslow, G.
Otway, A. J.
Owen, Sir H. O.
Padmore, R.
Paget, Lord C.
Palmer, Sir R.
Pease, J. W.
Peel, A. W.
Pelham, Lord
Peto, Sir S. M.
Philips, R. N.
Platt, J.
Potter, E.
Potter, T. B.
Price, W. P.
Pryse, E. L.
Pritchard, J.
Proby, Lord
Rearden, D. J.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Robertson, D.
Rothschild, N. M. de
Russell, A.
Russell, Sir W.
Salomons, Alderman
Samuda, J. D'A.
Saunderson, E.
Scholefield, W.
Scott, Sir W.
Seely, C.
Shafto, R. D.
Sheridan, R. B.
Sherriff, A. C.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, J. B.
Speirs, A. A.
Stacpoole, W.
Staniland, M.
Stansfeld, J.
Sullivan, E.
Synan, E. J.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Taylor, P. A.
Tollemache, J.
Tracy, hon. C. R. D. H.
Trevelyan, G. O.
Vandeleur, Colonel
Verney, Sir H.
Villiers, rt. hon. C. P.
Vivian, H. H.
Waterhouse, S.
Watkin, E. W.
Weguelin, T. M.
Whatman, J.
Whitbread, S.
White, J.
Williamson, Sir H.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wyvill, M.
Young, A. W.
Young, G.

TELLERS.

Brand, hon. H. B. W.
Adam, W. P.

The Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that Mr. Speaker had been obliged, by the state of his health, to retire from the House for the remainder of the night:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

RAILWAY DEBENTURES, &c., REGISTRY BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

Mr. SCOURFIELD, in moving for leave to bring in a Bill for the Registration of Railway Debentures, said, that the Bill was substantially the same as that introduced last Session. He understood that the Government intended to bring in a Bill to the same effect, and, therefore, he should only move for leave to bring in the Bill and that it should be printed.

Motion *agreed to*.

Bill for the Registry of Railway Debentures and Debenture Stock and other Obligations, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Scourfield and Mr. Hankey.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 109.]

GRAND JURIES PRESENTMENT (IRELAND) BILL—[Bill 89.]

(*Mr. Esmonde, Mr. Serjeant Armstrong.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. ESMONDE moved the second reading of the Bill. To-morrow he should move to have it committed, in order that the Amendments might be printed.

General DUNNE supported the Motion.

Mr. CHICHESTER FORTESCUE said, he did not object to the measure.

Motion *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow*.

POOR PERSONS' BURIAL (IRELAND) BILL—[Bill 88.]

(*Sir Hervey Bruce, Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Mr. Peel Dawson.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Mr. CHICHESTER FORTESCUE, in moving certain Amendments to this Bill, said, that his object in so doing was simply to reduce the Bill to the form of the measure which had passed through the House, without opposition, in 1864, but which had failed to pass the House of Lords.

Sir HERVEY BRUCE had no objection to the Amendments proposed.

Mr. GEORGE considered the Bill one of a dangerous description, as it would induce fraudulent misrepresentations, and throw charges upon the poor's rates, which ought not properly to be paid out of them.

Lord JOHN BROWNE agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Wexford, that the Bill would lead to a vast amount of jobbing. He found the strongest objection on the part of his constituents to the great increase which had lately taken place in the local taxation of Ireland.

Mr. PEEL DAWSON concurred with those hon. Gentlemen who felt it necessary to limit the poor's rate charges, but he considered that the object of this Bill was a useful one, and it had received the approval of Boards of Guardians in the North of Ireland.

Mr. MAGUIRE also supported the Bill, but pointed out the difficulty there was at present in providing coffins for the poor.

Lord CLAUD HAMILTON did not think the Bill should receive the sanction of the House. He should not wish, however, to do so harsh a thing as to move its rejection, but he thought it would be well to postpone its consideration. He had been for twenty years chairman of a union, and he had received no intimation that such a Bill was wanted.

Mr. W. R. ORMSBY GORE, while approving the object of the Bill, protested against the words "and other necessaries" after the word "coffin," as those "necessaries" might be taken to mean tobacco, whisky, and all sorts of things.

Mr. WHALLEY did not think separate legislation for Ireland desirable in these cases, as it might be a quiet mode of confiscation or of concession to some party or other.

Sir HERVEY BRUCE said, that no new principle was involved in this Bill, which merely supplied an accidental omission in former legislation. This House, when it repealed the Vestry Cess Act, imagined that it was providing the power for burying poor people in Ireland. He believed the Bill to be necessary on the score of humanity and decency.

Mr. BAGGALLAY thought that the Bill would not do much good, and that it would open the door to fraud; and, therefore, in order to save the pockets of the ratepayers, he would vote against it if there were a division.

Sir FREDERICK HEYGATE, who could not concur in the expediency of rejecting good measures because their operation would involve expense, had known inconvenience arise from there being no public authority to bury poor people. Subscriptions had been entered into, and far too much had often been subscribed. This amounted to a heavier tax than was proposed by the Bill, while the money raised had not only buried the deceased, but regaled the living.

General DUNNE complained of the whole conduct of the Irish Government, which ought to have dealt with this matter, instead of proposing Amendments to the Bill without explaining them. He thought they ought to have some test by which to know that a person was so destitute as to require this assistance.

Mr. CHICHESTER FORTESCUE complained of this attack upon himself, and said, that he had considered the Bill carefully, and had not the least apprehension that it would lead to any direful consequences. Precisely the same measure in another form had been introduced by his predecessor, and had received the unanimous sanction of the House. He proposed the Amendments to simplify the Bill and make it more practicable. All that it did was to enable Poor Law guardians to provide coffins for persons who had been in receipt of outdoor relief.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

TITHE RENT-CHARGE (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Esmonde, Bill to provide for the Triennial variation of Rent-charges in lieu of Tithe in Ireland, and the re-applotment and apportionment of such Rent-charges in certain cases, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Esmonde and Mr. Murphy.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 110.]

House adjourned at a quarter after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, April 18, 1866.

MINUTES.] — Public Bills — *Resolutions in Committee*— Customs Duties (Isle of Man) [Harbour Dues].
First Reading—Harbour Loans* [112].
Second Reading — Public Companies [35]; Hop Trade [36]; Thames Navigation [59]
Referred to Select Committee—Thames Navigation [59].
Committee — Prosecution Expenses [28]; Art [*Lords*]* [100]; Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland)* [89].
Report — Prosecution Expenses [28]; Art [*Lords*]* [100]; Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland)* [111].
Considered as amended—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland)* [88].
Third Reading—Postmaster General* [25], and *passed.*
Withdrawn—Bank Notes (Ireland) [29].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that the state of Mr. Speaker's health was such as to prevent him from attending the House this day:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

PUBLIC COMPANIES BILL—[Bill 35.]

(*Mr. Darby Griffith, Mr. Robert Torrens.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. DARBY GRIFFITH, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that it was identical with the Bill upon the same subject introduced in the year 1864. That Bill passed the first and second readings, and was sifted in Committee to a single clause, but the third reading was not proceeded with through the Session being so near its close and other causes. There was a clerical error in the title of the present Bill, but that could be rectified in Committee if necessary. The object of the Bill was to correct a certain malversation in the mode of voting in public companies, by extending the powers of the shareholders, and enabling them to vote after they knew what they were voting about instead of before, and its operation was restricted to those companies formed under the Companies Consolidation Act of 1845. Under that Act, shareholders were enabled to vote in one of two ways—either by proxies sent in forty-eight hours previous to the time for the holding of the meeting, or by personally giving their votes. But the shareholders of some of the railway companies numbered many thousands, and there was no room in the country that would contain them if they were disposed to attend. It was obvious, however, that gentlemen conducting large mercantile operations in Manchester or Liverpool would rarely be able to be present at meetings held in the south of England, and it would also be impossible to expect that ladies, who formed a large proportion of railway shareholders, would attend and take part in the proceedings. The other mode of voting—namely, by proxy—was exceedingly reprehensible, seeing that it left the way open to the directors to resort to various artifices in order to secure the votes of the shareholders upon questions that might arise for consideration; and then when the time for holding the meeting arrived, the directors, by the number of the proxies received, knew precisely how the voting would terminate. Of course, the shareholder could cancel his vote afterwards by personally attending and giving it in accordance with his maturer consideration; but it was in vain to expect that such a course would be extensively adopted. The alteration proposed by this Bill was of the simplest character possible. The only fresh provision was that in case any person wished to know, through the press or in any other way, what the questions were which arose, that they should have the opportunity of voting then with a knowledge of the facts of the case instead of beforehand. As a railway director, he at once admitted that he desired to be more under the control of the shareholders than the existing law permitted him to be. Railway directors, like Members of that House, were but too likely to be carried off their legs, and to be coerced to vote upon questions from a party view. It frequently happened that they were obliged to sit by, although regarding the course pursued by their brother directors with the greatest mistrust through having no alternative before them but to resign their seats. In a remarkable speech lately made in the other House by a great authority (Lord Redesdale), the necessity for reform in railway matters was sufficiently demonstrated. Lord Redesdale gave some instances of the extraordinary mode in which the borrowing powers of railway companies were sometimes exercised under the existing state of the law. One of those cases was that of the Cork and Youghal Railway Company, which had power to raise about £500,000, but had actually raised £920,000. That was done under the management of a Mr. Leopold Lewis, who acted as the financier of the board of directors. He first issued £206,000 in Lloyd's bonds; he then proposed to call in £165,000 of these bonds, and to issue new ones in their place; but while he issued the latter he did not withdraw those that he had before put in circulation, so that the actual issue he had made of these bonds amounted to £371,000, and he had besides issued £30,000 of new mortgage bonds, making a total amount which he had raised beyond the borrowing powers of the company of not less than £400,000. The result of these operations was that the line was at present about to be sold to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company of Ireland for £315,000, or about one-third of the capital that had been expended upon it. Another remarkable case was that of the Carmarthen and Cardigan Railway Company, whom Parliament had authorized to raise £248,000, and who had actually raised £981,000. He thought it was manifest that a state of the law which permitted transactions of that description ought, if possible, to be amended. He was certain that many of the directors themselves disapproved of the proceedings of their colleagues on railway boards, but finding that they had no alternative except to sanction them or to resign their seats, adopted the course which best suited their own sense of interest or their convenience, and allowed the shareholders to be deluded. It should be remembered that lists of proxies were by rule to be sent in to the secretary forty-eight hours before the holding of the meeting at which they were to be used, and the directors were thus aware what would be the result of a division before the proceedings commenced. In the year 1864 there was an amalgamation proposed between the Great Western Company and the South Wales Company. Seven directors were then to be changed; the board wished that certain gentlemen should be appointed to the offices, while a committee of shareholders were desirous of making a different selection, but the directors received proxies in their own favour representing £8,000,000 of stock before the shareholders knew anything of the report that was to be issued. Last autumn another striking exemplification of the existing state of the law took place in the case of the Great Eastern Railway Company. Captain Jervis, one of the directors, and who was also a Member of that House, addressed a letter to the secretary, in which he stated that he understood the borrowing power of the company was then exceeded by £150,000, and had a short time previously been exceeded by £250,000, and that he would cause an inquiry to be instituted into the matter, as he would be no party to the continuance of such a state of things. A resolution was proposed at the next meeting of the board to the effect that Captain Jervis' name should be erased from the board, and all the officers of the company should be instructed not to give him any information. But as it was considered that the passing of such a resolution would be too strong a measure, there was issued instead of it a circular stating that the directors had resolved that no copies of any documents should be furnished to any director without the authority of the board. The subject then came before the next meeting of the company—at which the directors, relying on their proxies, refused all information. But the proxies, together with that meeting, proved to be informal. Therefore the directors, if they had confidence in their case, might have tested the opinion of the shareholders afresh. Instead of that, however, they did not venture to give the opinion of the shareholders, now that the latter could vote after they were duly informed of the merits of the case—and thus the directors thought it prudent to concede the committee they had before resisted. This is an ample illustration of the evils of the present system of voting. He believed, however, that the proposal embodied in the Bill would make directors much more independent, and would save the shareholders from the risk of their proxies being abused.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Darby Griffith.*)

Mr. MILNER GIBSON said, he looked upon the principle of the measure as salutary and as tending to give shareholders greater power of controlling the proceedings of directors than was conferred under the existing system of proxies. He presumed that the hon. Gentleman proposed to leave the present law with respect to general proxies untouched, and it would, he thought, be expedient to secure that object, to alter the clauses of the Bill, so that those special proxies which, under its operation, would be introduced for the first time, should be subject to the same conditions as those by which the use of general proxies was now regulated. With that Amendment the Bill might very well, he thought, be accepted by the House.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

HOP TRADE BILL—[Bill 36.]

(*Mr. Huddleston, Sir Brook Bridges, Sir Edward Dering.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. HUDDLESTON, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said, that as a new and inexperienced Member of the House, he almost wished that the measure had fallen under the care of an older Member; but as it interested materially the constituency which he represented, he had felt bound to give his best consideration to the question. He would shortly state to the House the object proposed to be attained by this Bill, in which no new principle was involved. The clauses of the Bill had been drawn up for the purpose of carrying out the intentions of the Legislature, and to adapt the regulations to the exigencies of the present day. The frauds it was sought to prevent were the substitution and sale of a poor quality of hops for those of a superior character, and to prevent the system well known in the trade of false packing, which consisted of inserting, along with hops of a good class, hops of an inferior and unmerchantable quality, as well as foreign substances which could not be described as hops. These practices had continued for a long time, and it had been found almost impossible to repress them. The temptation to resort to them was very great. It arose from the difference in the price which different qualities of hops would fetch in the market. The superior quality, for instance, grown in East Kent, where the soil was favourable to their cultivation, and where great attention was shown in rearing them, and the supply of which was sometimes scanty and varying, fetched £9 or £9 9*s.* per cwt., while the coarser quality of hops grown in the Weald of Kent or in East Sussex would fetch only £5 or £5 5*s.* per cwt. A great inducement was thus held out to the seller to impose upon his customer the inferior for the superior article; and, unfortunately, there were great facilities for the commission of the fraud afforded by the method in which hops were packed. In order to exclude the air from them as far as possible, they were carefully enclosed in a cloth or bag, and a sample was generally taken from the centre of the bags—for to examine any particular pocket in bulk, like barley or wheat, would be to render its contents almost unsaleable. But, beyond that, it was difficult even for skilled persons to recognize the different varieties of hops, and, under all the circumstances of the case, the Legislature had by repeated Acts of Parliament sought to protect the public against imposition. The Acts which had been passed on the subject were five in number, one of which had been repealed, the other four being still on the statute-book, and it might be convenient to know what marks Parliament deemed it desirable to require for the purpose of preventing fraud in the trade. It was declared to be necessary that a pocket of hops should bear the name and the place of abode of the grower of the hops, of the parish and county in which they had been raised, as well as the year of the growth, and the true weight of the hops which the package contained. All that precaution had been rendered imperative by Acts of Parliament, the first of which had been passed in 1710, in the reign of Queen Anne, and the remaining four in the reign of George III. ; and the object of such legislation was, no doubt, in the main, to protect the reputation and brand of a grower, and also of enabling the public to select from among the number of growers those whose hops they had by experience found to be peculiarly good. The year was required to be affixed to the pocket, in order that the public might know the age of the hops, for they became deteriorated as they grew older. But the mark which was found by experience to be the most essential was that which gave the weight, which was originally required to be affixed to the pocket by the statute of Anne. By its means the purchaser was easily enabled to compare the weight as given on the pocket and that which his own scales showed it to be, and would thus have his suspicions roused if the weight was either very much above or below that which the mark indicated. The check was also found to be of great advantage in preventing the use of a bag with the weight marked on it a second time, which might have fallen into the hands of a dishonest trader. If the purchaser found that there was great excess of weight over that marked, there would at once arise a suspicion that some foreign substance had been introduced to increase the weight, and he might remark that frauds of this kind were committed in various ways. Sometimes a crowbar was inserted into the top of the pocket, a great hole was made, and the cavity filled with substances to increase the weight. Sometimes inferior hops were inserted, and sometimes clay, dirt, and even metal was found to have been put in to increase the weight. If, on the other hand, the scale weights were much below the marked weight, the purchaser would know that the hops were of bad quality, or that they had been slack dried. The weight being marked caused also this advantage, that this fact might prevent the bag being used a second time for hops. In practice it was found that the pocket was so very much strained by packing the hops, that it was commercially useless for the packing of hops a second time ; but sometimes the bags got into the hands of dishonest persons, who filled them with inferior hops, and thus committed a fraud, because they passed under a good brand. If, however, the weight of the first filling had been marked, it would be impossible to re-fill the bag so that it should weigh the weight originally marked. That being so, the marking of the weight was of very considerable importance. It was important that the House should know by whom these marks of the year and the weight were in the first instance required to be made on the bags. Originally they were all to be made by the Excise officers, but the 39 & 40 *Geo.* III. provided that the owner, planter, or grower should put his name, place of abode, parish, and county upon the pocket, and a subsequent statute said that this should be done in letters of a particular size. The putting of the year and the weight was left still in the hands of the Excise officers, and this state of things continued down to 1862, when the duty was taken off hops. When the duty was taken off there remained no person upon whom the obligation was imposed to mark the year and weight; and the practice, therefore, fell into disuse, and the public were deprived of the advantage of two of the most essential marks which had existed for their protection. This was a state of things which seemed to have escaped the attention of the Legislature, and he submitted that it was desirable that it should be remedied. The principal object of this Bill was to require that owners, planters, and growers of hops should mark upon the bags the year and weight; that they should perform the duty which previous to 1862 devolved upon the Excise officers. Now, there could be no hardship in this provision, for the grower had already in his possession the means by which this could be accomplished, for by the Act 39 & 40 *Geo.* III. he was called upon to have weights and scales on his premises under a penalty of £50, and was, indeed, accustomed to weigh his hops to protect his own interest as against the factor. Nor did he believe there would be found any practical objection to mark the weight on the part of the honest trader. Certainly no such objection had reached his ears, though he had been for the greater part of his life connected with the counties of Worcester and Hereford, and had in connection with this Bill been in communication with many hopgrowers and brewers. In the county of Kent he believed that there were objections from two quarters; one of those who objected being a highly-respectable person who was interested in the question, and the other quarter from which objection came was the Farmers' Club at Maidstone where the question had been discussed. He would refer to a letter from a gentleman who had had half a century of experience in the hop trade, and he wrote to the Farmers' Club that one fraud practised by unprincipled dealers was this—that, having sold hops by a good sample, they rammed into the pocket a large quantity of inferior hops. Now, if the planters' marks were required to be upon the hops this would tend to the detection of the fraud. He (Mr. Huddleston) believed that that was the feeling of the majority of hopgrowers upon the subject. Before he left that branch of the question he might, perhaps, be permitted to remind the House that a Committee upon the Hop Duty sat in 1857, and examined a great number of witnesses, thirteen of whom spoke in reference to the marking of hops, and all of whom agreed in this, that the marking of hops was a very great protection to the consumer, though two differed in some matters from the others — one of them thinking that the practice, if enforced, would be a little hard upon the growers of inferior hops in Sussex. The hon. Member for West Worcestershire summed up the evidence in this way:—"The whole evidence shows that the marks on hops are valuable to the consumer, and ought to be maintained. The object of those who wish to abolish the practice can only be to sell to unskilled persons hops of good colour and appearance, but of poor quality as first-rate hops, they not being readily distinguished by unskilled persons." He (Mr. Huddleston) hoped that after this it might not be thought to be out of the scope of proper legislation, even at the present day, to remedy this evil. He did not think it necessary to call the attention of the House to more than three out of the twenty-one clauses in the Bill. The first of those was Clause 5. Clause 2 of 54 *Geo.* III., to which he wished to direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, was to be found in the second page of the Bill, about the thirtieth line. That clause which had been in existence since 1814, inflicted a penalty upon any owner, planter, or grower who should knowingly put, or suffer to be put, hops of different qualities or of value into the same bag or pocket. The object of that clause was, no doubt, to prevent false packing. But, on consideration, that clause would be found to affect a number of gentlemen who had been in the habit of dealing in a manner perfectly honest and fair with the consumer. He believed that there was scarcely a grower in Kent who had not many more varieties of hops than one, and who was not liable to the accident of those varieties getting mixed up in the packing. Sometimes the proprietor of the hop garden in order to protect his hops of a superior and delicate quality from the effects of the weather, grew a coarser description of hops outside the former. Other growers, again, thought it sometimes necessary to use the long poles, which were applied to the better class of hops. Those poles becoming rotten at the bottom in the course of time, they cut the rotten parts off, and used the rest of the poles for the inferior hopes. It had then become the practice, without any intention to commit a fraud, to mix up in the bag or pocket the inferior with the superior hops; and when they were sold they were sold by sample which accurately described the bulk. In such cases it was ridiculous to say that any fraud had been intended or was committed by the owner. Nevertheless, this old section to which he referred would render a person liable to a penalty who had thus mixed hops of one quality with those of another. Now, he did not think it was ever intended that such persons should be held to be liable to a penalty for the commission of a fraud. He was bound to say that the 5th clause as drawn certainly did not afford that remedy which he thought so essential, and at the same time did not exempt from liability the honest dealer who had no intention whatever to commit a fraud in the packing of his hops, which of necessity was of a mixed quality. Having consulted with gentlemen of practical experience in the matter he was prepared to offer a suggestion in the framing of the clause which, if the House thought fit, might be carried out when the Bill was in Committee. There seemed to be a strange anomaly in the present law whereby the owner, planter, or grower was subject to the penalty for the offence of mixing hops, whilst there was nothing of the kind attaching to any other person who might be guilty of it. It appeared that very few frauds of this kind were committed by the planter or grower. They were chiefly committed by persons into whose hands the hops came after they had left the custody of the owner, planter, or grower, and yet the penalty under the old law would not reach them. It was suggested, in order to meet this difficulty, that the section should run thus—

> "That any person who shall fraudulently pack, or suffer to be packed, hops of different qualities or value in the same bag or pocket shall be liable to a penalty."

For such a provision as that would have the effect of exempting the honest trader, whilst it would reach the fraudulent one. In reference to the other clauses of this Bill, it appeared to him strange that whilst penalties were inflicted upon the forgers of marks, or upon those who omitted marks, there was no penalty whatever enacted against the aider or abettor who should assist a party in the perpetration of a fraud. It was therefore proposed to inflict a penalty upon any person who should knowingly sell hops that had not been properly marked or marked at all. Clause 9 required the vendor of hops improperly marked, upon demand being made on him, to give up the name of the party from whom he had obtained them, with the view that the fraud might be traced to its source. There was one great difficulty in the detection of fraud—namely, the utter inefficiency of the machinery of the law to enable the authorities to enter the dwelling-houses of fraudulent persons, and thus to afford the opportunity to the police of capturing them in *flagrante delicto.* He had heard of cases in which, through the disaffection of servants, an entrance had been thus effected, and the very implements of fraud had been captured and produced subsequently in the Courts of Law. But as the law stood the only legal means of obtaining an entrance into the house of a man supposed to be guilty of fraud of this kind was by a bill of discovery obtained upon application to the Court of Chancery; such application, however, might be defeated even then, if the party accused were to deny upon oath the truth of the allegations made against him. It was therefore proposed by the present Bill, by an express provision, to enable a Justice of the Peace, on information being laid before him that there was good reason to believe there were on the premises of a certain party bags or pockets of hops improperly marked, to issue his warrant to enable the constabulary to enter the premises of the accused to search them, and if such bags or pockets were found therein, to take them in charge and detain them, with a view to instituting a prosecution against the guilty party. That was not a new suggestion. A similar provision was to be found in the 7 & 8 *Vict.* c. 82, relating to marks on gold and silver ware, and also in the Salmon Fishery Act in reference to the use of nets of an improper size. This was a question which did not particularly affect the grower, brewer, or consumer, but the public generally; consequently, petitions from all parties interested in the question had been presented to that House praying the enactment of the Bill of which he had then the honour to move the second reading.

Sir BROOK BRIDGES seconded the Motion, and thanked the hon. and learned Gentleman for the able and lucid manner in which he had introduced the question to the House. All who had heard the hon. and learned Gentleman on that occasion would no doubt join with him (Sir Brook Bridges) in expressing a desire that he would turn his attention to other subjects as well as that which he had handled in so able a manner that day. Living in a district where the best hops were produced, he (Sir Brook Bridges) felt himself fully justified in placing his name on the back of that Bill. He believed that all persons would be anxious to prevent such frauds, and the question was, were they such as to justify exceptional legislation. He was aware that there were those who would say, leave it to the buyers, and the expression *caveat emptor* was often used in reference to matters of this kind; but there were several occasions on which the House had thought fit to pass express laws to protect the public from fraud, and he thought that such a case had been made out by the hon. and learned Gentleman who preceded him as would justify that course with reference to hops. He would only add that all parties came forward with a desire that legislation should pass the House on this subject. Both the growers and the brewers had sent petitions to the House; and if they combined in asking for legislation, surely the public must be interested also who drank the beer in which the hops were used. For his own part, he might say (and he thought he might say on the part of the other hon. Gentlemen whose names appeared on the Bill), if there was anything in the details of the measure that was considered objectionable, there would be the fullest desire to consider it carefully in Committee. Former experience had proved that the growers could do without inconvenience all that the Bill called on them to do, and as it would lead to the prevention of fraud he hoped the House would consent to the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Huddleston.*)

MR. BERESFORD HOPE said, he must join the hon. Member for East Kent in the commendation he had passed on the very able argument which the hon. and learned Member for Canterbury had used in support of this Bill. The only objection he could make to that argument was that it was one that might carry the House away with it, when the entire case had not been put before it. The case that had been brought forward was that certain frauds existed in the hop trade—frauds in quality, frauds in weight, and frauds of a grosser description—which the buyer, the brewer, and the drinker had a right to arm themselves against. That was, no doubt, true, but while it was very desirable to suppress fraud wherever it existed, it was at the same time necessary to be careful not to inflict or to perpetuate an injury upon any class. The hon. and learned Gentleman proposed to restore an antiquated penal enactment, while professing to deal with principles borrowed from the commercial legislation of late years. Did he lay down a new system—did he propose a new code of hop commerce suitable to the principles of modern commerce and free trade, which happily now prevailed in hops as in other articles? In this Bill were recited certain antiquated Acts of Parlialiament which were passed at a period when it

was thought proper to place any restriction on commerce for the benefit of the Excise. The high duties on hops, after a long and arduous fight to get rid of them, were abolished; and the opposition to their abolition came almost entirely from the growers in East Kent, where the high-priced hops were grown, they desiring to keep their hops up at an artificial price in the market. One of the restrictions that had existed before the abolition of the duty was that the hops should be marked with the county and parish from which they came, so that the samples from the counties where the high-priced hops were grown obtained an artificial money value, whilst those from other counties went into the market with a prejudice against them. Was that meant for the protection of the consumer? On the contrary, it was really meant to maintain the reputation of East and of Mid-Kent, by the fictitious value which the brand might give. The present Bill did not try to remedy, it tried to continue that state of things, as by Clause 2 it was enacted that the pockets should have marked upon them the weight—which was very proper—and also the name of the parish and county in which the hops were grown. He said it was quite clear that there were two intentions in that clause—the ostensibly one to avoid fraud, and the other—the covert design—which he hoped the House would not endorse, to keep up a forced protection for certain growers to run their hops up to an artificial price. They were all anxious to avoid fraud in the hop or any other trade, and if the present laws were insufficient for that purpose, by all means let the House pass others; but in doing so they should not ask the House to do something else that was sedulously kept out of its sight. Suppose a man had a hop garden one-half in West Kent and the other half in Sussex, under this Bill he would be compelled to mark one-half his hops as coming from Kent, and the other from Sussex. Well, that was just what he did not want, and it was a significant fact that the three hon. Gentlemen whose names appeared on the back of the Bill were East Kent representatives; there was not a single one of them from Worcester, West Kent, or Sussex. If the hon. Gentlemen promoting the Bill would consent to strike out the clause rendering it necessary that the place where the hops were grown should be placed on the pocket, so that the hops of certain places might not go to market with a prejudice stamped upon them, he would support the Bill; if not, he should be compelled to oppose it, and he would put the Mover and Seconder in order that they might state their intentions on this point, by moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. If the hon. Gentleman would withdraw the provision to which he referred, he, on his part, would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Beresford Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. LOCKE said, that he represented an interest different from that represented by the Mover and Seconder of the second reading of the Bill. He stood there as the representative of hop merchants and brewers in the Borough, from whom he had presented a petition strongly in favour of the Bill. Hops did not come within the category of other articles of trade, and the principle of *caveat emptor* did not apply to them. He had been assured by some of his constituents that not even a person in the habit of buying hops could discover their quality until they were actually put into the copper, and it was only then that he could discover whether he had not bought a wrong article, and on that ground legislation not necessary in other cases was required in the matter of hops in order to prevent fraud. The numerous Acts which had been referred to on this subject had not been passed exclusively for Excise purposes, but for the very object contemplated by this Bill. The title of 54 *Geo.* III. c. 23, was—

> "An Act to amend Acts 39th and 40th of the reign of His Majesty to prevent Fraud and Abuses in the Trade of Hops."

Originally, the marks of the weight and year of growth on the pocket were Excise marks merely, but it was afterwards found that they were beneficial to the hop trade. It enabled dealers to tell what description of hops were offered for sale at a subsequent period by the change that had taken place in the weight. He believed his hon. Friend opposite did not object to these two branches of the weight and year of growth. The objection he raised was the old one made in 1857 to the provision, that the grower should not be entitled to sell bad hops as good hops. That really was the whole struggle in the Committee which inquired into the subject. The hon. Member opposite was quiet then, but he supposed the Weald of Kent had stirred him up. He was not aware that the evidence taken went to show that these marks were not beneficial. The witnesses stated as a reason why the duty should not be taken off that it would remove the supervision of the Excise, and that the trade would therefore be left open to every kind of fraud. They were in favour of retaining the duty, thinking that if they did not do that the marking would be got rid of. The Exciseman was, under the circumstances, their great protector. The hon. Member opposite did not go the length of saying that no man should mark his hops, but he wished to do away with the marks as to the locality of their growth. Now, all that was asked for by the Bill was that the old system should be continued, and that there should be no false marks. His hon. Friend's proposal was that he should have the power, supposing he had two fields, one in Sussex and one in Kent, of putting on the pockets marks denoting that both were grown in Kent. What was to be done with the unfortunate Sussex pocket? If it were to be sent to market with no mark upon it at all no doubt it might have some value; but the fame of East Kent and some other places where a better kind of hop was grown was so great, that the growers in other districts could not restrain themselves from placing the marks of East Kent and the other favoured districts on their pockets. This was to be prevented by preserving the old system, which was found to answer, of providing that all hops should be marked. The Exciseman at the time formerly superintended that, and there was no necessity then for a Bill of this kind, because the man who did not mark his hops properly was liable to an information, and to punishment by the Inland Revenue. But what had happened since the duty on hops had been taken off? Frauds innumerable had been committed, and they had not been detected. His hon. Friend had inserted clauses in the Bill providing that every person who had hops improperly marked in his possession, and could not give a satisfactory account of them, should be punished. Formerly, all that was necessary could be done through the Exciseman, who knew that he had the interests of Government and of the revenue of the country to protect, and he protected the public as the buyers of hops at the same time that he protected the Excise. What objection could the Weald of Kent have to put on an honest mark? for that was the real question involved. Was it because his hon. Friend happened to live in a district that was not to be called upon to "brand" itself that he was to act as a person who had been already branded, not for the virtue of the place which he represented, but for its vices? The Bill really appeared to him (Mr. Locke) to be a simple continuation Bill. There was scarcely anything new in it, with the exception that two marks of the weight and the year, which were formerly put on by the Exciseman, should in future be put on by the grower, in addition to the other marks which he was required to stamp upon the pocket. At present, they could not compel the owner or the grower to put on marks without a roundabout and expensive action for penalties. That course was to be discontinued, and instead of actions for penalties, which were very harrassing frequently to extremely honest persons, an information before a magistrate was to be introduced. If a fraudulent mark were put on, or if a person did not mark his hops at all, he might be brought before a magistrate and fined. That was undoubtedly new; but, at the same time, it was strictly in accordance with all recent legislation, which had got rid of the cumbrous, frequently unjust, and very dangerous system of leaving the matter in the hands of common informers. The Committee which sat upon the subject were unanimously of opinion that the marking of hops was absolutely necessary, and he could not therefore see what objection there could be to this measure, which merely continued that system in an efficient instead of an inefficient manner. In the Weald of Kent and in Sussex they might grow similar hops so far as name was concerned, but the produce would not be the same in reality. They might grow golding hops in Sussex, but they were not the same things as the goldings grown in East Kent. Was it fair, then, that the man who grew the inferior hops should compete on the same terms, and perhaps fraudulently, with the man who grew the superior quality? [Mr. BERESFORD HOPE: I should make that penal.] His object was to prevent them from getting into these scrapes. They should all start by marking honestly, and by declining to be led into temptation; for in opposing the clauses of this Bill they would only create temptation for others. If these clauses were not passed he ventured to say that there would be a temptation held out to all the "branded districts," as his hon. Friend called them, which he was satisfied none of them would ever be able to resist.

MR. GREENE felt that there was not much sympathy for the brewers in that House, but he thought they had a strong claim on the consideration of the House, inasmuch as they were the payers of the hop duty, which had been transferred by the legislation of the House from the hop-growers to the brewers. A man who understood hops might be able to tell one kind of hop from another; but, at the same time, it was impossible for him to tell on what soil those hops were grown, and that formed the whole gist of the question. Golding hops, for instance, which were grown in Sussex, would not, from the nature of the soil, impart those peculiar qualities either of flavour or of keeping which were essential to the ale for which they were used. None but those engaged in the business knew the disappointment and the loss, both in a pecuniary sense and in credit, which was sustained when brewers sent out a large quantity of beer for summer use, and were deceived in the hops they had used. It was also, in his opinion, due to the grower of the hops, as well as to the buyer and consumer, that they should be marked, for it was not right that a man paying a high rent in East Kent should be liable to competition with the growers of Sussex or the Weald of Kent, who would palm their hops off upon the public in unfair competition with his. The goldings and finer sorts of hops were more delicate and difficult to grow than the coarser qualities, and the grower was more liable to blight and short crops, and that also was a matter which should be taken into consideration. A good deal had been said about another Bill now in the course of discussion being an honest Bill. It might be so, or it might not; but he thought this Bill was essential to make men honest. He had no doubt that in the hop trade there were men engaged who were as honourable as any others in the world, but there were also a vast number who lived by trickery and fraud. The protection of this Bill was needed especially for the small brewers, on whom inferior hops were palmed off, greatly to the injury of their trade. With these views he certainly hoped the Bill would pass.

Mr. Alderman LUSK was sorry at any time to differ from his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southwark, but he should like to know why hops should not stand on their own merits just like any other article of merchandise. Suppose he went into Mincing Lane to buy tea, did he find that article branded by the Government? No; he was left to judge for himself. And why should there be special legislation in a case of this sort? Why ask the Government to brand hops in any particular way? Why not leave the trade to stand on its own merits? and, if a buyer had not sufficient capacity to understand the trade, let him give place to some one else who had. This was a kind of retrograde legislation, which he could not approve. What was wanted was a good supply of hops. Let a fair chance be given to every county. Let them produce a good article. Let that article stand on its own merits in the market, and there would be no occasion for any brand.

Mr. KNIGHT said, that hops were unlike any other article in this respect, that their comparative value depended on a certain aroma which they derived from the particular place in which they were grown, but which could only be discovered by the taste when they were manufactured into beer. The Sussex growers wished to force their hops upon the market as the best hops, but the growers in all the other districts in England were opposed to that pretention, and that was the origin of all the contention that had arisen upon the subject.

Mr. PIM said, it appeared to him that a clear case had been made out for the passing of some such Bill as that under the consideration of the House. He considered the case of hops very similar to the case of the trade-marks which a manufacturer had a right to place on his goods. It was manifestly desirable to know the soil in which the hops were grown, for their quality varied very much in certain districts. The quality could not be known till the article was used. At present great facility was given to fraud, and there was a corresponding necessity for guarding against it. All the security required would be given by the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. CUBITT must express the cordial approval of his constituents with respect to this measure. He must, however, disclaim the plea of protection which his hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-upon-Trent had brought forward with regard to this Bill. All that was asked was that the necessary securities should be given which would prevent the frauds which were now so frequently practised. By losing the Excise mark one of the great securities which the trade possessed had been removed. The legislation had been most successful; but there was a residuum of grievance which this Bill would remedy.

Mr. MILNER GIBSON was not competent to enter into the controversy between the hopgrowers of Kent and Sussex, but would consider this solely as a question of general policy. For his own part, he must say there was considerable force in the observations of his hon. Friend the Member for Finsbury (Mr. Alderman Lusk), in regard to the compulsory branding or marking of any description of produce or manufacture. Certainly recent legislation had gone in the opposite direction. They had now before them a very able Report from the Fishery Commissioners, recommending the abolition of the branding of herrings. But then his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southwark (Mr. Locke) said the hop trade was an exceptional one, there was something about hops so peculiar, and the buyer was in such difficulties as to the quality of the article he wished to purchase, that it was necessary for his protection to enact some compulsory system of marking. If that were so, it was a very peculiar case, and he should be the last not to defer to the unanimous opinion of a Committee which was no doubt competent to form a judgment on the question. The Bill contained the provision, that persons should be required to put on marks indicating the place where the hops had been grown, and that if these marks were false there should be a summary mode of enforcing the penalties against persons so deceiving the public. There was no doubt that if the marks were to be compulsory there must be some provisions of that kind to prevent purchasers being misled, and growers being deprived of advantages to which they were entitled. It might be said that the Merchandise Marks Bill already afforded a sufficient remedy, but he found that was not so; and in respect to the necessity of preventing fraud by spurious marks, further legislation would appear in the case of hops to be requisite. As he understood, the place where the hops were grown was a very important indication of their quality, but the indications required by the Merchandise Marks Bill were limited to number, quality, measure, or weight, and there was nothing in it to restrain the false indication of place. He repeated, his own views and inclinations were against a system of compulsory marking of any merchandise; but as the buyers and growers of hops and others interested seemed, as it were, united in favour of compulsory marking, he did not want to set up his principle against their general wish. He would not, therefore, oppose the second reading of the Bill, thinking that they might fairly discuss in Committee the Amendments which had been suggested. Undoubtedly, the proposal was not new; the Bill was but an amendment of existing laws: but he had heard it whispered that it was rather an oversight, when the Excise duty on hops was abolished, that the laws which imposed the compulsory marking of the bags were allowed to remain upon the statute-books. Those laws were, however, upon the statute-book; and if there was a general desire that they should remain, there could be no doubt that they should be made effectual.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, he would withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* next.

BANK NOTES (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Mr. O'Beirne.*)

[BILL 29.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, observed, that although it was not a large and comprehensive measure it was one which to some extent affected the prosperity of the country. The banking interest in Ireland was subject to very improper and unfair restrictions, and this fact supplied one mode of explaining why the resources of Ireland had not been properly developed. It was calculated that in England, with a population of about 20,000,000, the issue of bank notes was about £26,000,000, and in addition there was a large circulation of gold, amounting to at least one sovereign for every head in the kingdom. In Scotland, with a population of 3,000,000, the circulation of notes was about £4,000,000; while Ireland, with a population close on 6,000,000, the actual circulation of notes was only £5,500,000. The small notes in Ireland had put sovereigns altogether out of circulation, and bank notes actually represented the present circulating medium in Ireland. The object of this Bill was first to make Bank of England notes a legal tender in Ireland; and secondly, to remove some restrictions on banks of issue in that country with respect to their notes. At present there was no legal tender in Ireland except gold, while in England bank notes were a legal tender. In Ireland gold had to be given for notes, and the consequence was that in times of panic or excitement it was necessary that considerable importations of gold should take place from England into Ireland, and this involved a serious tax on the bankers of Ireland. Every £100,000 of gold cost the Irish banker 7*s.* per cent, or £350, for insurance and other charges. He now proposed that bank notes should be made a legal tender in Ireland, although he should prefer that Imperial notes should be made a legal tender in England, Ireland, and Scotland. That would be the proper principle—that there should be one department for the issue of Imperial notes, just as there was for the coining of gold. We might still preserve a metallic basis for notes, and banks of issue would not be prejudiced, because they might get Government notes on certain terms. It had been suggested that the notes of the Bank of Ireland might be made a legal tender, but there were several objections to that proposition. In the first place, the Bank of Ireland was a private bank, and it was not bound, as was the Bank of England, to issue notes for gold. The Bank of Ireland might decline to issue a single note, and the note of no bank should be made a legal tender which the public could not claim to get as a right in exchange for gold. Moreover, the past history of the Bank of Ireland was not such as to give them any claim for a preference for any privilege of their notes. In place of acting as a banker's bank, which ought to have been their policy, their issue had always been from a million to a million and a half under their authorized issue. On a question of this kind the interest of the public and not that of any particular bank should be regarded. It would be of the greatest advantage to make Bank of

England notes a legal tender in Ireland, as they were now frequently at a discount of from ⅛ to ½ per cent in that country, and the Bank of Ireland had refused to take Bank of England notes, which they could not have done had such notes been made a legal tender. It had been objected against his proposition that there was ready communication between England and Ireland, but he did not see the force of that observation, as Dublin was now practically nearer London than were many parts of England in 1834, when the Bank of England notes were made a legal tender in England. The alteration he proposed would lead to free trade in banking in Ireland, instead of banks not of issue in Ireland being completely at the mercy of the Bank of Ireland. They were told that the Bank of England did not ask for the concession made in 1834, and that the two directors of the Bank who then enjoyed seats in Parliament said it would be of no advantage to them. But as the Bank of England possessed great rights, it had also great duties. The Bank was bound to issue notes for every bit of gold brought into it, and it obtained a profit of 1½*d.* an ounce upon the transaction. At one time the Bank of England note was a legal tender in Ireland, according to the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown which was taken upon the question. He would conclude his observations on this part of the Bill by remarking that the proposed change had been approved by the Royal Bank and the Belfast Banking Company, and a petition in favour of this Bill had been presented from the last-named bank, which had more branches in Ulster than any other bank. The second object of the Bill was of a less extensive character. Under the Act passed in 1828 banks of issue in Ireland were obliged to make their notes payable at the place at which they issued them, and this had led to serious inconvenience. At the time that Act was passed the Bank of Ireland enjoyed a monopoly of issue within fifty miles of Dublin, and the main object of the provision was to prevent any evasion of the rights of that bank. But in 1845 the monopoly of the Bank of Ireland within fifty miles of Dublin was done away with, and, therefore, there was now no object in requiring banks of issue in that country to make their notes payable at their branches, more particularly as such a provision acted most injuriously on the banks of issue and on the country at large. By the present system banks of issue were compelled to keep £120,000 in gold lying idle for every £100,000 of notes issued, to the great loss of the bankers. If such banks were authorized to make their notes payable at their head offices only, they would keep all their gold at that office, and they could then use it with profit by issuing notes against it. This system also prevented the opening of branch banks, because if notes were issued at a branch bank that establishment must be open every day to receive its notes when presented, though perhaps in many small towns the ordinary business of the place would not require the bank to be open more than two or three days a week. By the proposed change, the law of Ireland in this respect would be assimilated to that of Scotland, and thus a great restriction on banking facilities would be removed. The effect of the difference in the state of the law in Scotland and in Ireland in reference to banking was clearly shown by a Return laid before Parliament last Session, from which it appeared that while in Ireland, with a population of nearly 6,000,000, there were only 191 branch banks of issue, in Scotland, with a population scarcely more than 3,000,000, there were 594 branch banks. The Irish system did not give any increased value to notes issued there, whilst there was considerable disadvantage in times of disorder, in having depôts of gold scattered over the country. In 1837 a good deal of evidence was given before a Committee by important men, who all agreed as to the inconvenience of the present system, and he for his part could see no great reason in adhering to it. In bringing forward this measure, he felt bound to state that he did not wish to stand or fall by any portion of the Bill; and should the Chancellor of the Exchequer not see his way to accepting the first portion of the Bill, he should be quite ready, in the event of the Bill being read a second time, to abandon either that portion in Committee, or to withdraw the present Bill and to bring in a fresh one having reference to the second portion only, which related to the restriction of the banks of issue. In case the pressure of public business had been so great as to prevent the Chancellor of the Exchequer from considering the question, he should not object to postpone the discussion on the subject for a month or six weeks. But if there was not time to carry the measure during the present Session, he did not see what chance there would be for it during the ensuing Session.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, while acknowledging the courtesy of his hon. and learned Friend in offering to postpone the discussion upon the Bill for the convenience of the Government, was afraid he could not conscientiously acquiesce in his proposition to postpone this Bill to some future period of the Session, inasmuch as he could not see any prospect of the horizon of public business being any way clearer a month or six weeks hence than it was at present. He was in no degree surprised that his hon. and learned Friend should feel some impatience with reference to the present state of the law of banking in Ireland, and that he should be prepared to resist the dilatory plea that they were too busy just now to deal with the matter. He could, however, assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that the Government, in conjunction with gentlemen who had paid great attention to this subject, had carefully considered the provisions of the Bill before the House. Had it been in their power consistently with their duty to the public to have assented to the Bill they would undoubtedly have done so, but he would proceed to state the reasons which had unfortunately led them to refuse their assent to it. His hon. and learned Friend said he was willing to enter into an engagement either to drop the first portion of the Bill in Committee or to withdraw the Bill altogether, and to introduce a fresh Bill having reference to the second portion only of the Bill. It would, however, undoubtedly be a very objectionable proceeding were the House to assent to the second reading of a Bill with the view of casting out its principal part in Committee. He would briefly state the reasons which he thought were conclusive against both portions of the Bill. In the first place, as to the proposal to make Bank of England notes a legal tender in Ireland, the hon. Baronet said that in order that the Bank should have no just cause of complaint, he did not propose to oblige the Bank of England to open any branches in Ireland, and he thus deprived that Bank of any proprietary or commercial objection to the Bill by which otherwise it might have been seriously affected. But he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) considered that, as regarded the interests of the public generally, such an arrangement ought not to be established. Indeed, it appeared to him that the hon. Baronet had, by his own speech, cut the ground from under his feet, because he said that it frequently happened when the Irish market for stock did not afford a purchaser, and when it was the interest of the seller to send his stock to London for sale, he obtained in London Bank of England notes in payment, and that arriving in Dublin with those notes he was obliged to submit to a discount of one-eighth per cent. That, in itself, was a sufficient answer to the first portion of the Bill. He was anxious, however, to show that the Government meant more than mere empty words when they said that the state of the banking law of Ireland required some modification. He entirely agreed that by the present system the operation of the banks in Ireland was much restricted, and that there was ample reason for approaching the question. He would, however, remind the hon. Gentleman that the question was not one which could be approached with advantage at all times. Upon a recent occasion he drew a distinction between questions which ought to be treated upon local grounds, and such as ought only to be viewed upon Imperial grounds. Now the Bill before the House involved a question of a strictly Imperial character. It was quite true that there were three different systems of laws in operation in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and he was far, indeed, from saying that those systems might not be reduced to one with advantage to the country. Parliament could not settle the law in any one country without considering how it would affect the state of the law in the other two, and consequently any proposal in regard to the currency in Ireland must be considered not merely in regard to its effect there, but also to its effect in Scotland and England. The last successful legislation upon the currency took place in 1844, and was one of the principal achievements of the late Sir Robert Peel, at a time when he was at the head of one of the strongest Ministries that had existed in England for many years; but even to him it was a matter which tasked his strength and the strength of his Government to the uttermost to carry through the Acts of 1844 and 1845. It was plainly impossible to deal with the question of currency at large at a period when not only was the time of the House taken up by matters of absorbing interest, but when likewise false issues would necessarily enter into and darken and disturb the calm and impartial views with which they ought to consider a question of this kind. Thus much he had said in justification of the Government for continuing to delay the attempt to settle these questions. For himself, he must say that there was no one subject which he should have been so desirous of bringing under the consideration of the House during the present Session as the state of the law with regard to banking and the currency had he not felt the claims of other and higher questions to be such as to put it quite out of the question. His hon. Friend asked him, "Will you, or will you not, assent to a proposal for releasing Irish banks from their present obligation to make their promissory notes expressly payable in gold to the bearer on demand at the place where the same were issued?" His hon. Friend proposed that these banks should be only compellable to pay their promissory notes in gold at the head offices, and he thought he had established a case for the adoption of such a proposal when he showed that gold was now required to be kept at the branch banks which would not have to be kept there if the law were relaxed. He added that a certain expense was entailed on them by the requirement, and that he had the countenance and support of most of the respectable bankers in Ireland in the proposal he now made. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) did not wish to dispute any of these propositions, though he might observe that Mr. Murray, whom his hon. Friend had quoted, when examined in 1848 before the Select Committee on Commercial Distress, said that this provision was a hardship, not because it necessitated the keeping of large stocks of gold at the branch offices which for their own security they would always do, but because it necessitated the constant transmission and re-transmission of notes of different branches to the place of issue. Mr. Murray entirely disclaimed the notion that a greater quantity of gold had to be kept in the branches in consequence of this proviso. He could not admit with his hon. Friend that it was self-evident, or anything near self-evident, that some relaxation ought to be introduced in the obligation of the Irish banks to pay their notes in gold at their branch banks, for such a proposition appeared to him a very disputable one, to say the least. It was obvious that the first tendency of his hon. Friend's proposal would be to impair the convertibility of the notes. Now, let them consider what the law was. It was not excessively severe. It did not require banks which had branches, perhaps, all over Ireland to meet their notes in gold wherever they had places of business, but it bound them to meet the notes at the place where they issued them. His hon. Friend, however, complained that in Scotland there was no obligation upon the banks to convert their notes into gold at the places where those notes were issued. But his hon. Friend must recollect that whenever the Scotch system was made the subject of adverse comment the defenders of that system invariably replied, and replied, he believed, with truth, that, whatever it might be in the abstract, it had in practice peculiar defences, which were known nowhere else, those defences consisting in the plan of periodical and constant communications and interchange among the different banks of the notes which they respectively issued. Whether that was a sufficient argument under all the circumstances to show that the Scotch system was a good one, he would offer no opinion upon, but he must say that it established a very broad distinction between Scotland and any other country where that arrangement did not exist. He now came to England, and what was the case here? The Bank of England was compelled to pay the notes which it issued at its branches, either at those branches or in London, and with respect to the country banks he believed he was correct in saying that, though the local issues were under no legal obligation on the subject, they found it necessary for the safe conduct of their business to make the notes they issued at their branches payable either there or at the head office. The rule, therefore, which his hon. Friend sought to remove in Ireland existed in practice in England likewise. He might, indeed, be told "Put us under no obligation, as you have none in England;" but he must not be expected to admit that whatever existed in England or Scotland was to be cited as a pattern for legislation in Ireland. The legislation of Sir Robert Peel did not proceed upon that principle; he did not attempt to make the entire details of the currency system conform to abstract principles. All he aimed at, even with the great effort he made under such favourable circumstances, was to secure as most vital and most essential the convertibility of the Bank of England note and security against excessive issues, with the good regulation of foreign ex-changes. The system which he found existing in the private banks he was compelled to compound with upon the best terms he could make; and therefore the Government must not be expected to admit that because one country happened to have an exemption which the others did not enjoy, therefore the exemption ought to be extended to all. His hon. Friend had put forward an argument which rather rested upon an oblivion of what was the main governing circumstances in all these questions relating to private issue. If there was private issue with an open system, if there prevailed what some people called, though he did not, "free banking"—every man being allowed to issue as many notes as he pleased, and to get all the people he could to accept them—then the supporters of this Bill would be able to say that the issue of notes was thrown open to general competition, and the trade being so thrown open ought to have every facility Parliament could give it. But this was not the case. That general competition had been entirely put an end to by Sir Robert Peel, and at present a monopoly existed. Monopoly was an odious word, but it was the only expression which would indicate the fact. An exclusive privilege existed in the hands of certain parties, and those parties were not in a position to come forward and say, "These provisions pinch us a little here and a little there; take them away; it will do no harm, and the public will get the benefit." If there was an open trade, his hon. Friend might be justified in saying, "Relieve these branches from the expense of transmission and of keeping so much gold, and the public will reap the benefit;" but, it being strictly of the nature of a monopoly, the *primâ facie* ground for asking Parliament to enter upon a partial examination of the law entirely disappeared. His hon. Friend did not attempt to meet the whole of the case. He argued that private banks ought to be allowed to come to London and pay their notes and transact their business here without the intervention of agents, and he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) quite agreed with him. That, in his opinion, was a much clearer proposition than that propounded by this Bill. Whether any relaxation could be introduced into the law on this subject he was not now prepared to say, but it was most important that a man who had received a note should be able to exchange it for gold at the same place. Any change in the law, however, which would enable every bank to do business wherever it pleased, and would enable country banks to transact business in the one grand centre of monetary business for every dealer in money throughout the three kingdoms, was the most important subject to which the attention of Parliament could be drawn. He hoped he had said enough to show his hon. Friend that the Government were not unreasonable in stating that this was a question to which they must apply the same principle that they applied in analogous, if not strictly corresponding, cases. They could not undertake to deal with any portion of the law bearing upon the position of bankers until they were able to review the position as a whole. He need not go into the details of the scheme, but he was perfectly certain that the Bill would immediately raise questions from Scotland, and probably from England also. They would be dragged on to legislate from point to point without reference to any general principle. The result would be that, instead of making their currency system more consistent and harmonious, more conformable to sound principles, and at the same time better adapted to promote the free banking, which he agreed they ought to promote as far as possible, they would lose much of the ground that they had already gained, and would be plunged into a sea of perplexities. He could assure his hon. Friend that Her Majesty's Government were as anxious as he was for the time to come when they would be able to legislate for the subject as a whole, but they were unable to agree to the second reading of this Bill, and he trusted the hon. Gentleman would not be disposed to press it to a division.

Mr. THOMSON HANKEY said, that if any objection had been raised by the Bank of England with regard to this subject it would have taken the form of an official communication from the Governor to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but no such communication had been made. Begging the House to understand that he was only expressing his individual opinion, and without reference to his connection with the Bank of England, he wished to make a few remarks upon some observations offered by the Mover of the Bill. He appeared to have an idea that the Bank of England were rather anxious to evade the kind of responsibility devolving upon them in consequence of the privileges they enjoyed of supplying notes for the whole kingdom. Now, the Bank of England were undoubtedly bound to supply any quantity of notes that were required in exchange for gold, and they did not at all shrink from that obligation. His hon. Friend, however, seemed to think it would be an advantage to the Bank to have their notes made a legal tender in Ireland, as it would necessarily lead to the establishment of a branch or branches in Ireland where those notes should be exchanged. He believed, however, that the Bank of England, while much obliged to the hon. Gentleman, were quite willing to confine their operations to England, and had not the least wish to incur the serious expense of an establishment in Ireland. Their interest in their circulation was limited to fourteen or fifteen millions, and every shilling of their circulation beyond that was an expense, though it might not be a heavy one, for they were obliged to keep gold under their charge, and to have a constant system of coinage. He should like his hon. Friend to look over their bills, and see whether such an establishment could be carried on at a less expense than nearer £300,000 than £200,000 a year. To introduce a large number of their notes into Ireland would involve additional expense, though, if they were bound to do so by their charter, they would not flinch from it. The hon. Gentleman appeared to have a notion that the more bank notes he could get into Ireland the richer Ireland would become, but the idea of the hon. Gentleman was altogether chimerical. Bankers did not create capital, and if the capital of Ireland increased, an increase of circulative capital in the shape of notes or gold was sure to follow. The banking interests of Ireland were sufficient to afford facilities for carrying on the trade that at present existed, and if more English capital was introduced into Ireland it would be easily made available. The first part of this Bill proposed to make Bank of England notes a legal tender in Ireland, and the second part proposed to make notes issued in one place payable at another. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer had so fully stated his objections to the Bill, that it was not necessary for him to say more.

SIR COLMAN O'LOGHLEN said, that after the observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he should not proceed further with the Bill.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *withdrawn.*

PROSECUTION EXPENSES BILL.

(*Mr. Goldney, Mr. Goddard.*)

[BILL 28.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

MR. H. A. BRUCE stated that it was not the intention of the Government to offer any opposition to going into Committee on this measure, for there was a great deal in the Bill which might be considered and adopted. At present in all cases of summary conviction the expenses could be certified by the magistrate, and in cases of felony or misdemeanor, triable at assizes or quarter sessions, the expenses were certified by the committing magistrate and forwarded to the Crown Office, and then, if found reasonable, they were allowed. Where, however, a charge was not sufficiently proved to justify a committal, the expenses of witnesses could not, under the present regulations, be allowed. Those witnesses might have been brought up from a distance, at great cost, and the case might have been a most proper one for investigation, but the absence of some link in the chain of evidence might cause a dismissal, and it was only just that provision should be made for the payment of expenses in such cases. Then came the question whether the charge should be imposed on the Treasury. The Treasury, in the case of committals, had a security for the case being thoroughly inquired into by the second and final tribunal, and the Judge or Chairman of Quarter Sessions, if satisfied that the expenses had been properly incurred, made an order, and the sum was immediately paid by the Treasury. Where there was no committal the inquiry was far less complete, and there was not the same security for the prosecution having been rightly instituted. The Government, therefore, in assenting to the Bill, did so, on the clear understanding that the charge it involved should not be borne by the Treasury.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Powers of examining Magistrate to grant Certificate of Expenses to Prosecutor and Witnesses extended, and Petty Session Clerks to be entitled to Fees on Depositions).

Mr. HENLEY moved the omission of the words "prosecutor and," with the view of limiting the payment of witnesses to those not personally concerned in the case.

Mr. GOODSON assented to the Amendment, which was agreed to.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Declaration by Magistrate to be annexed to Certificate, and laid before Chairman of Quarter Sessions, who may allow Amount wholly or partially, and make Orders for Payment).

Mr. HENLEY moved an Amendment fixing on the Court of Quarter Sessions, instead of simply on the Chairman, the responsibility of allowing the expenses. He also suggested that the operation of the Bill should be limited to three years, at the end of which time, if it had worked satisfactorily, there would be a good ground for transferring the charge from the various counties to the Treasury.

Amendment *agreed to:* Clause *agreed to.*

Remaining clauses *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Friday.*

THAMES NAVIGATION BILL—[Bill 59.]

(*Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. Monsell.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Milner Gibson.*)

Mr. HENLEY said, that there was much of the measure of which he could not approve. It appeared to him that it afforded no sufficient guarantee for the protection of the rights of the inhabitants of the towns and of the private residences situated along the river. The state of things in the upper part of the river was such that he believed that if something were not done soon the whole thing would revert to a state of nature. A Commission had been inquiring into the state of the river, and they had lately presented a Report, but had not favoured the public with the evidence on which it was founded. The inquiry carried on by the Commission was carried on principally in relation to what was called the pollution of the river, which was a matter not connected with navigation, except so far that they both concerned the river. The Report of the Commission recommended that every town should be compelled to buy so many acres of land over which the sewage should run; and they said that when the sewage had run over the land it became innocuous. But they subsequently said it did not follow because only a certain proportion of organic matter could be detected in the water of the Thames at Teddington that the sewage should be innocuous. Surely, the same observations applied to the sewage water which had run over land, and in which only a small proportion of organic matter could be discovered. He thought the Commissioners should have made some inquiry as to whether sewage running into a river six or seven miles above a certain point did not become innocuous by the time it had flowed down to that point. There was at present a Conservancy Board of eighteen gentlemen, some of whom represented the corporation of London and others the Admiralty, the Trinity House, and other great public bodies; and those gentlemen were naturally little prepared to attend to details affecting the interest of comparatively obscure individuals. It was proposed by the present measure that three new conservators should be created; but those gentlemen would, he feared, be wholly powerless among the eighteen colleagues with whom they were to be associated. He doubted whether, considering that we had spent £3,000,000 in getting rid of a nuisance in London, this body was an impartial tribunal to determine questions affecting the river above London. It was not his intention to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but he thought that points connected with it still required the attention of the Government. He doubted whether the body to whom it was intended to delegate these various powers were equal to their discharge.

Mr. NEATE said, he should not oppose the second reading of the Bill, although his own judgment told him that this new body would not be found able to discharge the trust it was proposed to impose on them. He objected to the scope of the Bill, which ought to have included not only the navigation but also the management of the Thames. This matter was looked at differently now from what it was sixty or seventy years ago; then the important point was the navigation of the river, and the sewage question had not arisen. Now the important point was the sewage. The upper part of the Thames was not useful at all for the purposes of navigation; but it was very useful for the purposes of land drainage and irrigation, and he did not think the conservators knew much about the latter objects. Irrigation was a new thing, and was attracting great attention. It was possible the conservators might have to resort to a rate to carry out the object in view. When the Commissioners went to Oxford he (Mr. Neate) gave them a scheme for regulating the government of that part of the river, but it had led to no result. He knew a gentleman who used a weir, in order to enable him to throw back the water which had come by rainfall over his land, and this Bill would take away his weir among others, without giving him any compensation.

Mr. DENMAN said, that if this Bill should become law it might be found desirable to place fresh power in the hands of the conservators of the river for regulating the traffic on days like that of the University boat race. If this were not done probably some terrible accident would occur, and many lives might be sacrificed, and then perhaps Parliament would be called on to interfere. He found there was no body which had a right to make rules respecting the manner in which steam-boats should proceed along the stream on occasions of great aquatic festivals; for the Thames Conservancy Board had only a right to determine how vessels should be placed at their moorings, and to make minor regulations as to the navigation. The Commissioners had not a right to stop the progress of steamers even for a quarter of an hour. If fresh powers were to be granted to the Commissioners, he thought it would be well to invest them with authority that might be exercised usefully on an occasion like that he had referred to, and on similar occasions. He thought such a body ought to be competent to deal with a matter of that sort. If a Select Committee were called upon to deal with the question he hoped there would be an instruction to them to frame proper regulations to insure the public safety and convenience.

Mr. AYRTON thought that the subject referred to by the hon. and learned Gentleman was purely a question of police, and had better be committed to such a body as that proposed for regulating the traffic of the metropolis. The Bill proposing to grant fresh powers to the police to regulate the metropilitan traffic would soon come under consideration, and as there were police on the river, they would be the persons best fitted to determine what measure of interference was necessary when there was a large collection of steamers and boats on the stream. He thought that it was a matter of serious question whether the same body should control the port of London and also the Upper Thames; and whether there should not be a line of division drawn between the Upper and Lower Thames in reference to jurisdiction. No doubt the matter was very much one of detail, which could be best discussed before the Select Committee; but he was quite convinced that if there was not an unequivocal distinction made between the finances of the two parts of the river, the commerce of London would ultimately be saddled with a number of expenses which belonged entirely to the upper waters and the districts through which they ran.

Mr. THOMSON HANKEY observed, that it should not be forgotten what was the real state of things they had to provide for. He explained that the Commission found the Thames Commissioners, from no fault of their own, to be an entirely bankrupt body, quite incapable of keeping up the locks and other works on the Upper Thames. Unless the water were kept up by locks the river would revert to its original state—at times, it would be so dry as to enable people to walk over, at others so flooded that a great deal of injury might be sustained by millowners and others, and therefore it was necessary to devise some scheme to do this work. The Commission were asked to find some means of revising this state of things, and their attention was naturally attracted to the Thames Conservancy, who had funds which might be applied to that purpose. The Conservancy Board were themselves very unwilling to take this extra duty upon themselves, and only agreed to do so in the event of their being asked. Under these circumstances, he thought the best plan was to place the control of the upper waters in the hands of a well-known body, who had well and economically managed the river as far as Staines.

Sir WENTWORTH DILKE had reason to believe that those who were especially interested in the subject were perfectly satisfied with the Bill, with the exception of one point, and that was relating to the number of Commissioners, which they did not consider to be sufficient.

Sir FRANCIS GOLDSMID said, that he also did not feel inclined to join in the chorus of objection to the Bill, no complaints having been forwarded from Reading, the town he represented, which was a place of some importance on the river. He must say, however, that the landholders appeared to have been dealt with in a somewhat summary manner.

Mr. LOCKE said, he, for one, had never entertained an idea that he was one of 800 persons having a voice in the regulation of the river Thames. Now the question had been raised, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would be very wrong to sanction the creation of a divided authority, or to give to persons in the upper districts the power of determining the amount of water supply that should be given to those at the lower extremity when the interests affected were so immeasurably greater. He was himself in favour of placing the whole government of the matter in the hands of the Thames Conservancy Board.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee of Eleven Members, six to be nominated by the House, and five by the Committee of Selection.

And, on May 10, Select Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. Neate, Sir George Bowyer, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr. Yorke, and five Members to be named by the Committee of Selection.

HELSTON ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined—

That Adolphus William Young, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Helston.

That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, that the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

1. That Adolphus William Young, esquire, was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery and treating at the last Election:
2. That it was proved to the Committee that William Rowe received an offer of £20 from Henry James Seccombe, the Agent of the said Adolphus William Young, in order to induce him to vote for the said Adolphus William Young:
3. That it was not proved that the said Acts of bribery and treating were committed with the knowledge and consent of the said Adolphus William Young:
4. That the Committee have no reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last Election for the said Borough.

Report to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at ten minutes
before Six o'clock.

Sir Francis Goldsmid

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, April 19, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Sat First in Parliament*—The Earl of Jersey, after the Death of his Grandfather.

Several Lords took the Oath.

Public Bills—*First Reading*—Postmaster General * (75).

Committee—Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases * (70), and Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland) * (71), *considered* in Committee, *reported,* read 3^{a}, and *passed*; Parliamentary Oaths Amendment (54 & 76).

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 54.)—(*Earl Russell.*)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1 (Form of Oath to be taken by Members of Parliament).

The Marquess of BATH, on rising to move to insert in the oath the words "and I make this declaration on the true faith of a Christian," and to omit from the Schedule the words "23rd and 24th Vic. c. 63," and also the words—

> "An Act to amend the Act of the 21st and 22nd Vic. c. 49, to provide for the relief of Her Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish Religion,"

said, that in the ostensible and avowed objects of the Bill—to simplify the oaths taken by Members of Parliament to relieve Roman Catholic Members from a grievance which he considered more imaginary than real—he cordially concurred. But the Bill, in addition to an open and avowed, had also a covert and insidious object, which had not been alluded to by one of its supporters in the House of Commons, or by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, or the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) who addressed the House in support of the Bill. It had, however, been alluded to by his noble and learned Friend (Lord Chelmsford), who stated that he had always conscientiously opposed that object. That object was, for the first time, and by an Act of the united Legislature, to un-Christianize the Houses of Parliament. When a majority of their Lordships, in 1858, for the purpose of saving the two Houses from a conflict, and the Government from a dilemma, did violence to their convictions by supporting the Amendment of his noble and gallant Friend (the Earl of Lucan), he had thought that the question of the admission of the Jews had been settled for ever. It was then discovered that a Jewish Member of Parliament, although incompetent to vote upon a division, could sit and vote in Committee, and enjoy all the other privileges of a Member of Parliament. That was a startling anomaly, and a Resolution was brought forward to enable the Jews, in spite of the existing law, to take their seats in the House of Commons. The decision of the Judges upon the matter, if it were brought before them for the recovery of the penalties, was not doubtful. There was therefore the greatest danger of a conflict between the House of Commons and the Judges. To save the country from this danger and the Government of the day from the dilemma in which they were placed, he and many others on that (the Opposition) side voted in support of the Bill of his noble and gallant Friend (the Earl of Lucan). He would recall to their Lordships' attention how that Bill dealt with the question. It left the whole subject of oaths as it stood before; but it enabled the other House of Parliament by Resolution to dispense with certain portions of the prescribed oath, so as to allow Jews to take their seats in the House of Commons. He admitted that was a compromise, and to some extent a concession of principle; but let their Lordships consider what it was they conceded. And here he would say that it was to that (the Opposition) side of the House rather than the other that he addressed himself. The point that was conceded was the permission to the House of Commons to admit by Resolution Jews into their House by the omission from the oath of the words "on the true faith of a Christian." Half of that power the House of Commons already possessed, for it had been discovered that a Member without taking the prescribed oaths might enjoy all the privileges of a Member, except those of sitting and voting in the whole House. It was also unquestionable that the House of Commons would persist until they should find some means, whether legal or illegal, of seating the gentleman in question in their House. All, therefore, that their Lordships conceded was half the point—in fact, a half which they hardly had to give. What did their Lordships' House retain? It retained the power of maintaining intact the Christian character of that House, and it also saved, as it were, the acknowledgment on the part of the united Legislature of the right of other than Christians taking their seat in either House; it saved the country, as he had said, from a conflict between the House of Commons and the Courts of Law; it avoided an unpleasant difference between the two Houses; it set at rest a question which he could distinctly say, from his knowledge of the House at that time, was as much disliked by those who supported the Bill as by those who opposed it; and last, and not least, it saved the Government of the day from a dilemma in which they were placed by the causes to which he had alluded—and the fact that there was a considerable difference of opinion among the various Members of the Cabinet on the subject. Now, he would ask, why was this question, then set at rest, again to be disturbed? Who were dissatisfied with the present state of the law? What arguments were there in favour of the proposed change? He certainly had heard none. Although he thought it would have been better and more straightforward if the Government had from the first called attention to this most important feature of the Bill, even in their silence on that point they were justified by the conduct of noble Lords on that side; and therefore he would bring no charge against the Government on that ground. Though he thought Her Majesty's Government bound by the compromise entered into in 1858, yet he was bound to admit that when those who were as it were the managers of the compromise on that (the Opposition) side acquiesced by their silence or by their voices in the course which the Government had pursued, they were justified in considering themselves absolved from the conditions of the treaty. He was not going to inflict on their Lordships a speech on the Jewish question. If any one sought for reasons against admitting the Jews to Parliament, they might be found in *Hansard*, in the speeches of the noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) and the noble and learned Lord (Lord Chelmsford) by his side, and so convincingly stated that it would be difficult to understand why those noble Lords should go back from opinions which they had so long deliberately entertained. He had, indeed, heard one reason given by his noble and learned Friend (Lord Chelmsford) when, in passing, he alluded to this part of the question on the second reading. If he was not incorrect, the argument of his noble and learned Friend was this—He said he had consistently opposed the admission of the Jews to Parliament, but that the whole principle was compromised by the measure of 1858; the game was up, the battle over, and there was nothing left to fight for. He could hardly think his noble and learned Friend could have been serious. In all treaties, compromises, and arrangements between nations, parties, or individuals, a certain sacrifice of views, and therefore of principle, was made on the one side or the other, or both. But did the noble and learned Lord seriously mean to maintain that, because he could not retain all that he asked, he would come to no terms, make no treaty, submit to no compromise on any occasion? Would his noble and learned Friend say, "I cannot obtain what I seek, therefore I will take nothing. I cannot retain what I want, therefore I will throw the whole overboard." He could not believe that. Every principle contained principles in it, and was itself contained in the principle of doing what was right to the best of one's ability. Did his noble and learned Friend mean to say that, because in his opinion a wrong had been done in admitting the Jews to the House of Commons, that wrong created a right, and the Jews ought to be admitted to both Houses? Now, in the case of tithes, the right to them lay originally in the inviolate right of the Church to one-tenth of the produce of the land. It was found, however, that tithe acted as a tax and as an impediment to the improvement of the land, and tithes were commuted to a rent-charge based on the tenth of the produce at that period. Again, in the case of church rates, which was the topic of the present day, there were few in that House who did not desire to see that question settled by relieving Dissenters. Would the noble and learned Lord maintain that, because the supporters of church rates would be willing to consent to such a compromise, church rates must be done away? If that was the argument of the noble and learned Lord, it could not be taken to be the argument of those who voted in favour of the Motion of his noble and gallant Friend (the Earl of Lucan). The noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) when First Minister of the Crown, having summoned a majority of the House to aid him in excluding Jews, aliens in race and religion, from entering Parliament, was never weary of assuring the House, on the Motion of his noble and gallant Friend, that their Lordships still maintained their opinion, that they conceded no principle, although they were ready to satisfy, to some extent, the wishes of the House of Commons, and that there was no abandonment of principle. He confessed that, influenced by the authority and eloquence of the noble Earl, though with much hesitation, he voted in favour of the Motion of his noble and gallant Friend. But what were the reasons why the noble Earl passed in silent acquiescence over this portion of the Bill before the House? Was it because he considered the question an unimportant one? The noble Earl could not consider unimportant a question upon which he for several years made a chief display of his eloquence and of the personal influence which he exercised over the House. The question was set at rest in 1858, and had remained at rest until now—until now there had been no demand for a change; the advocates of religious emancipation were satisfied with the Act of 1858, and there had not been even a single allusion during the passage of the Bill through the House of Commons to this very important question. What, then, were the reasons why they were to turn their backs upon their former opinions, and to stultify themselves in the way proposed by this Bill. What the noble Earl's reasons were he knew not. What others thought he was equally unacquainted with. What the fate of his Amendment might be, whether anybody would vote for it, he did not know; but he could not silently acquiesce in passing a measure which a majority of that House so earnestly, so frequently, and so consistently opposed. He would, on the contrary, give their Lordships an opportunity to-night of vindicating by their votes the Christian character of that House, and their determination not to be moved or induced, without reason assigned or argument employed, to abandon a principle which they had so long defended. In the Amendment to the Schedule of the Bill of which he had given notice he proposed to continue the Act brought in by his noble and gallant Friend below him.

Amendment *moved*, to insert after the word "subject" the words "and I make this Declaration on the true Faith of a Christian."—(*The Marquess of Bath.*)

Earl RUSSELL said, that the question of the admission of the Jews into Parliament was a question which was for many years advocated, with great ability and perseverance, in the House of Commons. These discussions at length led to a conference between the two Houses, in which a most awkward and inconvenient decision was arrived at, the effect of which was that, although a Jew might not sit in the House of Commons, he might sit upon its Committees and join in their Reports. Eventually, in 1858, both Houses agreed to a compromise, which was that either House might pass a Resolution authorizing a Jew who sought to take his seat to take the oath without the words "and I make this declaration on the true faith of a Christian." That was a very convenient compromise, and it saved the Government of the day from great embarrassment, and there was no ground for saying that there remained any difficulty after that compromise. Many Resolutions were passed by the House of Commons to admit Jews by omitting these words from the oath taken by them; and at length it had become a Standing Order of the House of Commons that when a Jew presented himself at the table of the House to be sworn, the words "and I make this declaration on the true faith of a Christian," should be omitted from the oath. It was under these circumstances that the Legislature were called upon to consider a general law for placing the question of oaths upon a fair and intelligible footing. It would be far better that there should be a uniform law for both Houses, that there should be one oath for all Members, and that there should be no distinction on the ground of the religious faith of a person who had a right to sit in either House. It was surely better not to have an Act of Parliament that said Jews should be admitted, and another that they should not. The proposal of the noble Marquess would revive the whole controversy as to the admission of Jews, and as that would lead to great inconvenience, he hoped that the Amendment would be rejected, and that Parliament would accept a general oath for all Members.

Lord CHELMSFORD said, he did not think the noble Earl opposite (Earl Russell) had correctly stated the effect of the Amendment. It would not revive the contest with respect to the admission of Jews to Parliament; but it would simply maintain the compromise of 1858. But, notwithstanding the arguments of his noble Friend the Marquess of Bath, he (Lord Chelmsford) was unable to agree with him. The noble Marquess was perfectly correct in his recollection of his (Lord Chelmsford's) observations on the second reading of the Bill; but although the noble Marquess had roundly taken him to task for those remarks, he had not convinced him that he had taken a wrong view on the subject. He (Lord Chelmsford) had always opposed the admission of Jews to Parliament on principle, and he objected to the compromise of 1858 entirely upon the ground that it was a violation of the principle which he contended for. But the House of Commons had chosen to adopt a Resolution by means of which a person of the Jewish faith presenting himself at the table could be admitted on taking the oath, omitting the words "on the true faith of a Christian," and that Resolution had now become a Standing Order of the House; it was therefore clear that, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, there was no impediment whatever to the admission of Jews to Parliament. The Resolution had broken down the barrier completely, and the Jew walked in without any difficulty and took his seat. With regard to their Lordships' House—suppose Her Majesty were to be advised to raise a Jew to the dignity of the peerage, would their Lordships refuse to pass a Resolution dispensing with that portion of the oath which required him to say he made the declaration "on the true faith of a Christian?" Their Lordships would hardly be disposed to adopt a course which would be an insult to the Crown; and therefore he considered that there was practically no impediment to the admission of Jews to their Lordships' House. Under these circumstances there was, as he had said, nothing left to fight for! Immediately the principle he had maintained was sacrificed all grounds for further resistance were gone; therefore he did not oppose the second reading of the Bill, and must now decline to vote for the Amendment.

On Question, *Resolved* in the *Negative.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 2 to 5 *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Repeal of Acts).

Lord CHELMSFORD moved to add the following words:—

> "Provided always that the repeal of these Acts, or any of them, or of any Parts thereof, shall not be construed to weaken or in any manner to affect any Laws or Statutes now in force for preserving and upholding the Supremacy of Our Lady the Queen, Her Heirs and Successors, in all Matters Civil and Ecclesiastical within this Realm and other Her Majesty's dominions."

LORD CAMOYS said, that on the part of Catholic Members he must return thanks for the boon now offered, which put Catholics on a perfect equality, as far as Parliament was concerned, with their Protestant fellow-subjects, a position, he believed, they had not occupied for centuries. Their thanks were due first to Her Majesty's Government for having proposed this measure, and next to the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Derby) and his political friends for the manner in which they had received it. A great deal had been said about a compact between the Legislature and the Roman Catholics, said to have been entered into at the time of the passing of the Emancipation Act; but there was no compact made previous to the passing of that Act, and the noble Earls opposite to and below him (the Earl of Derby and Earl Russell) would confirm him in the accuracy of that statement. After the passing of the Emancipation Act an understanding, not expressed, but implied, was made between the Legislature and the Roman Catholics. The Legislature said to the Catholics, "Here is emancipation, but you must take that oath;" and the Catholics on the other side said, "We accept emancipation and we will take this oath;" but there was nothing in that understanding to prevent Catholics from asking the Legislature to abolish that oath or to prevent the Legislature complying with that request. He did not think the oath now proposed conferred upon Catholic Members any right of voting which they would otherwise possess; but still, the present Bill would prevent their being declaimed against for voting on questions relating to the Established Church. Catholics had been accused, for instance, of perjury aggravated by treachery because they voted for the abolition of church rates. He himself had always voted for their abolition without any idea that he was doing any injury to the establishment, but solely because he thought it was unwise and impolitic to retain them. Questions would, no doubt, arise relating to the Established Church and affecting national and Imperial interests. On such questions Catholic Members had always claimed a right to vote. But when questions were brought forward relating to the internal regulations of that Church—such, for example, as the alteration of their Liturgy—the good sense of Catholics led them to abstain from voting altogether. On such occasions he himself had always retired. And if anything could confirm them in that course it would be the Liberal measure now proposed. Another advantage conferred on Catholics by the Bill was that they would be relieved from the odium of denying a doctrine which they had never entertained. At the present moment there was in Italy an excommunicated Sovereign; but who had ever heard of even the wildest Ultramontane asserting that any one might assassinate Victor Emmanuel because he was excommunicated? Then, at the end of the existing oath was a declaration that it had been taken without any equivocation or mental reservation whatsoever. To him that declaration appeared wholly unnecessary, because if they were open to that accusation, it was just as applicable to that part of the oath as to any other part of it. Catholics were required to swear that the Pope had no temporal power in this country, while Protestants took an oath that he had not nor ought to have any jurisdiction, temporal or spiritual, within the realm. But it was notorious that the Pope did exercise spiritual power in this country, witness the "Papal aggression" and the appointment of the Archbishop last year. Indeed, one English and one Irish Peer had declined for some time to take their seats in that House because they could not conscientiously swear that the Pope had no spiritual power in the country. Well, the consequence was that a somewhat singular state of things was brought about. The explanation, he knew, was that the Pope had no power "by law;" but then the words "by law" were not in the oath. Therefore, while Catholics were obliged to declare that they made no mental reservation, and they required none for the explanation of their oath, Protestants, who were not called upon to make that declaration, were under the necessity of making use of a mental reservation in order to give to the part of the oath relating to the Pope's spiritual power a meaning which the literal words did not convey. He did not say this for the purpose of making any accusation, but only with the view of showing the advantages which Protestants, and the greater advantages which Catholics, would derive from this measure. He very much regretted that the noble and learned Lord (Lord Chelmsford) had moved the Amendment—not that he could find any fault with the meaning of the words of that Amendment, but because he was quite sure it would give rise to much discussion among the Roman Catholic body. To his mind the Amendment merely affirmed a truism; but he was quite certain that many Catholics would look upon it rather as a blow dealt against them by an enemy than as a suggestion made by a friend. For his own part, he wished that nothing should be introduced which would provoke fresh discussion when the Bill went back to the House of Commons; he must, however, leave the matter to the discretion of the noble and learned Lord and of the House. He was not much in the habit of addressing their Lordships, but he could not help taking this opportunity of expressing the satisfaction he felt at the liberal measure proposed on this side of the House and so generously accepted on the other.

Lord CHELMSFORD said, he must express his regret at some of the remarks made by the noble Lord, and particularly at his statement that the Amendment now before their Lordships would probably give rise to discussion elsewhere. The noble Lord had stated that the Amendment was nothing but the expression of a truism—and, indeed, it had been said that for that reason it was quite unnecessary. Now, in order to prevent misunderstanding, he would explain the reason which had induced him to press for the insertion of the Amendment. The supremacy was an essential part of the Constitution. Well, the Bill proposed to repeal a number of Acts which were enumerated in the schedule, and many of which Acts contained oaths in which there was a recognition of the supremacy of the Crown. He was apprehensive, therefore, that when persons came to compare the oath now proposed with the oaths contained in those Acts, a conclusion might be drawn in some degree adverse to the supremacy. In other words, he thought some persons might conclude that, as the Legislature had repealed the Acts containing the oaths recognizing the supremacy, and had given a form of oath in which no such recognition was made, therefore he thought it was not right and proper to recognize the supremacy at all. In order to guard against such a consequence he had proposed the Amendment, which, although termed a truism, was, at all events, a protection against such a conclusion being drawn. It could injure no one, and would give satisfaction to those who were anxious that the supremacy should not be in any way affected. He trusted, therefore, that when the Bill was calmly and dispassionately considered no one would entertain the slightest objection to the Amendment being inserted.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH said, he should undoubtedly vote for the Amendment, which there could be little doubt would be accepted by the House of Commons. He recollected the circumstances under which the Catholic Relief Bill was passed. At that time he happened to be a Member of the Government. Now, there was no doubt that the oath contained in the Act of 1829 was not a matter of compact with the Catholics—indeed, it had never been so understood; but the oath which under that Act was imposed upon Catholics when taking their seats in Parliament was substantially a matter of compact, not with the Roman Catholics but with the Protestants, and the Roman Catholics accepted it. It was in consequence of that oath that the Bill was passed, and although Parliament might now deem itself at liberty to sweep away a security which, whatever its actual value, English Protestants then thought they derived from the oath, he could not think such a step would be right. Others might be of opinion that at this distance of time they might deal freely with the oath. At any rate he (the Earl of Ellenborough) was not at liberty to do so, because he had been a party to the transaction.

Earl GREY protested against the doctrine laid down by the noble Earl, and utterly denied the power of any Parliament to prevent any subsequent Parliament from doing what, under altered circumstances and in other times, they might consider expedient. Therefore, he had always held that arguments founded upon oaths and compacts were powerless to influence the decision of Parliament. He cordially concurred with his noble Friend (Lord Camoys) in regretting that this Amendment had been moved. Of course, as both sides of the House appeared willing to accept it, he should offer no opposition, nor would he even argue the matter. The noble and learned Lord (Lord Chelmsford) had failed to show that any practical advantage whatever would arise from the introduction of the Amendment into the Bill. That being the case, it seemed to him very impolitic, unwise, and injurious to the reputation of that House and of Parliament to show, as it were, a slight which could not be acted upon, and to make a concession which was deemed necessary with as bad a grace as possible. If there had been the slightest prospect of succeeding in resisting the

Amendment, he, for one, should have voted against it.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH observed, that if the sentiments which had been enunciated by the noble Baron (Lord Camoys) had been avowed in 1829 the Emancipation Bill would never have been passed. He could not see what greater relevancy the proposal to abolish the declaration against transubstantiation had to this measure than it would have to a Railway or Gas Bill. If the Heir Apparent should be advised by the lawyers that there was no need for him to take the declaration, he (the Marquess of Westmeath) saw a prospect of civil war.

Earl RUSSELL said, he quite agreed with his noble Friend (Earl Grey) that it was competent to any Parliament to repeal what a previous Parliament had enacted. In point of instance, the Act of Supremacy was repealed in the reign of Queen Mary. It was true that some of our laws were more intimately connected with the Constitution than others, and such a law was that which related to the supremacy of the Crown; but there was nothing in this Bill to affect that law. At the same time, he saw no harm in Parliament declaring that nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to invalidate the supremacy of the Crown as affirmed in preceding statutes. He must say that, in his opinion, the conduct of the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Derby) and the noble and learned Lord (Lord Chelmsford) had been perfectly fair in this matter. They had not shown any wish to impair the Bill, and though some Roman Catholics might think that the words proposed to be inserted might as well be left out, he would make no objection to the Amendment.

The Earl of DERBY said, he did not want to enter into a discussion as to the character of the compact made in 1829, but he wished to say that the noble Earl on the cross-benches (Earl Grey) had misunderstood his noble Friend (the Earl of Ellenborough) in respect of that compact. His noble Friend did not deny that it was competent to any Parliament to do away with any engagement entered into by a former Parliament; but his noble Friend said that, having regard to all the circumstances under which the engagement with the Protestants was made in 1829, and to which the Roman Catholics had acceded, he, as one of the Government who had been a party to that engagement, felt himself bound to object to the alteration which this Bill would make in the oath. He would, in conclusion, express a hope that the passing of the measure might be attended with the beneficial effects anticipated.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH said, he had to thank his noble Friend for removing the erroneous interpretation placed upon his words by the noble Earl on the cross-benches. For himself, he thought the remarks so clear that they did not need explanation.

Earl GREY regretted that he had misunderstood the noble Earl. But he had certainly heard from some one the argument that Parliament was bound by a supposed pledge or compact, and against that idea he had risen to protest.

Clause amended, and *agreed to.*

On Motion that the Preamble be *agreed to,*

The Earl of DERBY said, the Preamble simply recited that it was expedient to amend the laws in the manner proposed, but without assigning any reason. He thought it would be advisable to make some reference to the main ground upon which noble Lords, though entertaining some objections to the measure, had been induced to give it their support. This ground was the desirability of adopting one uniform oath, which could be taken without difficulty by Members of Parliament belonging to all religious denominations.

Earl RUSSELL said, there could be no objection to the course suggested.

Preamble amended accordingly, and *agreed to.*

Amendments made: The Report thereof to be received *To-morrow,* and Bill to be printed, as amended. (No. 76.)

COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH (IRELAND).

QUESTION.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE, who had given notice to call Attention to the State of the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland, and to ask a Question, said, he would preface the Question of which he had given notice by some observations as to the measures adopted, or rather not adopted, in pursuance of the Report of the English and Irish Law Commission. The Commissioners made their first Report in 1863, and a very favourable Report it was; but, although several Bills had been since presented to Parliament for the purpose of carrying into effect their recommendations, nothing effectual had been done. The Commissioners seemed to think the legal machinery of the Irish Courts too extensive, but they abstained from recommending any reduction in the number of Judges, believing that a large increase of business would probably take place; whereas the very reverse had happened. He had been accused of unpatriotically seeking to diminish the amount of Imperial revenue expended in Dublin; but *per se* he did not care one straw how many Judges there were, or how much money they each received from the State. His object was to benefit the suitor and to cheapen and improve the administration of justice. But there were some circumstances connected with the Irish bench to which he felt bound to invite the attention of their Lordships. It would cause him much regret to wound the feelings of a learned and venerable Judge, who enjoyed the warm esteem of all who knew him, and who was entitled to respect and the utmost consideration at the hands of the country. But it was matter of notoriety that the learned functionary who presided over the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland was of extremely advanced age. It was very painful to be obliged to state such a matter in Parliament, but that was not the first time that it had been necessary to appeal to Parliament in a similar case, or, indeed, in this very case. Some years ago a most learned and able Irish Judge (Baron Pennefather) unfortunately became blind, and afterwards remained upon the bench for three years. He was a man of extraordinary powers, and the ends of justice did not appear to have been frustrated at any period during that time. Nevertheless, he was blind; and the Irish public often asked the question whether any Judge in England would have been allowed to sit in Westminster Hall for three years if he had the misfortune to labour under such an infirmity? That eminent Judge presided at a celebrated trial called the Mountgarret case, which lasted four days.

Lord CHELMSFORD was understood to say, the case to whichthe noble Marquess alluded was not the Mountgarret but the Colclough case.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE: The Mountgarret case also. Well, the trial occupied four or five days, and the judgment delivered by Baron Pennefather was described by the counsel who heard him as one of the most extraordinary and prodigious efforts of mental power they had ever witnessed. But they did not want prodigies on the Irish bench; and a Judge, however distinguished, ought not, under the circumstances which he had named, to have been suffered to remain at his post. He referred to this case as a precedent for the course which a sense of duty now compelled him to take in regard to another learned and very venerable person in Ireland; because very soon, subsequently to the previous debate to which he alluded, Baron Pennefather tendered his resignation. Whether that resignation was a case of *propter hoc*, or only of *post hoc*, he could not say; but he believed the act of resignation shortly followed the discussion in Parliament. In another instance, a petition was presented from Mr. O'Connell, in 1826, to Parliament against Lord Norbury's continuance on the bench, based upon a ground analogous to that which existed in the case which he was now about to mention—namely, extreme age. Lord Norbury was of so advanced an age that he fell into lethargic habits, and was quite unfitted for the proper discharge of his official duties. What then happened? Although Lord Norbury had remained on the bench up to that time, Mr. Secretary Peel did not attempt to defend such a proceeding. The matter was notorious, and all that was urged was, that as the petition stated nothing affecting the learned functionary's honour or character, he was about to retire; and Lord Norbury did so. Again, on another occasion, when the administration of justice in Ireland was impugned, it was laid down in the strongest terms by a noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Derby), and also by the present Prime Minister, that justice ought to be administered with a due regard to the capacity and conduct of the Judges as well in Ireland as in England. Well, what Mr. O'Connell complained of in respect to Lord Norbury unfortunately now applied to the very distinguished and venerable person who was still at the head of the criminal law and the common law of Ireland—the Lord Chief Justice Lefroy. A remarkable trial took place last winter at Birr. An officer stationed there had been barbarously murdered, and a guide or boatman was tried for the crime. He was informed, upon authority which he could not doubt, that the presiding

Judge at that investigation so far mistook the course of the testimony adduced that he was proceeding to charge the jury directly contrary to the evidence upon a point perhaps the most important of all, and certainly most important as concerning the prisoner, because it was the only scintilla of evidence that he could produce to lead the minds of the jury not to think him guilty. The evidence was wholly circumstantial, and the learned Judge totally mistook a most important circumstance. The point was one that was evident to everybody except the learned Lord Chief Justice; but of course he was set right by counsel, and the point was placed correctly before the jury. The jury having found the prisoner guilty, it became the duty of the Lord Chief Justice to pronounce sentence upon the prisoner; but his Lordship was not able to do that in a becoming manner. The sentence was written for him in large hand writing; the judge could not read it; and the Law Officer of the Crown had to stand by him to prompt him in the execution of a duty of the most important character. These are facts which could be proved to the satisfaction of their Lordships, if an inquiry were instituted by the House; and he wished to ask whether the recurrence of such a state of things ought not to be guarded against? If the slightest mistake had been made in the delivery of the sentence, the prisoner would have escaped without any punishment. Such a thing had happened in Ireland. A Judge, now no more, overcome by emotion or agitation, after sentencing two men for murder and robbery, accidentally omitted the words relating to the disposal of the bodies within the gaol. The counsel for the prisoners afterwards made a point of the sentence not having been pronounced in the legally-prescribed form, and the men would wholly have escaped punishment, but that they were subsequently sentenced to imprisonment for life for robbery. But what must be the effect upon the minds of the Irish people of trials so conducted? Without making any charge whatever against the learned Judge, he said it was the imperative duty of the Government to have interfered sooner in that matter; and it was now the duty of Parliament to interpose rather than allow the possibility of such a scene being permitted to continue. Could such things happen in England? Was it to be supposed that any Judge of ninety years of age would be permitted to preside at circuit in England or to sit in Westminster Hall? [The noble Marquess then read to the House an article from *The Fortnightly Review.*] The writer, who gave his name, had been a public functionary for several years, and was, he believed, a Member of the bar. He (the Marquess of Clanricarde) wished to speak with every personal respect of this very learned and venerable Judge. He complained of nothing but his prolonged tenure of office. Chief Justice Lefroy was over ninety years of age; he had the infirmities incident to that age, and it was not becoming that the head of the criminal and common law of Ireland should be a person of such extreme age. The noble Marquess concluded by asking, How soon the Second Report of the Commissioners appointed in December, 1861, to inquire into the Procedure of Irish Courts of Law with a view to reduce Costs to Suitors and the Expenditure of the Public money will be presented to Parliament?

LORD DUFFERIN said, that the Report of the Commission on Procedure was in a forward state, and had been already agreed to by the Irish Commissioners and also by the English Commissioners, with the exception of one Irish and one English Commissioner. On Monday the Report would be submitted finally to the English Commissioners, and he hoped in a very few days to lay it upon their Lordships' table.

LORD CHELMSFORD said, he desired to make a few observations in answer to the remarks of the noble Marquess. He must express his regret that there had been no intimation in the notice the noble Marquess had given of his intention to make this attack, as he might term it, upon the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland; and it was hardly fair, under a general notice of this kind, to make remarks which the friends of the learned Judge could not be prepared properly to meet, and it was indeed only by accident that they became aware that any observations prejudicial to him would be made. He (Lord Chelmsford) was very imperfectly furnished with any information in answer to the noble Marquess' complaint; but he had obtained some particulars which would enable him to show that at least the noble Marquess was imperfectly informed, and that some at least of the observations he had made were not well founded. He quite agreed that *primâ facie* the noble Marquess was right, and that the presumption was that a Judge who had arrived at a time of life far beyond the ordinary period of man's existence could not be perfectly competent to the duties he had to discharge. The noble Marquess, however, must be a little cautious in measuring capacity by age. A distinguished ornament of their Lordships' House had not long passed away, who had adorned every debate with the most profound wisdom and a judicial eloquence that had never been surpassed. That noble and learned Lord (Lord Lyndhurst) on the night that he entered upon his ninetieth year, addressed their Lordships in a most remarkable speech that riveted their attention for more than half-an-hour, in which the most perfect clearness, lucidity, and wisdom showed that his powerful intellect was setting without a cloud. Suppose that that distinguished person had held a judicial office at the time he made that speech, would it have been justifiable to call upon him to resign on the score of his age? And yet, if he understood the noble Marquess, the whole ground of his accusation against the learned Judge was that he had arrived at the age of ninety. Even if there had been any error or mistake on the part of a Judge, that would not be a ground for bringing the matter before the Houses of Parliament, unless it was clear that the mistake arose from the decay of his mental power. But there was not a practitioner in the Court of Queen's Bench who would say that a single decision of the Lord Chief Justice was not what it ought to have been, or that they showed any decay of his mental faculties. From the year 1862 to the present period there had been only four writs of error from the Court of Queen's Bench, and during the last two years only one bill of exceptions had been offered to the ruling of the learned Judge. The noble Marquess asked whether it would be possible that an English Judge of that age would be able to endure the labours required of him here. For twenty-five years the Chief Justice had not missed a single circuit, or town in any circuit, except in the year 1847, when he was suffering from low fever, and was obliged to absent himself for six weeks. He had up to the present moment discharged duties of the most important kind. The criminal business of the Court of Queen's Bench was very considerable; besides which the important questions connected with the New Fishery Acts went to the Court of Queen's Bench. The Chief Justice performed his part in the discharge of those duties, and every one of his decisions met with the most perfect approbation. The state of business of the Court of Queen's Bench showed how much that Court was resorted to in Ireland. The amount recovered in the Queen's Bench in 1864 was £345,740, in 1865, £445,000; whereas in the Court of Common Pleas the amount was in 1864, £148,000; in 1865, £150,000; and in the Court of Exchequer in 1864, £330,000: the account of the latter Court in 1865 had not been made up. Now, as the attorneys had a choice of their courts, the circumstance that the business of the Queen's Bench was so much greater showed that it must have been the favourite Court. And here he might be permitted to read a portion of a letter which he had received to-day from a gentleman perfectly cognizant with all the facts—Mr. Napier, the ex-Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He said—

> "As to the Chief Justice, he is the best Judge we have, although he is very old and not very vigorous for complicated cases. But he always finishes his *nisi prius* cases sooner than the other chiefs. He is so good a Judge that the Bar respect him, and decency and order prevail in his court."

They all knew what was attributed to Lord Norbury in the petition of Mr. O'Connell—that he used to fall asleep on the bench; but that had never been said of the Chief Justice, who was always awake and understood the case before him from beginning to end. With regard to the case of King, which had been alluded to by the noble Marquess, he did not know upon what authority the facts were stated; but if he wanted a case which would satisfy him of the strength and vigour of the Chief Justice's intellect it would be that very case. Their Lordships might recollect that a question of law arose in that case with respect to the indictment. By an Act of Parliament in Ireland, if a murder was committed within 500 yards of the boundary of a county the indictment might be laid either in that or the adjacent county. In the case of King, the murder took place not in the county in which the *venue* was laid, and an objection was taken that it ought to have been stated in the indictment that the murder took place within 500 yards of the boundaries of the county. That question was argued before the Chief Justice with very great ability, and he was of opinion that there was no necessity for introducing that averment in the indictment; but the question was so important, especially as the life of a human creature was concerned, that he reserved the point. It was accordingly argued before the Judges, and they decided almost unanimously that the judgment of the Chief Justice was right. The only dissentient was Mr. Justice Hayes; but he differed on a point which did not materially affect the decision of the Chief Justice. It had been stated that the Chief Justice began his charge to the jury upon some erroneous view of the real nature of the case. He should like to know upon what authority the noble Marquess had made that statement. He had seen a letter from Mr. Battersby, who was the Crown Prosecutor on that occasion, and that gentleman positively denied many of the allegations made with respect to the Chief Justice. But supposing the Chief Justice had, in the course of the summing up, made some observations which the counsel for the prisoner thought not correct, that was no more than continually happened upon trials in this country. Therefore, unless the noble Marquess meant that the Chief Justice began to sum up as if he were summing up a totally different case, how could it possibly be alleged as a proof of failure of intellect that there was some interruption on the part of counsel for the prisoner? Then it was said that the Chief Justice was so worn out and completely exhausted that when he came to pass sentence he was obliged to have it written out for him in a very large hand, and that then he was scarcely able to read it. But he was informed by Mr. Battersby that such an allegation was entirely erroneous. The noble Marquess said that there was a chance of the jury being so far misled as to acquit the prisoner in consequence of the way in which the learned Judge summed up.

THE MARQUESS OF CLANRICARDE explained, that the Chief Justice stated that a certain article of dress had been found when it was not found.

LORD CHELMSFORD: Was that all? Was that the only ground for attributing to the Chief Justice failure of intellectual powers and incapacity to perform his duty? If the imputation on the Lord Chief Justice rested on the fact that he was ninety years of age, it behoved their Lordships to be a little cautious and take care of themselves, because it might affect them very materially if that were the ground upon which a person was to be considered incompetent—and, moreover, they could not tell at what precise age the line of demarcation might be drawn. He remembered that some time ago, when Lord Leitrim in presenting a petition made certain charges against the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland which he (Lord Chelmsford) did not think sufficient, he induced the noble Lord to withdraw his Motion. But Lord Leitrim was on that occasion very sharply rebuked by Lord Campbell, then Lord Chancellor, for having brought a charge against a Judge unless he was prepared to found thereon an Address to the Crown praying for his removal. Now, he did not mean to say that if a Judge was really incapable—if his mental faculties were so impaired as to render him unfit for the discharge of his duties, and if he still clung to the bench so that the force of public opinion could not induce him to resign, both Houses of Parliament might not address the Crown to remove him. But no case ought to be brought forward unless it were of a nature so serious as to lead to that result. Age, and age alone, being the ground upon which the noble Marquess had proceeded, and there being no proof whatever that there had been any failure of justice or any display of mental incapacity, the noble Marquess might very well have spared the observations he had considered it his duty to make. Having such an accusation to bring against the learned Judge, it was hardly fair of the noble Marquess not to give distinct notice of it and of the grounds upon which it was made, in order that the learned Judge might have been able to answer categorically every charge that was made.

VISCOUNT LIFFORD said, he thought the attack which the noble Marquess had made on the Lord Chief Justice was altogether unfounded. It did not inevitably follow that the infirmities of age disqualified Judges for the discharge of their duties. The noble Marquess had said that they did not want prodigies on the Irish bench. He (Viscount Lifford) thought they did, and that when they had got one they had better keep him. The noble Marquess had said that a Judge of such an advanced age would not be tolerated in England. But the noble Marquess seemed to have forgotten that there was such a Judge as the Lord Chief Baron Pollock, who he hoped would live to adorn the bench many years yet. He was honoured with the friendship of Baron Pennefather, who, when past the age of eighty, and perfectly blind, presiding over a trial, followed a long arithmetical calculation so closely as to detect an error immediately, and on another occasion explained a question of boundaries better than any of the jury could have done, although they had studied it with the aid of maps. Chief Baron Pollock was not much younger than Lord Chief Justice Lefroy, and yet no complaint was made of him. The noble Marquess had hinted that the love of emolument kept the Lord Chief Justice on the bench. He (Viscount Lifford) submitted that it was something higher. They loved their profession; they were naturally proud of doing better than they believed younger men could, and there was the unwillingness to give up the successful performance of important duties. He would read the letter, to which reference had been made, from the leading counsel of the Home Circuit, who, writing on the 31st of March, said—

> "The Chief Justice discharged his duties as well as he ever did last circuit, and better than many of his juniors could have done. He tried at Maryborough as complicated a right of way as could be conceived, and at seven o'clock p.m. charged the jury most accurately and clearly upon the law and facts. When Parliament meet, I should think they will have something else to do besides trying to make vacancies for their friends here."

The amount of money recovered in the trials in the Court of Queen's Bench in 1864 was £345,740. What would have been thought if, after the delivery of that remarkable speech which Lord Lyndhurst made on the day he attained his ninetieth year, any of the younger Members of their Lordships' House had risen, and, in Parliamentary language, said, "Go home, you dotard; you are ninety; let younger men perform the duty to which you are unequal?" Yet this was what the noble Marquess had practically said in reference to the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE said, he was glad to have been reminded of Lord Lyndhurst, and would ask—Did he continue to discharge judicial duties up to the age of ninety? He had long ceased before that age to sit in that House on appeals avowedly on the score of his age; yet the occasional hearing of an appeal, still less the delivery of a speech in that House, did not involve the fatigue inseparable from presiding over the Court of Queen's Bench. The information he had was inconsistent with what had been stated with respect to the conduct of the business of the Irish Court of Queen's Bench. It was, he understood, notorious that the business was arranged so that complicated cases did not come before the Chief Justice, and that cases were postponed in order that he might not try them. It might be true that for a part of the day his intellect was as clear as it was in his youth; but it did not follow that his physical faculties would enable him to give throughout a day equally sustained attention to a lengthened case. He had done his duty in bringing forward a grievance; he would leave the matter in the hands of the Government for the present, and if there were an inquiry he would undertake to support what he had stated by the best possible evidence. The mention of Baron Pennefather's blindness reminded him of a case which came before that learned Judge. The charge was forgery, and the question turned upon a comparison of handwritings. The prisoner knew well the infirmity of the learned Judge, but pretended not to know it, and begged of the Judge to compare the two writings, well knowing he could not do so. Would blindness in a Judge be tolerated at Westminster, or even at Clerkenwell?

The Earl of LONGFORD regretted that the attacks which had been made elsewhere on the Lord Chief Justice had been repeated in that House. He had never heard any complaint from any suitor in Ireland as to any failure of justice in cases before the Court of Queen's Bench. He had the great advantage of constantly meeting the Lord Chief Justice, both in town and country, and frequently at late hours; and he could affirm that no ground existed for the charge that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the great office which he so worthily filled.

BREECH LOADING SMALL ARMS.

QUESTION.

Viscount LIFFORD said, that in consequence of the Danish War and the great success of the Prussian breech-loaders a Committee had been appointed to inquire into the matter. That Committee reported in favour of the breech-loading system; and accordingly an advertisement was issued to the effect that the Secretary of State for War desired to receive communications from gunmakers as to the best means of converting Enfield rifles into breech-loaders on certain specified conditions. In reply to that advertisement fifty specimens of arms were sent in and trials were made of five out of eight which had been selected. In the end it appeared that only one rifle, that of Mr. Westley Richards, complied with the conditions; but, nevertheless, that of Mr. Snider was chosen. That was not all. Mr. Snider's rifle was sent back to him in order that he might make certain alterations—in which, however, he failed. It was then handed over to two Government officials who, he believed, had succeeded in making it a very perfect arm. He did not doubt that there were obvious reasons for adopting Mr. Snider's rifle; but it was unfair to accord him a privilege denied to the other competitors, and particularly to the inventor of the rifle which alone complied with the conditions. It would, indeed, be difficult to devise a system better calculated to deter gunmakers from competing on future occasions. The noble Viscount concluded by asking, Whether the Under Secretary for War will lay before the House the Correspondence of the leading Gunmakers in reference to the War Office Circular of December, 1865, asking the Reasons which had deterred them from taking any part in the proposed competition for military Breech-loading Small Arms; and, whether any Departmental Officers, having had the benefit of the experience of the various trials of Small Arms made at the Government expense, have taken out patents for Improvements in connection with Small Arms?

Lord DUFFERIN, in reply, said, that inasmuch as the correspondence to which the noble Lord had referred was still under the consideration of the Small Arms Select Committee it would not be advisable at present to lay it before the House. With regard to the second part of the Question, he had to state that it was the fact that officers connected with the War Department, after having devised inventions of considerable importance, had protected those inventions by taking out patents. In the opinion of the noble Lord the Secretary of State for War, that practice was very objectionable. The point had been referred to the Law Officers of the Department, and in all probability it would be found expedient to deal with the matter hereafter when a measure respecting the patent laws generally should be introduced. Clauses might then be inserted to prevent the recurrence of the practice.

The Earl of HARDWICKE expressed his pleasure at hearing what had fallen from the noble Lord in reference to these patents. It was very wrong that Officers of the Crown should be permitted to take advantage of the ingenuity and experiments of private inventors, and be permitted to experimentalise upon those inventions at the expense of the public, and then for their own profit patent the improvements suggested by those experiments.

The Earl of LONGFORD said, the reply of the noble Lord the Under Secretary for War would hardly be satisfactory to the principal members of the gun trade. Although two years had elapsed since the project was formed of arming the infantry with breech-loaders, scarcely any progress had been made in the matter. The matter was one of a serious character; and he hoped this short conversation might have the effect of procuring for the subject more attention than it had hitherto received.

RAILWAY BILLS AFFECTING THE CITY OF LONDON.—QUESTION.

The Earl of CARNARVON had to present petitions referring to a very important subject—the Railway Bills affecting the City of London during the present Session. The first of these petitions was one from Merchants, Traders, and Inhabitants of the Ward of Billingsgate, against allowing any Bills introduced by any Railway Company whose line is proposed to enter the City of London to pass into law; and contained some general statements as to the inconvenience and hardship arising from the construction of railways in the metropolis. He believed no one could doubt that the construction of those railways did cause very great inconvenience, and no one could deny that it was attended with considerable hardship to the working classes. To a certain extent this was inevitable in the formation of any new railway, and on this ground alone it would not be right to interfere with a scheme which was otherwise beneficial. The second petition was from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commoners of the City of London, and prayed that all Bills affecting the City of London may be referred to the same Committee, and made subject to the general laws relating to railways. The statements made in this petition were of a more specific character. It alleged that the Bills now being promoted in Parliament would monopolize a very large acreage in the City—not less than twenty-six acres in the very heart of the metropolis. Their Lordships might perhaps have seen a paragraph in *The Times* stating that in the immediate vicinity of St. Paul's

Churchyard property had been sold at the rate of £1,000,000 an acre. Now, though we could not think that these twenty-six acres would be worth £26,000,000, it was certain that the land required by railways in the City was of enormous value. The petitioners expressed a hope that means might be found of prescribing certain limits as to the quantity of work to be constructed at one time, so as to mitigate the inconvenience resulting from having portions of the City blocked up. Some time ago he brought under the notice of their Lordships the fact that in some of the Railway Bills now being promoted the promoters sought for very remarkable powers, and powers quite inconsistent with public statutes. The petition of the corporation of London referred to some of those Bills. The petitioners complained that one Company proposed to enter on house property without purchase, and also sought for powers to use part of a house without taking the rest of it. Such powers would be in contravention of the provisions of the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act. Another Company proposed to make use of the vaults and cellars of houses without purchasing the houses themselves; and another Company required a clause providing that no owner or occupier of a house should be entitled to compensation for any mischief done to it in consequence of the railway running underneath. This again would be contrary to the provisions of the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act. He would suggest to their Lordships that some general rule should be laid down for these cases, and that provisions overriding statutory enactments should not be permitted in Bills promoted by railway companies. He thought it would be very desirable to reduce so important a matter to a general rule. The petition of the corporation prayed that the Bills for metropolitan railways should all be referred to one Committee. He himself thought it would be advisable to adhere to the recommendation of the Select Committee of 1864 on metropolitan railways, and, as far as possible, to refer all those Bills to one Committee. He was told that this year the number was so considerable it would be impossible to send them to one Committee. If that were so, the next best thing would be to refer such of those Bills as had any connection with each other to the same Committee.

Lord REDESDALE said, that no doubt very important and peculiar considerations arose in connection with Bills for railways in the metropolis; but he did not think the Committee of 1864, to which the noble Earl alluded, had any reference to the points submitted in the petitions which the noble Earl had brought under their Lordships' notice. The recommendations of that Committee were directed to the general effect of all railways running through London, and not to the details of particular Bills. Having regard to the number of metropolitan Bills promoted this year, and to the period of the Session, he did not think it would be possible to have all those Bills referred to one Committee. No doubt there were very peculiar clauses in some of them, most of the clauses having for their object to lessen the cost of construction. This was an important consideration; but Parliament could not allow an injurious and unfair interference with property merely for the purpose of reducing the cost of a construction to the promoters of the line. He must say he had not found any disposition on the part of the Committees to which such Bills were referred not to pay due attention to the details; and he trusted this would continue to be the case. With regard to the domolition of property, it was consequent on the introduction of railways into the metropolis; and though the construction of those railways would impede the traffic of the streets for a time, they might have the effect ultimately of very much relieving that traffic. He did not think the poor would suffer to the extent that was generally supposed; because, if the value of land in the City was so great, it was obviously impossible to suppose that as the old houses fell into decay they would be reinstated as dwellings for the labouring classes. No doubt, great numbers of bad and offensive buildings were being removed. Much good must ultimately result from that circumstance; and, in the meantime, the City must adapt itself to the change. The first inconvenience to which parties were now subjected was, doubtless, severe. At the same time, the change was so intimately connected with the work itself, that, however much to be regretted, he did not see how it was to be avoided.

Petitions to lie on the table.

House adjourned at a quarter past
Eight o'clock, till To-morrow,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, April 19, 1866.

MINUTES.] — PUBLIC BILLS — *Resolutions in Committee* — Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) [Advances].
Ordered—Naval Savings Banks*; Glebe Lands (Scotland).*
First Reading—Naval Savings Banks* [114]; Glebe Lands (Scotland)* [115].
Second Reading—Representation of the People [68], adjourned debate *resumed*, and again *adjourned;* Crown Lands* [98]; Local Government Supplemental* [107].
Committee—Customs Duties (Isle of Man)* [91].
Report—Customs Duties (Isle of Man)* [91].
Third Reading—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland)* [88], and *passed.*

HORSHAM ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Robert Henry Hurst, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the borough of Horsham.

And the said Determination was ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That they had altered the Poll taken at such Election by striking off the names of Henry Foreman, James Winscom, and Richard Howes, as not having had a right to vote at such Election.

Report to lie upon the table.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS IN WORKHOUSE.

QUESTION.

MR. THOMAS CHAMBERS said, he wished to ask the President of the Poor Law Board, Whether it is his intention, and, if so, when, to introduce a Bill into Parliament, founded on the recommendations of the Select Committee on Poor Relief, in reference to the religious rights of inmates of workhouses; and further, if such be his intention, to ask that he will give sufficient notice of the same for Boards of Guardians, Unions, and Parishes to have the opportunity of expressing their opinions upon such an important measure?

MR. C. P. VILLIERS said, in reply, that towards the end of last Session he had introduced a Bill for the amendment of the Poor Law in several respects, and among other provisions in the Bill were clauses affecting the religious rights of the inmates of workhouses. That Bill was withdrawn owing to the lateness of the Session, but it was his intention to re-introduce it containing clauses having the effect of those in the former Bill. Due notice of its introduction would be given, and ample opportunity afforded for the discussion of its clauses.

ELECTORAL STATISTICS.

QUESTION.

LORD BURGHLEY said, he wished to ask the President of the Poor Law Board, When the statistics relating to the County Franchise moved for by Mr. Banks Stanhope on March 16th, and also those moved for by himself on March 21st, will be presented to the House?

MR. C. P. VILLIERS, in reply, said, he could not say at what time those Returns would be made. They had to be made from 600 unions, and only 164 had, as yet, been received. The time required was as long as that which was taken to make the Government Returns with respect to the counties, which was from the latter end of November till the end of January. The clerks of the unions were not bound to make these Returns, and unless there was some remuneration given for the labour occasioned, it was not very certain when they would be laid on the table; but he knew of no unnecessary delay that had taken place.

THE CHOLERA.—QUESTION.

SIR JERVOISE JERVOISE said, he rose to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether the attention of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council has been directed to a statement in *The Morning Star* of 25th October, 1865, that the Emperor and Empress of the French had visited the Cholera Hospitals in Paris, and that M. Gustave Girard had made experiments in demonstration of the non-infectious nature of the cholera?

MR. H. A. BRUCE said, in reply, that the Medical Officer of the Privy Council was cognizant of the conduct of the illustrious personages in question, whose courage and humanity on that occasion had excited such general admiration. He was also aware of the daring experiments made by M. Girard, to prove the non-infectious nature of cholera. That gentleman had placed upon his tongue the moisture from the brow and the fur from the tongue of a man who had died of cholera without suffering any ill consequences. But, in the first place, such an experiment only proved the insusceptibility to that disease of M. Girard, and by no means proved that the experiment might be tried with equal safety by other persons. Even, if held conclusive on that point, it did not in the slightest measure invalidate the position taken by the Medical Officer of the Privy Council with respect to the infectiousness of that disease. The hon. Baronet had, moreover, overlooked the fact that, as the French Government was at present strongly advocating quarantine precautions against the introduction of cholera, it might be presumed that their medical advisers entertained the same opinion as the medical adviser of the English Government on the subject of M. Girard's experiments.

TREATY OF VIENNA.—QUESTION.

Sir HARRY VERNEY said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the British Government has guaranteed to Prussia the portion of Saxony united to her dominions by the Treaty of Vienna; and whether, in case Prussia should now engage in war, that guarantee would be upheld? He should also like to know whether there is any truth in the report contained in the papers of that morning, as to a Despatch which was said to be a reply to one addressed to the Court of Vienna by Earl Russell on the German Question?

Mr. LAYARD, in reply, said, it was well known that, by the 17th Article of the Treaty of Vienna, this country, in conjunction with Austria, France, and Russia, had guaranteed to Prussia that part of Saxony to which the question of his hon. Friend referred. In the event of war breaking out, it might be the duty of Her Majesty's Government to consult the Governments of the three Powers with whom they were united in the guarantee, with the view of ascertaining what course they proposed to take in the matter. He could not inform the hon. Baronet what the result might be of that consultation. There was not, he might add, a word of truth in the statement made in the papers of that day in reference to the despatch to which his hon. Friend had alluded.

ARMY—CIVIL OFFICERS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS.—QUESTION.

Mr. MAGUIRE said, he rose to ask, Why the Civil Officers of the Royal Engineers' Department are denied the advantages of Lodging and Servants' Allowances granted to other Civil Officers of the War Department of similar relative rank; and whether it is intended to include these Allowances in the re-organization scheme?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I have to state, Sir, that the clerks of the works and engineers' clerks do receive at home a modified lodging allowance, and that when abroad they receive the allowance due to their relative rank. The pay and allowances which those officers now receive is found to be sufficient to attract to the service as large a number of persons as are required for the performance of the duties which they have to discharge, and the scheme of re-organization to which my hon. Friend refers does not propose to give any increase of pay to the great body of those officers. We, however, contemplate the employment of some of them as surveyors, at a higher rate of pay.

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT RAILWAY.
QUESTION.

Mr. CRAWFORD said, he would beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, If it has been proposed or is intended to carry the Metropolitan District Railway along the whole or any part of the Thames Embankment between Westminster and Blackfriars Bridges, in an open cutting instead of a tunnel or covered way underground?

Mr. MILNER GIBSON: Sir, by the Metropolitan District Railway Act a large portion of the railway between Westminster and Blackfriars Bridges is required to be constructed through a tunnel. According to Mr. Fowler, the engineer of the line, out of the whole length—one mile and a quarter—only about one-eighth of a mile can be made in open cutting. The Board of Trade are not aware of any proposal having been made since the passing of that Act to obtain authority for the company to alter its provisions regarding this portion of railway.

NAVY—WIDOWS OF NAVAL ENGINEERS.
QUESTION.

Mr. FERRAND said, he rose to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, Why the widows of engineers in the Royal Navy are not entitled to pensions equally with the widows of Assistant Surgeons, considering that the Engineers do not enter the service as boys and receive an education like officers of the same rank, including Second Masters and Assistant Paymasters?

LORD CLARENCE PAGET said, in reply, that the proposal on the subject which had been made to the Admiralty on behalf of the widows of Engineers was under consideration. He must, however, guard himself against being supposed to give any pledge that their petition would be granted.

COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH FRANCE.

QUESTION.

MR. COWEN said, he would beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, What are the peculiar circumstances connected with the Treaty of Commerce between this Country and France which disincline Her Majesty's Government to claim from the French Government the same commercial privileges as those which have been accorded to Monaco?

MR. MILNER GIBSON said, in reply, that there were no circumstances connected with the Treaty of Commerce between this country and France which disinclined Her Majesty's Government to claim from the French Government the same commercial privileges which had been granted to Monaco. But it had been thought by Her Majesty's Government that to make any formal representation such as that to which the hon. Gentleman referred would be an extreme assertion of our rights, and as the Question had little practical importance, Her Majesty's Government had not considered it expedient to make such a representation.

IRISH AND SCOTCH REFORM BILLS.

QUESTION.

MAJOR STUART KNOX said, he wished to ask, Whether the Government propose to bring in separate Bills for the re-distribution of seats for the three Kingdoms; and, if so, whether the pledge given by them to place the Bill for the Re-distribution of Seats in England and Wales on the table of the House before going into Committee on the Franchise Bill applies, also, to the cases of Scotland and Ireland?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: As far, Sir, as I can judge, I cannot say that I think such a division as that which the hon. and gallant Gentleman indicates would be necessary with respect to the Reform measures for Scotland and Ireland. The pledge, however, which the Government have given with regard to the English Bill would apply to the subject-matter of their proposals for Scotland and Ireland as it might ultimately be deemed expedient or not to put them in the shape of one or three Bills.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[BILL 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. FOURTH NIGHT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was—

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor*,)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. GRAHAM said: I feel that there is no slight presumption in one so little entitled to attention as myself occupying the time of the House when there are doubtless many hon. Members of weight and authority whom it desires to hear on this great question; nor is the responsibility a light one of speaking and voting upon it. But I have observed upon so many occasions, and I have myself indeed experienced the great indulgence which it is the habit of the House to extend to those who have recently been admitted to its deliberations, that I am emboldened to do so, while I feel that I should be untrue to my convictions and unfaithful to my duty did I not raise my voice and record my vote on behalf of the measure of my hon. Friend. Although susceptible of improvement, by the omission of provisions for disenfranchising Government *employés*, I believe it to be just in principle, moderate and prudent in its scope and extent, and eminently judicious to the form in which it is brought before us. I believe it to be pregnant with good consequences, and secure of triumphant success in the almost unanimous adhesion of the Liberal party.

I have carefully considered the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor). I have listened with the closest attention to the very temperate and moderate speech in which it was introduced, to the earnest, able, and various arguments by which it has been supported by others, and especially to the masterly and elaborate speech of the right hon. and learned Baronet the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns), and I can honestly say that I have done so without discovering one sufficient reason or hearing one adequate argument to shake the adhesion or ensnare the vote of any earnest and intelligent reformer. The Resolution alluded to does not avowedly attack the principle of the Bill—the principle of a reduction of the county and borough franchise—but only the alleged incompleteness of it. The noble Lords the Mover and the Seconder of the Amendment (Earl Grosvenor and Lord Stanley) alike proclaim themselves genuine and hearty Reformers—and this avowal is, in the case, of the noble Lord the Member for Chester in accordance with his previous history and the traditions of his house, however apparently contradicted by his position at this time; and they and those who act with them, whilst carefully avoiding to condescend on the particulars of what reform of the franchise they would approve (which the question before the House really is), content themselves with saying that what they want is a more comprehensive measure of Reform, but fail to tell us how deep and how broad they would seek to have the foundations laid of this their castle in the air—fail to tell us whether they disapprove of any reduction of the franchise at all, or whether they consider the reduction too great. The argument of the Amendment has been dwelt not on the question of the fitness of reducing the franchise, but only as to whether a Bill for that purpose can safely be passed apart from measures for re-distribution. Now, Sir, the answer to that argument is very simple. There is, I am certain, no Reformer on this side of the House—no Member of the Government—who would not heartily rejoice in carrying out, at one time in this Session, either in one or separate Bills, no matter which, all necessary changes for improving our representative system; and the only reason against such a course is, I suppose, the strongest of all reasons, that in the present circumstances it is impossible, whilst the assumed knowledge of that impossibility is just the true reason and motive for by far the largest portion of the support which the Amendment receives from hon. Gentlemen opposite. There are, I doubt not, some sincere Reformers who may, notwithstanding, be found under the banner of obstruction on this occasion. There are men who can see things but from one, and that their own point of view; men who, from a peculiar idiosyncracy, prefer rather that a thing should not be done at all than that it be done otherwise than in their own way. They are often good men, often able men; but they are generally very unpractical, and often very mischievous men indeed. But the truth is, the great majority of those who oppose this measure, oppose it not because they are anxious for a complete symmetrical Reform, but because they do not believe in the wisdom or necessity of, and are indifferent and hostile to, any Reform at all; and the plausible proposition which, in perfect good faith no doubt, the noble Earl has put upon the table of the House, is but the lurking-place in which the enemies of all Reform lie in wait to assassinate what they shrink from openly assailing. The right hon. and gallant General the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) I cannot find fault with in this respect. He came forward with the gallantry becoming his profession and reputation as the leader of a forlorn hope against the cause and the character of Reform altogether; and, calling up the shade of a great financial Reformer of other days, discourses to him, with an enthusiasm that is really refreshing, of the extravagance in expenditure, the persistent aggressiveness in foreign policy, the wretched mismanagement in colonial and Hibernian Government, and the veanlity and violence in the constituencies, which have been the natural and necessary result of the Reform Act of 1832. That, Sir, is a style of argument which I respect. It is consistent, straightforward, intelligible. By all means let us go back to the old constituencies, who selected sensible men to represent them. If so senseless a body as the present House of Commons can be persuaded so to decide, let us put that issue plainly—do not let us make believe more than is absolutely necessary—do not let us be firing blank cartridges as *feux de joie* in honour of Reform, and slipping in a loaded one in the shape of a Resolution to slay it from behind its back. Nor would it be possible for me to question the good faith, or to treat otherwise than with profound respect, the arguments of the right hon. and learned Baronet the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns.) His transparent sincerity and deep earnestness of personal character need no words of acknowledgment from me. I believe him to be incapable of arguing contrary to his honest convictions. I am but a stripling, and he a man of war from his youth, and how should I match myself with his trained and nervous intellect and power of argument? Yet, honestly differing from him in opinion, I may presume to mention one or two points in which he seemed to me to be at fault; and that I may not unnecessarily trespass on the time of the House, I shall confine myself to three points—1st, his conclusion that personal fitness is not the proper basis of the suffrage right. With regard to this he has said that certain examples which he laid down "disembarrassed the case of the invidious consideration of fitness." Again—

> "I agree that unfitness ought to prevent the exercise of the suffrage, but it by no means follows that because there is fitness there should be right."

And again, "the mere question of fitness is beside the argument." Now the right hon. and learned Baronet's is a just authority, as the organ of the Opposition. But there are other authorities of no inconsiderable weight. In the debate on Lord Russell's Bill in 1860, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), when speaking on the question of the borough franchise reduction, said—

> "In proposing to confer the franchise on those who do not possess it we ought to look to their fitness."

And again—

> "But it appears to me that founding a recommendation to extend the suffrage merely on considerations of numbers is an unsafe and shallow proceeding."

So that we find two of the great leaders of the Conservative party at variance upon the point that lies very much at the bottom of all this controversy—namely, whether a man's fitness for the suffrage is a reason why we should give it him; second, his belief that there is danger to the Constitution in such an influx of new constituents as the Bill now before the House proposes. That Bill, he states, "is precipitate, blind, and reckless," and he asks whether the Constitution, if changed, will transmit to our children the blessings we ourselves have received. And

Mr. Graham

here again I find him at variance with his political leader. In the same debate to which I have already referred, the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire thus spoke—

> "I say that if, instead of 257,000, there had been 557,000 men who, in the opinion of the House, are fit for the suffrage, the suffrage ought to be given them."

The right hon. Gentleman, with a strict sense of justice which does him infinite honour, would not even omit the odd 7,000; and now, when we propose to admit 400,000 men, the Constitution is in danger. The third point on which I have to find fault is his opinion that to deal with one branch of the Reform question, apart from all others, is unsafe and improper; and here once more I appeal to Cæsar—to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire. Now, Sir, when the Bill of Lord Derby was before Parliament in 1859 the Scotch Members were anxious to know how their interests were to be affected before giving their votes; and on the second reading Mr. Ellice, on their behalf, asked the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, how Scotland was to be dealt with? The right hon. Gentleman replied—

> "As soon after the English Bill has been read a second time as the pressure of public business will admit, it is our intention to introduce a Scotch Reform Bill. At present we contemplate introducing it before Easter, and I think that the House will agree with me that it will be much more convenient that a general statement of its provisions should then be made than that on the present occasion we should give any partial information which might lead to very great misconceptions."—[3 *Hansard*, clii. 1284.]

So that the Scotch Members were to vote for a measure which might so change the views of Parliament as greatly to affect their interests, without being told how these interests were to be affected—the very thing which is to you so objectionable in the case of the English Members now. Am I not justified in asking how views so opposite can be reconciled? What are on these three points the real views of the Conservative party? Sir, I am always opposed to the practice of turning public men into ridicule by showing how they have contradicted themselves at separate periods. I think it unfair and ungenerous, and rather tending to be a demoralizing style of argument; but to contrast the publicly declared opinions of the leaders of a party, and to show that the principles asserted by one are as positively contradicted by the other, seems to me a perfectly legitimate reply, when these principles are pleaded against us by them. There is one other point arising out of the late argument which I must refer to. The illustration afforded showed how difficult and yet how desirable it is to look at questions affecting the working classes from their own point of view. Much has been said of the danger and impropriety (and I quite assent to it) of giving the working classes a predominancy in Parliament, of putting them in a majority; but I have not heard one word upon the impropriety of the opposite course—the predominance of the middle classes—indeed, the working classes being in a minority seems to be accepted as of perfectly unquestionable right. The claim of the middle classes seems to be founded on the belief that the middle classes are the wise, the impartial, the worthy, the unimpulsive. Now this may be all true, or it may not; it is a pleasant persuasion for us to live in, but remember that from the working classes point of view this may not be so apparent, and every argument which may be used to debar these working classes of an equal share in Parliament is susceptible of being applied by them exactly in the reverse sense of the middle classes. They, Sir, have never claimed, as we have done, the preponderating share. They do not expect—they do not wish for it. They are prepared to accept the theory of the right hon. and learned Baronet, that of an equal participation, which, however, he states theoretically, and with no practical intention of applying it. Nay, they are content to accept this Bill, which offers them much less than an equal share. To the elaborate statistics which have been quoted on the opposite side, I do not refer; I leave that to the arithmetic master of the House. I will only upon the arithmetic of the case suggest a little ode to be committed to memory by the hon. Gentlemen opposite, many, probably, of whom may have early reminiscences of the words—

> "Multiplication is vexation,"

that is, of the borough constituencies;

> "Division is as bad,"

that is, the division on the Franchise Bill;

> "The rule of three perplexes me,"

that is, the little sum set them on Thursday last by my right hon. Friend;

> "And fractions drive me mad."

that is, the infinitesimal portion of the Liberal party that will go with them into the lobby. Sir, of the sincerity and good faith of some of the distinguished men who oppose us I have not a doubt; but I am sorry to say I cannot believe that the great majority of those who support the Amendment do so upon the ground which it ostensibly holds out; much less do I believe that hon. Gentlemen on our own side, who profess themselves earnest Reformers, desire to prevent Reform altogether, and yet what else must be the result, if not the intention, of a Resolution supported by such allies should it prove successful. It complains, forsooth, not of too much Reform, but of too little. It is not that the unwelcome little stranger of which my right hon. Friend has been delivered is not the legitimate child of Liberal opinion, but that the right hon. Gentleman has not been brought to bed of twins, and these Egyptian midwives on the other side of the House encourage the demand for a double accouchement only that they may more effectually do the bidding of Pharoah and strangle both infants at their birth. With those who are thus insincere in dealing with this great question it is in vain to debate; we know their opinion; we accept the real and not the feigned issues between us; we have proved the victorious power of Liberal principles, and political truth in the past; we measure our strength and the goodness of our cause against them in the present, and we have no fear of the result. But a far different consideration is due to those of whose sincerity and whose right-mindedness we have had abundant proof in the past, and whose co-operation we earnestly desire still to secure—to secure, I say, for their sakes as much as for our own to them. If one so humble in position and influence as myself may presume to appeal, I would address a few words of earnest remonstrance, and would ask them, Do you wish to imperil a cause that you have really at heart? Tell us fully and frankly what you hope for by such a course; and I do not believe that, if your objects be faithful to the cause and consistent with the interests of Reform, there can be anything that should prevent a perfect understanding between us. Of their sincere wish for such an understanding the Government have already given proof by the concessions they have made. Is the reduction of the franchise contemplated in this measure in itself a dangerous thing, an evil, or a good? What are the dangers to be apprehended from this reduction being passed apart from the other measures of Reform which they desire? Are such other measures more or less likely to be passed after this one has become law? What probability is there that any larger and more explicit measure of Reform would command a greater or even an equal measure of support? And first, as to the intrinsic merits of the proposition that the franchise should be reduced, I have never held the opinion that the franchise is the right of every man untainted by crime. I believe that, as inequality of condition is one of the necessary and inevitable accidents of society, it is the duty and privilege of society to recognize such inequality of condition in all matters in which its recognition tends to the general good. Such a matter I believe the distribution of the franchise to be—a matter not of abstract right, but of equitable adjustment. But I think that, so regarding it, it is perfectly evident that the more wide the area of that franchise, consistently with the general good, the better for the State and for society. This I look upon as the true distinction between really democratic and really constitutional principles in this matter; and this word democratic—this bye-word and reproach—it is too much the habit of the day to apply indiscriminately to men and to opinions—to whom, whether it be a reproach or not, it has at all events no just application. Those who differ from you as to fitness of individuals or classes for admission to the privilege of the franchise in the interests of society are not therefore democrats in the sense of asserting a right of admission, independent of fitness altogether. And what does the Bill of my right hon. Friend assert but that by the progress of education, intelligence, and virtue, and by the growth of population, a number of persons, in all not exceeding 400,000, may be added to the present constituencies with advantage to the country; and that as there was more room and more need for that progress amongst the lower than amongst the higher state of society—witness the evidence of the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe)—and a much larger number of the former than of the latter were excluded, we rejoice to find that the large number of the new constituents will be furnished from that class. *Primâ facie,* then, and assuming the growth of education and intelligence, which I presume no one denies, the extension of the franchise is a right proposal, and will be an auspicious event. But what are, apart from the *primâ facie* view, the positive benefits to be anticipated? The advantage to those thus admitted consists in the increased self-respect, the diminished class feeling, the closer contact with higher cultivation, the lessened temptation to illegitimate self-assertion which the possession of its legitimate scope affords in this House, and just as men work themselves up into an unreasoning distrust of the working people of this country—the more surely, the less they know and the more they talk about them, so do the working people distrust and dread the upper classes just in proportion as they are shut out to pursue their objects in a state of political separation from their social superiors. The advantage to us who admit them, on the other hand, will be the disabusing us of many prejudices, and relieving us of many fears as to what the aims of these working classes are. We shall disarm their opposition to wholesome things, which they dread chiefly as coming from us, and secure their co-operation in removing unwholesome things which are too strong for us too deal with without their help. We shall understand them better and trust them more. But, Sir, I am ashamed to trespass on the House with my feeble expression of these views after the noble and exhaustive exposition of them by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), views which honourably contrast, in their calm and dispassionate truthfulness, with those of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Hertfordshire. He proclaimed the astounding doctrine, far from the franchise right being an educational and elevating thing, it was positively a demoralizing one. He demonstrated this eminently Conservative theory by a reference to the pot-wallopers of the good old days, and a contrast between the venal voters of Yarmouth and the unrepresented men of Rochdale; and, in his benevolent anxiety for the virtue of the working man, he seeks to save him from the possession of that vote whose demoralizing influence must of course be deepest among those who have longest been exposed to it—of those who possessed it before Liberal principles were in the ascendant at all. But if the advantages of extended franchise are such as I have indicated, what are the dangers to be apprehended, apart from that demoralizing influence, in the admitted classes themselves, which the hon. Baronet the Member for

Hertfordshire anticipates?—an invasion of democratic Members—an avalanche of democratic measures—a confiscation of the rights of property—a capital sentence upon capital itself. Well, are the representatives of the working people, or those who are accused of being so, the least respectable or the least valuable Members of the House of Commons? Is it, indeed, a calamity to this House that it numbers in its ranks the hon. Members for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), for Brighton (Mr. White), for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton), for Manchester (Mr. Bazley)—nay, even the humble representatives of Glasgow—are they very dangerous men? Sir, election by working men does not necessarily imply election of working men. We all know it is far otherwise; and if some violent men should find their way into this House—so far from that being an evil, I regard it as a positive good. Talk of public schools, talk of Universities; there is no school for men like the House of Commons. Many a wild elephant has been tamed ere now by being coupled with tame ones; and in the conflict of opinion in the free and yet self-restrained intercourse of thought which here arises, there are subduing, and sobering, and improving influences that only a very stupid man, a very bad man, will resist. And do not suppose the working classes are fools. Extreme and violent men will never acquire influence in an Assembly such as this unless they first accept the lessons which it teaches; and the people would soon tire of sending men to represent them who failed to secure influence and command attention here. Nor are the working men all of one way of thinking, so as to use their power with a special concentration. They are no more gregarious in their habits of thought than the classes above them. On the contrary, I believe they profess more originality and individualism. Why, Sir, I will find you at the corner of any street down in our northern towns a set of men amongst whom almost any ten are prepared to differ upon public questions, and many of them to maintain their differences, in argument, with an ability that would do no dishonour to this House. Is it an avalanche of measures, conceived in a spirit of hostility to property and capital, that is feared? Was there ever such a calumny—such a chimera? You tell us of the protectionist tendency of democrats elsewhere. Was it working men who opposed those doctrines of free trade, and free agriculture, and free navigation, that have enhanced the value of property and increased the accumulation of capital in this country to an extent unprecedented in the history of the world? Tell me what measures conceived in such a spirit it is that you dread? Leave the region of vague, general insinuation! Come to particulars, and the shadows will flee away. Look at the savings banks and the trades unions. Are not the working classes learning the value of capital? Look at the co-operative building and manufacturing societies. Are they ignorant of the value of property? Are they dishonest more than ourselves, that they should wish to seize what they know is not theirs? Who run most swiftly in the paths of every speculative adventure, and figure most prominently in the records of the Insolvent Court, and the arrear books of unfortunate tradesmen? Is it the working people of this country? Are they selfish? Ask them how neighbours and relatives and friends are supported, specially in times of want and sickness and sorrow! Woe to the poor if they depended only on the charities of the rich—great and noble as these Christian charities are! No, Sir, the dangers that we picture on the horizon of a distant future are only the *fata morgana*—magnified and distorted images of ourselves. Again, I ask, what evil can possibly arise from the reduction of the franchise, as passed apart from other measures of Reform? Now, if I rightly understand the apprehension entertained on this point, it amounts simply to this—that supposing, as the hon. Member for Westminster has put it, a most improbable concurrence of events to prevent the Ministry from completing their measure before another election, there would then be a somewhat larger, although still a very moderate number of constituencies under working men's influence, who would elect Members to share in the deliberations on re-distribution. I must say I cannot see anything very alarming in that to sincere Reformers. I can quite understand the aversion to it of the "Let well alone" party in this House—the aversion of those who have vested interests in the question, which it may be difficult to defend. But if you believe that it is a good thing to have Reform—that it is a good thing to bring more of our fellow citizens within the suffrage—that it is a good thing to secure a more faithful representation of national rather than individual interests—

for, remember, if the suffrage be not the right of the working man at all as an individual, neither is it the right of the upper classes for any selfish or personal end — if, I say, you believe these things, and if you regard the class of men who have hitherto and are still likely to represent the working class constituencies in this House, and if you regard the tone and temper of this House itself, and the large predominance of other interests that will still remain — what possible injustice or wrong can you believe will be perpetrated in the course of that re-distribution by the representatives of the working classes? Of course the large probability, almost the certainty is, that this same House of Commons will have to deal with the question; but even if it should not, you know the worst that can happen; and is that so very terrible? Again, you profess to desire an equitable re-distribution of seats. Is that more or less likely to be passed after the franchise measure has become law? Any child can answer that question. If there be a difficulty in re-distribution, it must be in wresting from the stronger and giving to the weaker, or securing to the weak what may be coveted by the strong. Who are the stronger in this House now?—the middle and upper classes, or the working classes? And if the effect of the Franchise Bill be to strengthen the hands of the latter, is it not strengthening the hands of those who seek an equitable re-distribution? And, still more, what probability is there that any larger measure of Reform would command a greater, or even an equal, measure of support? Upon the simple issue of an extended franchise there are but two opinions to consult—the affirmative and the negative. Upon the questions of re-distribution, of boundaries, of securing purity of election, and the many collateral questions that must be included, there are conflicts of opinion and of interest at every step. To the bitter opposition which this measure of simple justice and expediency has evoked will be superadded the thousand oppositions of ten thousand conflicting claims. That obstruction, which is the last resource of our opponents when arguments has failed, will wear out the time of the House, and exhaust the patience of the country, until at last, in the jaded weariness of baffled effort and disappointed hope, we resign ourselves to the apathy and hopelessness out of which we have only now, after so many years, awakened; or, under the pressure of some unforeseen emergency, yield to clamour in a moment of alarm far more than what we have denied to justice and expediency in the hour of our opportunity. Sir, I have addressed myself solely to those who profess to be sincere adherents of the Liberal cause. Of persuading others I have no hope, and I have not made the attempt. I know not the shibboleths of their party, nor the arts by which they are to be won; but to those I have presumed to address I offer this feeble appeal — offer it not so much for our sakes as for their own — believing as I do that the shame and the loss will be all on their side who are faint-hearted, when the division lists of this House, as they will shortly do, proclaim a victory in which they have no share.

Lord ELCHO: Sir, the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Graham) has asked the House whether they regard the hon. Member for Glasgow as a dangerous man. Now, Sir, I do not of course know what the opinion of the House may be on that subject; but, as far as I have been able to judge of the hon. Gentleman, I believe him to be a most amiable man, but I should also regard him as a most dangerous supporter of any measure which I might bring forward. I shall not follow the hon. Gentleman through many of the points in his speech, because in the remarks I am about to address to the House I shall have to touch upon questions cognate to some of those to which he referred; nor shall I, indeed, offer any opinion upon the questions raised by the hon. Gentleman as to the virtue of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the legitimacy of the Bill which his right hon. Friend has introduced. The hon. Gentleman has characterized this Bill as just in principle, moderate in scope, eminently judicious in form, and pregnant with good. It is this opinion I shall venture to dispute, and if the House will hear them, I purpose stating the grounds for the opinions which I entertain. The hon. Gentleman has further said that the Bill will receive the adherence of the great body of the Liberal party, with the exception of that "fraction" which, he says, "drives him mad." Now, I should be very sorry, as one of that fraction, to contribute in any way to reducing the hon. Gentleman to that unhappy mental condition, the more so as I see that the Scotch Members are summoned by the Lord Advocate for to-morrow night to the consideration of some new Lunacy Bill. In dealing with this question I have, as an observer, been much struck by the haste—I might almost say the indecent haste—which the Government have shown in dealing with this subject. My noble Friend the Member for Galway (Lord Dunkellin) who spoke on Monday night with so much ability, and who put some telling points against the Government and the Bill, said that our Constitution was 600 years old. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing the Bill said that we had twelve days, and twelve days only, wherein to pull it to pieces and to put it together again. The greater part of six of those days is gone, and six days only therefore remain to us for the completion of the work. I have no doubt that the Government thought they were wise in their generation in pursuing the course upon which they have determined; but in the whole of their conduct upon this Question we cannot, I venture to think, detect that reverence for the Constitution which we have a right to expect from those who are our paid and responsible Ministers. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer twitted me before the Easter recess with feeling strongly upon this question. I admit the truth of that charge: and it is because I dread the hasty, the impulsive, and the fragmentary way in which the Government appear inclined to deal with this vital question, and, above all, because I am alarmed at the wild sentimentalism by which, in default of arguments, the Bill is supported, that I would request the patience of the House while I express the views which I have formed both upon the Bill itself and upon the Amendment which has been proposed.

Before, however, doing so, I would ask the House to favour me with its indulgence while I refer to my own position in reference to this question, and that also of Parliament. I hope the House will not believe that I request this indulgence from any feeling of egotism. Those who know me best will, I am sure, acquit me of any such motive. The tactics of the Government and of the defenders of the Bill in reference to its opponents appear to consist in making charges which they cannot possibly substantiate. My hon. Friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Layard), whom I see near me, said the other night that I was the opponent of all Reform. That statement I deny, and if I were to ask him to cite any speech of mine, or any passage in any speech of mine, delivered either in this House or out of it, which would corroborate that statement, he would, I believe, find himself in a difficulty, similar to the one in which he found himself placed the same evening when he was asked to name one of those measures which, he said, dealt with great public questions in a way as fragmentary as that to which this question has been subjected at the hands of the Government. My course with regard to this question may not have been wise, but it has, at least, been consistent, and it is, at all events, one to which I have been prompted by the dictates of my own conscience. It is said I am the opponent of Reform. As a Reformer, I supported the Bill of Lord Derby—a Bill which was opposed by all you Liberals. I forgot for a moment, I am happy to say my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a consistent Reformer and voted with us. That this question was not settled in 1859 was the fault not of that fraction in which I include myself, but of the great majority of the Liberal party who were opposed to that settlement. On the hustings and in my addresses I have alike advocated the settlement of this question. I opposed the Bill brought forward last year by the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) proposing the reduction of the borough franchise to £6, because I regarded it as a fragmentary measure, and as one not likely to lead to the settlement of the question; and the course I then adopted was, I am happy to say, perfectly justified by that which the Government pursued in relation to the same proposal. I say that I am not opposed to Reform. All that I desired was that there should be an inquiry into the question, and that we should ascertain with certainty the nature of the path which it was suggested we should tread. On that ground I proposed that the Government should appoint a Commission upon this subject. I am obliged to refer to this matter in consequence of what was said the other day by the Prime Minister at a meeting which he convened in reference to this Bill, and because one of the reasons assigned for our conduct is a hostility to the Government. Now at the meeting Earl Russell made a statement concerning myself, on reading which I confess I was not a little astonished. That statement was—

"I inquired of a gentleman I considered well informed whether Lord Elcho intended to propose the appointment of a Committee to obtain information as to the persons who may be entitled to the franchise. I was answered, 'No, that intention is given up, because it is believed that the Government will be got rid of without having recourse to that means.'"

Now, if words convey any meaning at all, that statement implies that I intended bringing forward that measure in a spirit of hostility to the Government, but that I abandoned the intention on finding an easier way of getting rid of the present Ministry. Now what are the facts of the case? I came to London in order to attend Lord Palmerston's funeral, when a Member of the Cabinet told me that he thought there was a good deal to be said in favour of my Commission, and asked me whether I would give him my reasons for it. I said I was willing to do so, and suggested that I should write them down, as it was a long story. He expressed his thanks, and I sat up during the best part of the night writing my reasons. I might have answered him "No," and said "That is my thunder, and I intend it in hostility to you." But I went frankly into the whole question and gave every possible argument for the measure, which I believed to be not only for the good of the country, but for the interest of the Government, and stating to him that in my humble opinion the course I proposed was the best one of dealing with the matter. I heard when in London that Lord Russell had seen this letter, and hence the Electoral Returns; and when these were produced I heard that a Member of the Government had said, "Now I think that we have taken the wind out of Lord Elcho's sails." I thought that perhaps I had been misinformed; but I made inquiries and found that Lord Russell had seen that paper. He is now Prime Minister of this country; but as a humble Member of Lord Aberdeen's Government I can never forget the way in which he left that Government upon a threatened hostile Motion, from a gentleman who sit opposite to where I am now standing. I most readily admit that Lord Russell is one of the most distinguished statesmen that this country has ever seen; that no man has done more for the liberty and good Government of his country; and, therefore, all that I have to say on this point is that I am surprised that Lord Russell, with a full knowledge of the spirit in which that paper was written, should have expressed himself as he did at that meeting, and should have spoken of me in my absence in the way he did. I must apologize for having referred at so great a length to this matter. I should not have done so at all, had I not been lugged into it by the Prime Minister.

Now, I have to say something with regard to the general question of Reform. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in bringing in this Bill laid great stress upon the fact — and, indeed, this was really his only argument—that Reform had been put into so many Queen's Speeches, and had been brought forward by so many Governments—in fact, he said that Parliament was pledged upon the question of Reform. Now, I might say that the fact of this Reform question having been put into so many Queen's Speeches, and of so many Bills having been brought forward during the last fourteen years cuts the other way; for if there had been any great necessity for it or any desire for it on the part of the country, instead of the question being before the country for fourteen years we should not have had fourteen months of agitation upon it. My right hon. Friend said that Parliament is pledged; but I imagine that this Parliament is not pledged upon the question of Reform; and I say that even if we are pledged upon every other question this Parliament is clearly and distinctly not pledged upon Reform. Now, what are my grounds for saying this? In the debate upon the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) last year, we got a distinct assurance from the Home Secretary that the Government did not go to the country upon the question of Reform. I shall not repeat his words, for they have been quoted already in this debate. [*Cries of* "Read!"] These, then, are the words used by the right hon. Gentleman—

> "We are not pledged to, and we do not intend to ask, the support of the country as the advocates of a great measure of Parliamentary Reform. . . . We are not prepared to go to the country as the advocates of a measure of Parliamentary Reform without reserving to ourselves a discretion to act upon that matter, as upon all others, as the interests of the country may require."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxviii. 1639.]

And the right hon. Gentleman said upon the hustings—

> "Lord Palmerston had fully redeemed the pledges they made on taking office, and the reason why they had not pressed a Reform Bill upon Parliament Session after Session was the disinclination of that body to deal with the question and the apathy of the country with regard to it. He held that it was not the duty of a Government to propose organic changes in the Constitution without a fair prospect of carrying the matter to

a successful issue, and that Lord Palmerston's Government had taken the wise course of proposing measures of practical utility. After the past experience, it would now be an act of folly for any man to pledge himself either to the introduction of a Reform Bill or to any of its details."

I turn from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary and look at the election address of the late Prime Minister. I have not got it here; it is unnecessary that I should read it, because it does not contain a single allusion to Reform from beginning to end. Nay, more, when asked why he did not propose to deal with Reform, Lord Palmerston answered, "Because we are not geese." But I would quote from another authority to which all Members on the Ministerial side of the House will bow. I have found an analysis of this Parliament that was made in September, and it gives the Liberal Members as follows:—Liberals expressing themselves on Reform on the hustings, 160; Liberals making no declaration on the subject of Reform, 165; those who announced that they were supporters of Lord Palmerston, 42; making in all 367. Now, where did I take that analysis from? It was a calculation made after the election in September, and I took it from the pages of the *Leeds Mercury*. Why, Sir, all this only tends to one inevitable conclusion—that as long as Lord Palmerston lived there was no hope of Reform; under his judicious and calm leadership there was no chance of Reform, and, indeed, the hon. Member behind me (Mr. Bright)—and I shall endeavour not to bring his name in more than necessary—when invited to go to Glasgow upon the question of Reform, said that it was of no use "trying it on"—it was more eloquently expressed, of course—so long as Lord Palmerston lived. He unhappily died, and peace appears to have departed with him; Lord Russell became Prime Minister; agitation followed, and my right hon. Friend the leader of the House goes and stumps it in the provinces. No man regrets more than I do that my right hon. Friend should have taken this course. I have great admiration and always had for him; and when he takes to stumping it in the provinces the necessary consequence is that a comparison is drawn between him and another, and unfortunately his eloquence upon the stump suffers in comparison. His eloquence here is unrivalled, and if I might presume to give advice I would advise him to keep his eloquence for the House, and not to follow the example of a person whom I will not name.

Now, Sir, I come to the Bill of the Government. It is a Franchise Bill, and I object to it *per se*, because it says one thing—but I will not use towards it the language which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer used towards the Amendment, and say that while it says one thing it means another—but I will say that while it says one thing I am perfectly confident it would lead to another. My objection to it is that it is only a Franchise Bill. Now, what does it profess to do? It touches the county franchise, but the main characteristic of the Bill is the way in which it deals with the borough franchise. It professes to be a Bill to enfranchise the working classes. The working man has been the stock argument of Reform agitators for many years past, and he was supposed to have no voice whatever in the representation. I need not quote passages in support of this, but I will say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said last autumn at Liverpool that he did not know whether 50,000 or 100,000 working men had no franchise; Lord Russell said the working man had no franchise, and the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) said last year that the number having the franchise was so exceedingly small that it had no appreciable weight upon the representation. I had always doubted this, and this was the reason that I wished for inquiry. The inquiry was made and a Return furnished; and what does it show? Why, that there are 26 per cent of the working classes upon the electoral roll. This inquiry has further shown that the barrier which is said to stand between enfranchisement and the working classes is a barrier that has lowered itself by the change in the value of money, and that the working classes are getting taller by the rise in the price of labour; and therefore the number of voters of this class upon the register is increasing at a more rapid pace than the increase of the population of the country. It appears to me that these facts should make us look well before we leap, and examine well the Bill of the Government lest we give a preponderance in the Constitution to one class of the population. I believe that there is danger of this, and I believe that those Electoral Returns show the danger of action, and all inquiry leads me to the conclusion that if we do not take care the Bill may have the effect of giving a preponderance to one class. I need not trouble the House with quotations, but here is a passage from Lord Russell which distinctly denies the doctrine of the natural right of every man to the suffrage. In his introduction to his work on the Constitution he says—

> "There were two modes in which Reform might be approached. The one was to consider the right of voting as a personal privilege possessed by every man of sound mind and of years of discretion as an inherent, inalienable right belonging to him as a member of a free country. According to this theory the votes of the whole male adult population form the only basis of legitimate Government. Other political writers and eminent statesmen acknowledge no personal right of voting as inalienable and essential. They consider that the purpose to be attained is good government, the freedom of the people within the State and their security from without, and that the best mode of attaining these ends is the problem to be solved. It seemed to me that these last reasoners were in the right."

Now why should we be so cautious? Because the spirit of the Constitution is not the giving of a vote, but the attainment of good government; and even the hon. Member behind me (Mr. Bright) — for even he has lucid intervals with regard to the Constitution — in his speech at Rochdale advocated a moderate measure on the ground that the right to vote does not necessarily belong to the individual or the classes. This I gathered from his speech. No doubt the hon. Gentleman will speak in the course of the debate, and then he will be able to make an explanation if I have misunderstood him. [Mr. Bright was understood to deny that he entertained such view with respect to the right of voting.] I am sorry I gave him credit for what he appears now to deny in regard to the principle of representation by classes. Why is it desirable that we should be cautious with reference to the representation of classes? Because I dread class legislation in this House. We hear from hon. Gentlemen that there is no fear of this; and that you have Liberals and Conservatives among the working classes, just as you have them among other classes of the community. But what are the views the working classes take of this question of Reform? They desire it in order to attain a certain object. A deputation waited upon the Prime Minister, when a working man from Glasgow said that the working classes wanted Reform in order that they might be able to do what they had been obliged to do by strikes—namely, regulate wages and labour. Let me quote upon this point an opinion which I think will have great weight with hon. Members — that of a Gentleman who has contributed so much both to the debates of this House and to the character of this assembly—the hon. Member for Westminster. What does Mr. Stuart Mill say with reference to class legislation? He says—

> "In all countries there is a majority of poor, a minority who, in contradistinction, may be termed rich. Between these two classes, on many questions there is complete opposition of apparent interest. We will suppose the majority to be sufficiently intelligent to be aware that it is not for their advantage to weaken the security of property, and that it would be weakened by any act of arbitrary spoliation. But is there not a considerable danger that they should throw upon the possessors of what is called realized property, and upon the larger incomes an unfair share, or even the whole of the burden of taxation, and, having done so, add to the amount without scruple, expending the proceeds in modes supposed to conduce to the profit and advantage of the labouring classes. Suppose, again, a minority of skilled labourers, a majority of unskilled. The experience of many trade unions, unless they are greatly calumniated, justifies the apprehension that equality of earnings might be imposed as an obligation, and that piece work, payment by the hour, and all practices which enable superior industry or abilities to gain a superior reward, might be put down."

These are the sentiments of the hon. Gentleman behind me, of whom I may say that since he has been a Member of this House he has shown that he can speak in his place in Parliament in language as clear, and in words as keen and cutting as any that come from his pen in the retirement of his study. I cannot but think, however, that he runs a little danger of having his judgment dimmed and warped by the heated atmosphere of Westminster. I have quoted the opinion of the hon. Gentleman expressed in the quiet of his study, and I think it ought to have very great weight with this House, and make us cautious in dealing with this subject. But there is another authority—the late Mr. Cobden—who, I am sure, will have weight with Gentlemen behind me. In 1848, when supporting Mr. Hume's Motion for Reform, he said he did so on this ground—that there was great necessity for alteration in the taxation of the country, and that if we had Reform the instinct of selfishness on the part of the working classes would induce them to place the taxation upon realized property rather than upon any other. Therefore, the danger you run is the selfish instinct of the classes which will induce them to act selfishly in legislating in this House.

The question then is, will the Bill have, or will it not have, the effect of giving a preponderance to these classes? The right hon. Gentleman says that it purposes to place the working classes in the boroughs on an equality, or nearly so, with the other classes. That is in the year 1866—but how will it be in the year 1876? What will be the state of the representation at a later period? These are the points upon which we want information, and which we have a right to ask. But when we ask for information upon these points, how are we met? I ventured to put some questions to my right hon. Friend, in order to ascertain what would be the effect of his measure some twenty or thirty years hence, and I was met by laughter from hon. Gentlemen near me. Now, the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) made a speech on Tuesday last on the malt tax, in which he called the attention of the House to what would be the condition of this country if, in the course of three generations, our coal measures should become exhausted; but I am not aware that he was laughed at when he asked that question. But if a Gentleman gets up in this House and asks a question for the purpose of knowing whether the Constitution will retain its present balance of classes twenty or thirty years hence—the period that has elapsed since the last Reform Bill was passed being about thirty years—he is met with laughter, and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer absolutely refuses to give you any further information, and says you are treating the working classes as an "invading army." A Gentleman—I think it was the hon. Member for Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley)—referred to this, when my right hon. Friend denied that he had imputed this expression of an "invading army" to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Now, I may be allowed to explain—in order to save the right hon. Gentleman from making any further explanation—that he did not impute that expression to hon. Gentlemen opposite generally, but especially to myself. Before the recess, after remarking that the working classes had been treated as an "invading army," the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, speaking of me—

> "The noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire has recently passed some few days of his life in a state of alarm at the prospects of the country. He would not in the least tremble to meet a French invasion, but the idea of an invasion of his own fellow-citizens, desirous of obtaining the franchise, has entirely frightened him from his propriety."

From this I hope hon. Gentlemen will see that this expression was not applied to hon. Gentlemen opposite; but that it is one of the little amenities of debate which my right hon. Friend keeps for a fraction on this side of the House, who do not humbly bow to his chastening rod and iron flail. Believing as I do, that we have not sufficient information on this question, and that we ought before we pass such a Bill as this, to be put in possession of more information respecting it, I feel it my duty to vote for the Amendment, and to oppose any such Bill till we get such information.

It may be said because I oppose the present Bill that I am an enemy to the working classes. Now, so far from that, I hope it will be distinctly understood that I do not oppose this Bill because I see in it a danger, a future danger, of a preponderance of the working classes, more than I would oppose it if I saw in it a danger of the preponderance of any other class. What I am opposed to is the unfair representation of classes. What I said to the working men I will repeat to this House—namely, that I am in favour of a due and proper balance of the representation of the land, trade, commerce, and industry. "Justice to all, preponderance to none," is my motto; whenever I see a Bill, such as that now before the House, which threatens the preponderance of any class, I shall feel it my duty to resist it. I believe such a preponderance would inevitably lead to the rule of numbers; and that our Constitution cannot safely rest upon the book of numbers, of which I have every reason to fear this Bill is only the first page.

I shall not enter into the details of the Amendment moved by my noble Friend, and the arguments which would be necessary to support it; he has in so straightforward and manly a manner shown distinctly how pure were his motives, that I believe all those who act with him, and intend to follow him, are under no necessity to justify the course which they are taking in reference to this Bill. Again, my noble Friend opposite (Lord Stanley), in that most able speech of his, which has not been answered, put the argument so clearly and so forcibly that I think he has saved all those who support this Amendment a great deal of trouble, and given an amount of trouble to hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, which, it appears to me, they are very shy in undertaking. Let me recall to the recollection of the House what were the arguments used by my noble Friend. I have jotted them down on paper because I think it is desirable that they should be put before the House in the shortest possible form, in order that hon. Gentlemen who may be anxious to answer them may have all possible facilities for doing so. My noble Friend opposite supports the Amendment. On what ground? Because the Government bring in a Bill in halves, knowing that the whole cannot be carried. He further says that the schedules are elastic, and that they might be so made as to oblige a friend and punish an opponent; and that it is uncertain whether this would or would not be the case, as the Government may not live to carry the Bill. If a dissolution intervene, the appeal will be to condemned or provisional constituencies. These will decide the future destinies of the House. A guarantee is wanted that the same body shall decide both questions. There are three successive stages—enfranchisement, re-distribution—boundaries — but Reform should be treated like finance, as a whole. The Government begins at the wrong end. The franchise is extending itself. Anomalies of inequality are increasing. Government will have more influence with new constituencies. To judge of future balance of power it is necessary to know the effect of joint Bills. The powers intrusted to us we have to exercise not in ignorance, not by deputy, but by our own judgment. The same body must decide and be able to control, mould, pass, or reject as a whole. My hon. Friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs said I would not allow him to answer that speech the other night. [Mr. Layard: I said hon. Members on the other side of the House would not allow me to do so.] Well, be that as it may, I had the pleasure of hearing the speech of my hon. Friend, and he began by telling us with the utmost self-complacency that he intended to answer the arguments of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn. Those, however, who were in the House at the time, and who have since then read the debate, cannot have failed to have observed that he very soon left my noble Friend and betook himself to Smith, the plasterer. He gave us the whole history of that gentleman; and, adverting to the temptation to which he was exposed, said we should all pray to be delivered from temptation—and I am sure I and those who sat beside me most earnestly prayed that we might at length be delivered from Smith, the plasterer. I may add that the conclusion at which I arrived at the close of my hon. Friend's speech was that, however valuable and useful his services might have been in digging Assyrian antiquities out of the sand ["Oh, oh!"]—let me not be misunderstood; no man is more ready than I am to do honour to my hon. Friend for the signal service which he has done this country for his labours in this respect, but he is, nevertheless, not the person whom I should like to call to my aid to pick out of the mud a Bill which the Government have, as I think, so perversely introduced. Returning from that divergence to the point more immediately before the House, I wish to state that I intend to vote for the Amendment of my noble Friend the Member for Chester, because I not only dread this Bill itself on account of the provisions which it contains, but because it meets with support from persons who have hitherto been in favour of the very widest possible extension of the franchise. I hold in my hand a manifesto which was published in 1858, which was addressed "To the People of England," and the first paragraph of which states that—

> "The extension of the borough franchise in England and Wales to 'every male person of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity' who shall occupy, as owner or tenant in part or whole, any premises within the boroughs which are rated for the relief of the poor."

Now, this manifesto was signed by three hundred persons, and among other names I find attached to it those of Frank Crossley, John Bright, Charles Gilpin, John Arthur Roebuck, James Clay, F. H. Fitzhardinge Berkeley, and Thomas Milner Gibson. This manifesto was issued in 1858. Have things, I should like to know, become changed in 1866? But we have got a Reform League in this country which agitates and holds meetings wherever it can, and I find that this League supports while it denounces the Government Bill, with which, if I mistake not, the hon. Gentleman who spoke last (Mr. Graham) said the working classes were satisfied. In the concluding paragraph of the manifesto of the Reform League, however, they say—

> "But while we give this recommendation [to support the Bill] we protest emphatically, for the reasons already assigned, against this Bill, should it become law, being regarded as a settlement of

the Reform question. Whether it be passed or rejected, we urge you and our friends in every direction to aid us in maintaining with unabated zeal a peaceful and moral agitation 'for the extension of the elective franchise to every resident and registered adult male person of sound mind, and unconvicted of crime.'"

It is, therefore, quite clear that, while the Amendment of my noble Friend indicates a desire for the settlement of this question, it is very doubtful whether the measure of the Government, in its present shape, would effect that object. But, be that as it may, what I and those who support that Amendment wish for is a settlement of the question; but the mere passing the Bill in its present form will not do that. We emphatically protest against dealing in this fragmentary way with a question which is one and indivisible, and ought to be dealt with only as a whole. There are three sorts of argument resorted to by those who wish us to take a contrary course. I may class them under the heads of defamation of opponents; fear of constituents; and fealty to party. Those who oppose the Bill are said to be actuated by base and interested motives. That accusation has, for instance, been brought against my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe). Now, I happened to be in the same Government with my right hon. Friend in 1854, when Lord Aberdeen was Prime Minister, and I am in a position to speak of the views which he then held on the subject of Reform. My right hon. Friend and I used at that time often to talk upon the subject in walking home from our respective offices, and when the Bill of 1854, proposing a £6 franchise, was brought forward we both made up our minds that, if it went into Committee, we should resign office, and vote against it, because we feared that a £6 franchise would give a preponderance to one class in the community and upset the balance of the Constitution. Again, I met my right hon. Friend in the lobby on the division which took place on the Franchise Bill the year before last, when he came up to me and said, "You and I can vouch for each other's consistency." Last year also, on occasion of the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds, I went up to him and asked him if he would help me to vote against the proposal for £6 franchise and get up a debate upon it, and his reply was, "It is contrary to my interest as a political man to quarrel with my party, but I feel so strongly on the question that I will do everything in my power to throw out this Bill." The only thing, indeed, that can be laid to the charge of my right hon. Friend in support of the accusations which have been made against him in this matter is that he voted in 1859 for a Resolution which had the effect of turning out Lord Derby's Government; and having asked him what explanation he had to give of the course which he took on that occasion he said, "I gave a party vote to turn out the Government. I acted with my party." [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] Let those who cheer that statement and who find fault with my right hon. Friend for having acted with his party on this question—let them, I say, throw the first stone. Did not my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I would ask, then oppose a proposal to lower the borough franchise—a reduction of which he now supports. ["No, no!"] He voted against a Resolution the principle of which was to affirm the expediency of reducing the borough franchise, while he now brings forward a measure having that object in view. As far as the charge of want of consistency is concerned, therefore, both my right hon. Friends may very well, I think, pair off together. Now, the course which we who support the Amendment of my noble Friend the Member for Chester take is, I maintain, a conscientious course; but then for taking this course we are reproached with being "Adullamites;" and it is said that we have retired into this Cave of Adullum because we are discontented. Now, speaking for my own part—I have no right to speak for others—I believe we are discontented; but not in the sense imputed to us by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham. We are dissatisfied with the tyranny of our Saul sitting on the Treasury Benches, supported by his armour-bearer, who sits behind me. This it is, Sir, and no improper motive, which has driven us into this Cave, where we are, I can assure the House, a most happy family, daily, I may say hourly, increasing in number and in strength, and where we shall remain until we go forth to deliver Israel from oppression.

Another motive which has been brought to bear with great force on Members to induce them to vote for the Bill is the mean motive of the fear of their constituents. The screw has been put on by the Secretary to the Treasury and by others to induce recalcitrant Members to take a course contrary to their consciences. It has been applied in some cases with extreme vigour, but I do not know a more pitiable spectacle than that presented by my right hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead (Sir William Hutt) who, having been submitted to this torturing process, now lies on the floor of this House a crumpled mass, wrung and dislocated, and morally out of joint. I hold a seat in this House to be the highest honour so long as a man can act independently and follow his sincere convictions. When he can no longer do so, the two letters appended to his name then become only the symbols of his moral degradation. It is well on this occasion to recall the words of a great and illustrious statesman of the last century. Mr. Burke said in an address to the people of Bristol—

> "But if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected to Parliament. It is certainly not very pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a Member of Parliament to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would, therefore, be absurd to renounce my objects in order to retain my seat. I deceive myself, indeed, most grossly if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid Throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse."

With respect to this question of the fear of constituencies, the choice seems to rest between one or two alternatives — the choice preferred by Burke and that made by the hon. Member for Gateshead; the choice between, as I have heard it is said, a cave and a hut; between Adullam and Gateshead—and I cannot doubt the alternative, which all independent men will prefer, if this screw is turned on them by any of those persons who are in the habit of manipulating that instrument. But is there really any fear with respect to constituents ? If I were pledged up to my eyes on the question of Reform, or of lowering the franchise, I should not fear to meet my constituents and defend my vote after voting in favour of the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester. That Amendment is not an Amendment against Reform. ["Oh, oh!"] Why, it specially says that the question of Reform should be settled. It specially declares that those who vote for it are prepared to consider the question of Reform with a view to its settlement. I have told you what the Amendment is not, and I will now tell you what I believe it to be. I believe it to be a protest against the rash, hasty, and fragmentary legislation, in which the Government are dealing with the question of Reform. Nay, more—it is a protest on the part of some Members of this House against the course taken by the Government in asking for confidence from their followers when they show no confidence in them.

Lord Elcho

The other point on which I wish to touch is the question of fealty to party. I readily admit that representative Government requires as a rule fealty to party, and you must on the whole, as a general rule, be prepared to waive, perhaps, your own private opinion in deference to the necessity for a united action as a party, and in order that you may work together and have two generally opposing parties in this House. But I think that in the present instance the Government are dealing rather harshly with those who conscientiously differ from them in opinion. We are accused of breaking up our party and being hostile to the Government. Now, we have in Parliamentary history some great instances of the sacrifice of party from a high sense of duty. We have had the great instance of the late Sir Robert Peel, who thought it necessary to sacrifice his party for what he believed the public good, and we had in return his party sacrificing him for what they believed his desertion. Therefore, you have had a great and noble exception from the general rule; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer said at Liverpool, in reference to the measure being fragmentary, that he knew the people he had to deal with, I think he made a great mistake in the matter. I believe that the way in which the Government have brought in this Bill, the language which has been used in the press and out of it, shows that my right hon. Friend does not know the sort of people he has to deal with. Some of us have felt this so strongly, that, in spite of all other considerations, we have thought it our duty to stand by our conscience and by our country, and at any risk to vote for the Amendment. But do not let my right hon. Friend suppose that it is a mere fraction of a party who hold the opinion which we profess. We say here openly what we say in private, and as fearlessly; and if the majority of men who sit on this side would do the same they would speak as I do. They may follow you into the lobby, but it will be a grudging, hesitating, and sulky allegiance with which they will follow you—and, rest assured of this, that they will not forget it. I know there are men who, when they have made all square, as they think, with their constituents by voting with the Government, will take every opportunity in Committee to trip you up, and in the name of the right of private judgment and the rights of conscience, I protest against this attempt to coerce us. There is nothing new in all this—this is not the only country which has had representative institutions—and there is a passage written, not by an Englishman, but by a distinguished foreign Minister and constitutional statesman, so apposite, that I will read it to the House—

> "I recognize no greater danger to free institutions than that blind tyranny which the habitual fanaticism of partisanship, whether of a faction or a small segment, pretends to exercise in the name of Liberal ideas. Are you a staunch advocate for constitutional Government and political guarantees? Do you wish to live and act in co-operation with the party which hoists this standard? Renounce at once your judgment and independence. In that party you will find on all questions and under all circumstances opinions ready formed and resolutions settled beforehand, which assume the right of your entire control. Self-evident facts are in open contradiction to these opinions; you are forbidden to see them. Powerful obstacles oppose these resolutions; you are not allowed to think of them. Equity and prudence suggest circumspection; you must cast it aside. You are in the presence of superstitious Credo and a popular passion. Do not argue; you would no longer be a Liberal. Do not oppose; you would be looked upon as a mutineer. Obey, advance, no matter at what pace you are urged, or in what road. If you cease to be a slave, you instantly become a deserter. My clear judgment and natural pride revolted invincibly against such a yoke."

I cannot speak in the name of fractions, but I can speak in the name of one fraction, and I repeat the words of M. Guizot, who in this country as Minister had ample opportunity of studying our forms of representative Government, of which he was one of the most distinguished advocates abroad—I respond to those words, "My natural pride revolts invincibly against such a yoke."

Now, Sir, one word in conclusion with reference to the position of the moderate Liberal party on this occasion. Last year I ventured in the discussion of the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds to point out that I believed the time must come when the moderate men on this side of the House could no longer act cordially with the extreme section of the Liberal party. Hitherto there has been on these Benches a large, a ruling, a moderate liberal majority, led by Lord Palmerston. There has been, on the other hand, a small section of most honest, most sincere, most able men, who honestly hold extreme views and opinions, which they have taken every opportunity of pressing on the attention of the House and the country. And when we talk of "conspiracy," why, the greatest rebel, the greatest conspirator I know since the days of Catiline is my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton (Mr. White) from whose place I now speak. These Gentlemen, for the purpose of promoting their views, would enter into what Lord Palmerston used to call a "fortuitous concourse of atoms." [Mr. WHITE: A fortuitous concord of atoms.] My hon. Friend corrects me in the quotation. He knows that he was one of those large atoms who used so fortuitously to concur with the atoms on the other side, whether great or small. Well, Lord Palmerston died, and we have now this party under a very different leader, who leads it not so much by cold calculations of reason and experience as by the warm impulses of his nature. Well, these Gentlemen hope to bring about a state of things which they have long wished to see established in this country, and if they succeed the fate of the moderate Liberals is pretty certain. Indeed, I hold in my hand a passage which was written in 1858, which pretty well predicts the course of events, or, at least, what is hoped and expected, in regard to the fate of the moderate Liberals—

> "The Liberal party has consisted ever since the abrogation of the Corn Laws of a majority who make a loud profession and a minority who hold a great principle, and the profession is made to cover the principle, not for the purpose of nourishing, but of destroying it. Let Lord John Russell remain where he is to carry his little Oaths Bill and to resist the abolition of church rates. Let Lord Palmerston move under his false colours, until his supporters are disgusted with his hollow pretentions. They have still to carry a Reform Bill. That done, separation from Church and State will then be ready as a basis for the party of progress, and once more we shall have earnest politicians, ennobling warfare, and in the end, we doubt not, glorious victories."

That is taken from *The Nonconformist* newspaper, and is written, I believe, by Mr. Miall, who will be accepted by hon. Gentlemen behind me as a great authority on the question of separation between Church and State. Well, what are these "glorious victors" they are looking to? What is the policy of this extreme section? It is this—the establishment in this country of so powerful a House of Commons, so democratic in its nature that I believe the balance of the Constitution will be upset and other bodies in the State cannot co-exist with it. As regards the question of property the policy of this section is the abolition of the law of primogeniture, and the breaking up of large estates. I am not quoting on this point from the pamphlet containing the speech of the hon. Member for Birmingham, and published by his authority; although, I believe, he did not like the look of it when he saw it in print, and therefore he bought it up.

Mr. BRIGHT: I do not know whether I am in order, but I may be allowed to say there is not a word of truth in what the noble Lord has uttered.

Lord ELCHO: I can only say this, that I have tried in vain to get a copy. [Mr. Bright: So have I.] But if the pamphlet has been so popular that only shows the necessity of still greater caution. As regards the Church, the policy of that section is the severance of Church and State; and on questions of taxation—let capitalists as well as others mark this—it is the putting of taxation on realized property and relieving other classes of taxpayers. Well, if that is the programme of the extreme section of the Liberal party, I should like to know whether it is the programme of the large majority which have hitherto followed the leading of Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell in this House. I believe the policy of the Government leads in that direction. My noble Friend (Earl Grosvenor) has raised a standard in order to rally those who feel this is not the policy which will conduce to the eventual prosperity of this country, and that it is subversive of the present state of things. He has raised that standard. By so doing he has laid himself open to much obloquy and abuse; but, if he should succeed, as I conscientiously believe he will, in carrying his Amendment, I am certain of this—a very short time will elapse after his success before those very men who now give a faltering allegiance to the Government will thank him for what he has been doing, and say he has been the means of saving what is so necessary and desirable in this House—the existence of the moderate Liberal party. Therefore, in concluding, I would make an appeal to these Gentlemen, and in doing so I would slightly paraphrase words which I have heard in this House. I would appeal to them not to support a policy which tends to Americanize our institutions, and to change our kingly commonwealth with all its liberty into a democratic tyranny. Paraphrasing these words I would appeal to them not with their hands—for by their hands alone it can be done—not by their hands to help to unmoor the constitution of these islands from its strong fastenings in the past, from its safe anchorage in the present, and send it adrift at least 2,000 miles towards the west.

Sir WILLIAM HUTT said, he did not complain of the acrimonious manner in which the noble Lord had stepped out of his way to attack him, nor of the lecture which the noble Lord, conscious of his own superior patriotism and virtue, had thought proper to read him on the authority of Mr. Burke. On the contrary, he could assure the noble Lord that he felt towards him nothing but thankfulness, because he had given him (Sir William Hutt) an opportunity of defending himself in the presence of the House from those injurious criticisms and gross misrepresentations to which he had been exposed. The noble Lord had indulged in all the license of what he called fanatical partizanship, and had assailed him in a spirit that he ought to be ashamed of. But he turned from him to the right hon. and gallant General (General Peel) who had also attacked him, though with better taste and feeling, and would give an explanation to the right hon. and gallant Member which he disdained to offer to the noble Lord. The right hon. and gallant General (General Peel) had on a former evening described him as taking up a hostile position in the rear of the Government. He could assure the right hon. and gallant General that he had never made a more incorrect statement. The position which he (Sir William Hutt) had taken up was in no sense whatever a hostile position; and he made that statement confidently in the presence of Members of the Government, the leader of which in that House could contradict him if he was stating what was erroneous. He appealed to his right hon. Friend whether he ever understood his position as a hostile one, as one of attack or obstruction? He had not dealt, to use the military phraseology of the right hon. and gallant Member, either with blank or with ball cartridge; his only object was to reconcile the Franchise Bill with the feelings of those who were anxious that a complete scheme of Parliamentary Reform should be brought forward. That was the only object of the

Amendment of which he had given notice. He had no design to make himself the associate of the noble Lord, nor the catspaw of the anti-Reform party in that House. Neither had it ever been his intention to desert his opinions in favour of an extended franchise, which he had recorded by so many votes. But he would not trouble the House with any further reference to himself; he would discuss the question which was really before the House, and which had been a great deal lost sight of in the discursive observations of the noble Lord. The question was whether they were willing, by reading this Bill a second time, to sanction the principle of an extension of the franchise; or whether they would postpone that consideration until they had a complete scheme of Parliamentary Reform brought before them? To that question the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), and he alone among the opponents of the Bill, had addressed himself in arguments of great weight and power. The right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon had forgotten it in his amusing speech which had added very little to their counsels in this debate, and which scarcely sustained his well-earned reputation. Then the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer Lytton), had given them an eloquent disquisition, but spoke on this occasion very little to the purpose. Almost all he said might, and with little ingenuity, as well have been spoken on the Church Rates Bill, or on a Bill relating to the Cattle Plague. Whether a £7 franchise would practically become a £6 franchise as the right hon. Gentleman stated, and whether a £6 franchise would give such a preponderance to democracy in this country, that it would be necessary for our safety to borrow a leaf from the charter of France or the United States, were matters of detail, not of principle. They were questions of great importance to be considered in Committee, but were singularly out of place in dealing with the principle of the Bill. He believed the principle of extension to be a salutary and a Conservative one, and that either in the House or out of it, most Members were pledged to it. The right hon. Member for Calne, indeed, had honestly avowed his opinion that it would be inexpedient to extend the franchise any further—he looked upon a £10 qualification as the perfection of human wisdom; but there was not half-a-dozen persons in or out of the House who shared his opinion. Even the right hon. and gallant General had volunteered on the hustings at Huntingdon the statement that a much larger number of the people ought to be admitted within the pale of the Constitution; the question was, were they disposed to act on those professions, or were they to wash their hands of those pledges because the Bill was not connected with something else which had never been named in their engagements? He believed that the working millions of this country would not understand these refinements. He hardly understood them himself. They were indeed hardly intelligible to anyone whose reasoning faculties were not disturbed by "fanatical partizanship" or the sophistries of Parliamentary logic. The view of the working classes would be that all the promises which had been made to them were to be broken. Now after all the panegyrics which had been lavished on them; after they had been so often told that such men as had formed the co-operative society of Rochdale, and the friendly society of Manchester were perfectly qualified for the franchise, if Members now rejected this Bill they would create a state of things in the country which every good and prudent man would have reason to regret. There had been growing up of late years in the hearts of the working classes of this country a feeling of confidence in the higher branches of the social hierarchy, which no one could have watched the progress of without the greatest gratification; for in that more than anything else consisted the prosperity, happiness, and security of nations. Were hon. Gentlemen opposite prepared to see that kind and generous feeling destroyed for ever, and to see it replaced by festering animosity, jealousy, and distrust? There was nothing in this country they should more cultivate than affectionate interest in the working classes, in the laws and government of the country. A circumstance had occurred to him in his experience as a Member of Parliament which exhibited in a striking manner the importance of uniting and knitting together the hearts of the working classes with those of the other portion of the community in contented allegiance to the laws, and which showed emphatically how ready the working classes were to constitute themselves the defenders and protectors of the laws. In 1843, when the present Chancellor of the Exchequer held the office of Vice President of the

Board of Trade, he brought in a Bill for the purpose of releasing the coal-whippers of London from the cruel and grinding bondage in which they were held by the owners of beer shops and gin shops at the water side; he (Sir William Hutt) was disposed at first to think that it was a needless interference with the labour market, and voted against the second reading. He, however, went amongst the coal-whippers at their labour, and entered the gin shops and tasted the abominable liquor in which they were paid their wages; he visited them in their own homes, and he saw also the medical men who were in the habit of attending them, and from what he gathered from his inquiries he became satisfied that the right hon. Gentleman was right in the view he took of the matter, and he supported the Bill in its subsequent stages. That occurred in 1843. In 1848 came the French revolution, which desolated in turn almost every capital in Europe, and the agents of revolution boasted that they would soon visit this country, and that their visit would be felt in the wreck of laws and the destruction of social order. Everywhere special constables were sworn in for the protection of the country. A few days before the explosion of revolutionary violence was expected, he was waited upon by a deputation from the coal-whippers of London to communicate two resolutions which had been passed at a public meeting of their body, which was 1,200 strong. The first resolution expressed gratitude to Mr. Gladstone and the House of Commons for the kind interest which had been shown in their sufferings, and the remedies applied to their grievances; and the second announced their intention of showing their gratitude by being sworn in as special constables; and a deputation waited on him (Sir William Hutt) to acquaint him with their resolution, and their spokesman assured him that wherever else there might be disturbance he might depend upon it that peace and order should be preserved at Wapping. He wished the feeling which animated these poor men was more generally entertained by the working classes, and that they were brought to feel that they had a beneficial interest and property in the laws by which they were governed. He believed the Bill of the Government had a tendency to promote that object, and believing that it was a measure salutary, sound, beneficial, and conservative, he should give his unhesitating support to the Motion that it be read a second time.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE said, that he should studiously refrain from importing any personalities into the discussion, although there was no one who would have more—not excuse, but palliation—for doing so, as he was one of the two Members to whom his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech at Liverpool—it might have been unintentionally—had imputed that he regarded the working classes as an invading army. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a gesture of dissent.] The charge of the right hon. Gentleman was made in such a manner as to include himself in the natural and literal interpretation of the words.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER had no intention of making such a charge against the hon. Member.

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE accepted the disclaimer of his right hon. Friend, and would at once proceed to address himself to the question before the House. He had listened to this debate with great interest; he had heard able speeches on the other side which threw more or less light upon the question—he might particularly refer to the able and logical speech—though, as he would endeavour to show, questionable in its premises—of the hon. Member for Westminster; but there was one quarter from which he looked for light and found only dense darkness—the Treasury Bench. With the exception of what fell from the hon. Member for Bradford, who was a practical man and an employer of labour, and therefore made a practical speech, he had heard nothing but angry declamation, strong invective, and sentimental appeals. He must correct himself, however—he had heard from one Member of the Government (Mr. Layard) that he regarded the hon. Member for Birmingham as "Snug, the joiner." Now, in the fashionable language of the day, "joiner" was called "cabinetmaker," and, perhaps, the hon. Gentleman intended delicately to convey the idea that the Member for Birmingham was a maker of Cabinets. Whether the Under Secretary thought that the rest of the worshipful company, Flute, Quince, Snout, and Bottom were also present in the Cabinet he could not tell; but he thought that the country would perhaps be of the opinion of the wise King of Athens in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, after seeing their performance, that they had left their dead to be buried by Lion and Moonshine—especially Moonshine. Leaving this attack in the rear upon it, however, he wished to discuss the principles of the Bill, and he would do so under two aspects. First, he would ask, was the Franchise Bill based, or was it not, on any sufficient appreciation of the conditions of the working man as he really showed himself in actual life; and secondly, he would further inquire whether this Bill must not, by the force of circumstances, effect a sudden displacement of political power, which, whether it intrinsically operated for good or evil, was an experiment which required to be acutely examined, well proved, and well tested previous to endorsement? This could not be done unless, before the proposal passed into a law, the parallel displacements of political power which would be caused by a re-distribution of seats and by a re-adjustment of boundaries were also before them. These were really the questions that required to be settled; and those who imputed ulterior motives to the persons who tried to make the inquiry, and who said that the object of the Amendment was to get rid of all Reform, simply showed that weakness of argument, that recklessness of tongue, that volubility of denunciation, which was sometimes rather pleasant and agreeable when coming from the mouth of an engaging woman, but which was exceedingly disagreeable, and not very dignified when it bubbled over from the Treasury Bench. He thought that the Amendment and not the Bill ought to be accepted by the House in the name of practical Reform. There were few Members in that House who had a better right to speak on behalf of the working men than he possessed. He represented a constituency of more than 100,000 inhabitants in Staffordshire, comprising a borough made up of several adjacent towns which were alike the head-quarters of our famous national manufacture of porcelain and also the seat of growing iron-works—a borough which stood in the first class of the Return moved for by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. Hunt) in respect of the number of working men already on the register. He was also at the head of an organization in London (the "Architectural Museum") the very object of whose existence was to find out, instruct, and reward the working artist or art workman, and it had often been his pleasure and his pride to stand up and address meetings of working men, not, indeed, on political principles, except within his own constituency, but on questions connected with their moral and social improvement. He was also a resident in a southern county, and he could therefore claim to discuss this question fairly and dispassionately, without prejudice, bias, or fear as a friend of the working classes, as a man whose residential associations were southern, and withal as the representative of a constituency which, though situated in a North Midland county, might, from the character of the soil, the habits of the people, and the nature of their employments, be regarded as belonging to the North of England. Now, let them look at the condition of the working man as he was—let them deal with him as a man, not pat him on the back as a political element, and patronize him. Whatever might be the merits or the demerits of the working man—and all classes had their merits and their demerits—he had one great merit—the honest stand-up, hearty English feeling, detested gammon, and hated to be patronized. Without question the party opposite had committed the one cardinal error against the working man of patronizing and patting him on the back. ["No, no!"] He said they had. ["No, no!"] But he said yes. They were always talking of him and of his friends, not as if so many fellow members of society, but as the "working classes"—namely, as a composite something made up of many wants, which had forfeited their individual identity, and out of which no component member was by his patrons assumed as ever likely to rise. They had refused to deal with him as one of many accidental incidents of our complicated society, with responsibilities to those above as well as to those below him—able to do good and to do harm right and left. They had preached from Liverpool to the Tower Hamlets, and from London to Edinburgh, upon the virtues and the excellencies of the working man, as if he were some species of exceptional Darwinian development of human nature. They had patted and patronized him just as if he were a converted African chief at a pious tea party. He predicted that such policy would be regarded by the working man as an insult rather than a compliment when he came calmly to look back at the events of this excited time. They were not dealing with him as a man with a many-sided character, with as many varieties in his natural, moral, physical, social, and financial organization as even the Members of that House. But it might be well to see who the working men of England really were. He would divide them roughly into three classes. The first consisted of those whom he would gladly, willingly, and even enthusiastically see possessed of the suffrage, and was composed of those workmen who were exceptionally engaged in some branch of production requiring a certain intellectual strain, a certain discriminating manipulation and artistic design. In this class would be included the higher section of carvers in stone and wood, painters, joiners, and workers in iron, and, although the House might think he was speaking in favour of his constituents, the higher branch of workmen at the potteries. These were the *élite* of the working classes, and nothing that the hon. Members for Bradford or Westminster had said of them was too much in their praise. These were the men whom he would admit not within the pale of the "Constitution"—he repudiated that current phrase, which he was sorry to hear the high authority of the leader of the House lately sanction; every man was within the pale of the Constitution who was within the pale of the law—but he would admit them within the pale of the franchise. Then there was a second class whom he supposed nobody on either side of the House desired to admit to the franchise. These were the agricultural labourers in country districts—honest fellows, sober, hardworking, bringing up their families well (for he assumed for the class the virtues which characterized the best specimens), but living apart in the country, away from the attrition of political life and from all those town influences which tended to form the character of the active as opposed to the passive citizen. He would assume that the admission to the franchise of these good people was not desirable. But then there was the large intermediate class, over whom the battle was really being fought. This meant the large masses of labouring men in towns, the workmen in the building trades, and the operatives in mills, where steam power was the great money-producing force, and whose labour was, perhaps, in itself as much mechanical as that of the digger and the delver; but who by their obtaining higher wages, and from their living under the sharpening influence of towns, within reach of mechanics' institutions, and newspapers, of political meetings, and dramatic representations, were better posted up—to use an American phrase—than their agricultural brethren. Now, if they looked at those men it would be found that, from no fault of their own, they were very much assimilated together. In the upper and middle classes persons could choose their own occupations, their own amusements, their own pursuits, and this produced that healthy and wide diversity of mind which really gave these classes their preponderating influence in the administration of the land. But these men, from the very nature of their occupations and circumstances, were more subject to the influence of class feelings, and more accustomed to surrender themselves to the guidance of the stronger minds of local leaders. The very nature of their employment involved their working in continuous grooves and in constant association with their fellow-workmen. They could not, as their richer neighbours did, take in their *Times, Spectator*, and so on, but must confine themselves to one paper, whether *Reynolds*, an illustrated, or a local journal. Their paper, whichever it may be, was probably taken in by joint subscription, and read and commented upon in turns by those engaged in the same workshops. Their refreshments were obtained in all probability from the same tavern, and even in their Sunday's recreation their companions were still their fellow-workmen. From all these influences there was a more powerful effect produced upon the weak, the ignorant, the dissipated among them by the stronger minds out of their order than could be found in any other class whose members had more physical means of getting out of the way when they liked, and of choosing their own companionship. Thus a class feeling was necessarily created in the minds of the working men, and so with equal talents, equal desire for knowledge and equal goodness, each single working man was a less unit in the composition of the great national mind and character than each individual of any other portion of the community. Enfranchising a number of working men would not, therefore, be enfranchising that great number of minds all independently turned upon the same questions from different points of view, which the widening of the franchise would be in other portions of the social polity, but merely performing a multiplication sum, and developing the same single instincts, single prejudices, and single desires. In such a state of things the very virtues of a man of that sort might become real dangers to the community. An intelligent man of that stamp would be ready to go to war for an idea—his mind would be full of generous impulses which it would be unsafe, if not impracticable, to carry out. Might not that condition of things become dangerous? Might not those people be frequently placed in wrong positions from their very generosity? Influenced by one newspaper and one set of ideas, these working men would move as one, and being prompted by their generous impulses, would assuredly make for war in such a case as Poland, already referred to by the hon. Member for Brighton, just as they would rescue a little boy from being bullied by a larger one, whom they would thrash despite the presence of the policeman, and without counting consequences. To act upon such impulses was the natural result of ready instinct, unguided by political experience. All who had been to public schools would remember what absurd, what preposterous notions and odd ruels of honour the boys set up amongst themselves. Would they think of giving the franchise to a schoolboy, fine fellow though he was? In the same way the franchise should not be rashly given to the schoolboys of the great commonwealth, who, though presumably earnest and capable, had not, like the typical wise man of Greece, seen the cities of many men and learnt their habits, which formed the true test of a political education. He would ask the House to listen to a sentence full of wisdom bearing upon that point—

> "All trust in Constitutions is grounded on the assurance they may afford, not that the depositaries of power will not, but that they cannot, mis-employ it. Democracy is not literally the best form of government unless this weak side of it can be strengthened, unless it can be so organized that no class, not even the most numerous"—

(And they all knew that the working men formed the most numerous class in this country)—

> "Shall be able to reduce all but itself to political insignificance, and direct the course of legislation and administration by its exclusive class interests."

The strength of that sentence would not be weakened when the House heard that it was the deliberate opinion of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), whose speech was listened to with such great interest the other night, although not with perfect agreement by every one on that side of the House.

He wished to deal fairly with the real material interests of the working man. They had heard a great deal of trades unions, strikes for wages, and the natural protectionist proclivities of the working classes. No one could deny those facts, and the question was, who created that state of mind among their fellow-workmen which led to those things—was it the best workmen or was it the worst? Was it those who had the heads to think, the time to read, and the study to devote to their reading, and who were something more than mere expert workers in a cotton or woollen mill? No—all these trades unions were in the first instance the inspiration of the bad workman, who had a natural interest in preventing the good workman from obtaining the legitimate advantages which his superior labour ought to command, and in forbidding the most expert from going fairly into the free trade labour market and earning the best wages in return for the most work—by extra hours, extra zeal and handiness—under the communistic regulations of some "rule of the trade," or whatever other cant name the system might bear. If the working classes were poured like a cataract into the franchise, might they not expect that some organization of the bad, the lazy, and the selfish to corrupt the good and industrious would be developed and receive a political significance? It was not in human nature to suppose that this sort of communistic system would not grow up among the young political constituencies of this country. They had witnessed such notions growing up to poison the political life of the young communities in Australia, and they had seen them settling down like a black cloud over the wide States of America. How, then, could England under a more democratic Constitution expect to continue free from the same dangerous influence? The hon. Member for Westminster had made much of the probability that the ideas of working men would be modified if their representatives were met by the older Members of the House in fair Parliamentary discussion. The hon. Member's anticipations could not, however, be fulfilled unless it happened that working men could return genuine working men as their representatives for special constituencies underlying the old electoral divisions (after the precedent of the Universities) and composed exclusively of working men. The argument was incomplete unless it accepted this development. He did not believe that boroughs, however largely made up of working men voters, would return real working men. He thought it much more probable that professional politicians would start up and be ready to take a working man's brief if working men's constituencies were created. The result contemplated by the hon. Member for Westminster would not, in that case, come to pass, because the professional working man's representative would not be a disinterestedly honest man, standing forward to plead the working man's cause solely from his conscientious convictions, but a retained advocate who would, of course, be speaking to his brief with ears closed to conviction, and could not be trusted to bring back his genuine impression of Parliament to his constituents. Whether it were desirable to create such special constituencies of working men, was, no doubt, a question worthy of consideration, but he would not now commit himself upon that which would certainly be a great innovation. He only wished to note that it must be accepted by the hon. Member for Westminster if he meant to give logical completeness to his argument.

Then arose the question, if they were to enfranchise the working man, and he desired to do so, how were they to deal with the question of his enfranchisement? How were they to enfranchise the intelligent, well-conducted man, and not enfranchise the drunken, worthless fellow who would pull him back and more than neutralize his vote? The plan proposed was the rudest and most clumsy of unworkmanlike methods that could be conceived. That old fiddle with one string, the house rental or rating, the ready way of cutting the Gordian knot twenty-five years ago, was a proposal which, in the present state of political education, a statesman ought to be ashamed of bringing forward. At the time of the first Reform Bill it was perhaps necessary to adopt some rough and ready criterion, for a great work had to be suddenly done. But this necessity no longer existed. The ten-pounder was now an institution of the country, but in the enlargement of the constituencies something more varied and elastic and worthy of political philosophy than this one single consideration of the bargain between landlord and tenant might have been thought of. It was indeed a curious feature of the present measure that it was the vulgarest scheme of Parliamentary Reform which had for many years been brought forward—the one which most completely abandoned any idea of regulating and compensating interests. Lord Aberdeen's Reform Bill, of which Lord John Russell was the mouthpiece, proposed, indeed, a very low franchise both in counties and boroughs, and it disfranchised recklessly. But the compensating provision was found in its proposal for the representation of minorities. Lord Derby's Reform Bill had its demerits, but it proposed to maintain the balance by transferring county votes in boroughs to those boroughs, and it was accordingly attacked by Lord John Russell, who had himself originally proposed the same thing in the great Reform Bill. Moreover, both those Bills proposed to give the franchise to intelligence as well as ignorance by what were contemptuously called the fancy franchises, franchises which for his part he thought most recommendable. One, and one only fancy franchise, they proposed to introduce into the present Bill—the savings bank one. That "bye" franchise, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer timidly called it, while apologizing for recommending anything which had been sneered down by the blatant eloquence ot the Member for Birmingham showed some little attempt to be, at all events, the imitator of originality. Otherwise, the Reform Bill of the Government was of the rudest and roughest description. Evidence was abundant that the statistics had been handled in a very hasty, mechanical, tinkering manner. The Bill would not add a thousand more voters into all the metropolitan boroughs, while they would be admitted in a flood at Salford and other places. How would the Members of the Government have dealt with this question if they had been statesmen, and were not afraid of this or that side of the House, and had not contracted obligations with the Birmingham firm? He thought they would have attempted to enfranchise above and sideways, as well as below. In particular, they would have seen if something better than the house rent could not have been discovered as the basis on which to found the working man's claim to the franchise. He thought this might have been found in the possession on his part of some moderate amount of realized property or of income assured for some period, which, however short, was a fixed one. This property might be either in bonds, in the funds, or in private investments, and he would not be too nice about the nature of the investment if it had a *bonâ fide* character about it. He would take investments into which the Court of Chancery would hardly let parties put their trust money. A Commission might well exist to examine into and report on the classes of realized property to which it would be right to attach the possibility of the franchise. This method of increasing the constituencies would give the workman a personal stake in the country. There was something of that sort attempted in the £60 savings bank clause ; and he would go so far as to say that if this proposal were workable, it would be a good thing in itself, only he did not suppose any one would deny the possibility of frauds when parties were running rather close at an election in a small borough. About two years before an election was imminent one side might expect to find itself in a minority of about thirty. Somehow or another fifty people would immediately become savings banks depositors, each in due time having £60 invested. No one would know whence that £3,000 came; no one would know to whom it would return after the polling day. There would be no authentic historical document to prove anything of its fate. The voters would have been made, and the money would be withdrawn. He did not see why they should not adopt the plan of transferring freeholders in boroughs under certain circumstances ; the freeholders, for instance, under a certain value to the borough list, as proposed in Lord Derby's Bill. Public business and the due balance of orders in the State almost made this transfer necessary, for the system of freehold building societies had been invented since the Reform Bill, and was eagerly worked by the competing sides. So streets upon streets of houses inhabited and owned by working men were growing up in the outskirts of the large towns, and, of course, tended every day to swamp more and more the real county voters. This had created a relation between the property of the working classes and the Constitution of the country, which did not exist before, and which they could only deal with by giving the borough franchise in boroughs to the small freeholders who existed there. So placed, the small town freeholders would be an excellent element in the enfranchised community; while, if kept in the county, they would be antagonistic to the development of the country's action. This suggestion was no fantastical innovation, but a return to the old Constitution of the country. When in the Middle Ages a town became eminent for its commerce or its manufactures, the King gave it a charter and constituted it a "county of a city" or "county of a town." What was one of the effects of this privilege? Why, that the freeholders in that city or borough voted for the town and not for the county, as still is the case in such places as Exeter, Bristol, or Norwich, the Liverpools and Manchesters of the Middle Ages. It was consistent with the spirit of those times to effect those salutary reforms by special privilege which are now made by general enactment. In these counties of cities, therefore, they still found that expedient existing which was even more necessary now than in the days of the Plantagenets. Turning to another point, it was an insult to common sense to say that graduates and clergymen and dissenting ministers should not have the suffrage which was given to a £7 householder. The Government would disgrace themselves in the eyes of an impartial posterity by the arrant cowardice which was provoked by a sneer from Birmingham to omit provisions like these. There was another class whose position in society was not that of householders, and who had no votes because they were people of such especial trustworthiness and probity that they were put in other people's houses to take care of them. A clerk at a bank, and the trusted foreman of a shop, who were given free quarters in their respective houses to see after them and take care of them, were people of this class. There was no provision to give them the franchise except the savings bank clause. A son who might take high honours at College and secure great distinction, who might be admitted to partnership with his father, would yet have no vote if he lived in the paternal home. They might even imagine the case of a young man of brilliant ability who might early rise to be a Cabinet Minister, but who, if he lived in a house of his father's, would have no vote unless he invested £60 of his salary in the savings bank, and even then he would have to wait two years before he gained his vote, by which time he might be turned out of office. This is what they called a Reform Bill! Turning to another class of the community, he found that the agricultural labourer had no place in the present Bill, and he was glad of it; for although he was a fine fellow, he had not the political education to make him a safe voter. But when it was once passed, and the House had told the workmen of the towns that they had some sort of right to the franchise, how long would they prevent the working men of the counties from coming forward with an ugly demand for the same advantage? If the agricultural labourers were enfranchised it would give a very preponderating influence in the counties to the landed interest, and so, as one belonging to that interest, he might be suspected of having a partizan desire to see the revolution effected. But for the good of the commonwealth he would resist it, and he was sure that other Members attached to the landed interest would also have the patriotism to resist the temptation of snatching at an illegitimate power by means so dangerous to the good government of the nation. But if the day did come when such a demand were made, the arguments—very difficult to resist except at the cost of no little inconsistency—which the Jack Straw of the future would wield would not be borrowed from this side of the House, they would be furbished up from the armoury of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of the Member for Birmingham.

There was one important matter which lay at the bottom of this whole question of Reform, and which it was foolish to blink—namely, the vast change that had taken place in what might be termed the centre of gravity of our population and our political power by the rise of the great manufacturing towns in the North of England. The present scheme of Parliamentary Reform was a move on the part of the North of England to get more power in the body politic than it had hitherto possessed. Now, he was anxious to give the North its due share of power, but he was at the same time zealous to save the rights of the South. At the time when England settled down into our old Parliamentary system, the North was in a great measure a wild moorland, and all our manufactures were centred in the South. When they read in history of the risings in Kent of Wat Tyler in the days of Richard II. and of Sir Thomas Wyatt in that of Queen Mary, they should picture these events as identical with what would now be a vast *émeute* from Lancashire or Birmingham. When they dwelt on the gallant adventures of those Devonshire worthies, whether a Raleigh or a Carew, they should recollect that Devonshire was in Tudor times a great seat of trade and manufactures. We all know the change in the external aspect of these two great sections of the land, but we are apt to forget that a subtil principle of compensation has also been at work. In proportion as the North grew in manufacturing power the South became the centre of residential interests. Its air was more genial, and it became, with London as its capital, the main scene of our social and political life. The North, on the other hand, had her three capitals — namely, Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool — which became great centres of commercial activity and wealth. But still the manufacturer, when he made his money, usually retired to some southern seat, for the very prosperity of his great towns, showing itself in smoke and turmoil, made their vicinage little desirable for residence, and grouse was still found to be often the most profitable crop for his hill tops. So the South has become the potent centre of wealthy residence, and in it accordingly, especially in the metropolis, political life and social organization have culminated, under the influence of leaders of opinion and of action, who might be, and who often were, Northern, and not Southern born. All candid judges must own that it is well that it should be so, for this condition of things indicated the true fusion of the interests of both sections, while at the same time it was an irresistible argument against the aggrandisement of one at the expense of the other. If the North were now enfranchised at the expense of the South, they would not only have a simple transfer of political power from one set of localities to another, but they would disorganize and unsettle all the old relations of the country viewed in its great sections, and they would place power in the hands of numbers without heads to direct them.

If they wished to make their suffrage suited to the times, they should not only have different franchises for the North and for the South, but they should go back to the good old constitutional system of having different franchises for different places according to their different circumstances, and they should supplement this variety by a liberal and enlightened creation of bye-franchises. He gladly recognized the truthfulness of the character of the northern workman given by the Member for Bradford; but in order to enfranchise the seven-pounders of Bradford—supposing that to be in itself desirable—was there, he would ask, the least justification for raising the number of voters in the immaculate borough of Reigate by the admission of its valuable seven-pounders, by which act of statesmanship 60 per cent of the constituency of that place would be composed of the working classes, under the present Bill, if the Government statistics spoke truth? But is the case even of the unenfranchised large towns of the North so preponderatingly strong against the South as their advocates pretend? By a digest of a table published the other day by the order of this House on the Motion of the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Sandford), it appeared that the unenfranchised towns in the North, that is in Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Westmoreland, and Lancashire, with populations of upwards of 5,000 inhabitants, had an aggregate population of 456,626 persons, while the unenfranchised towns in the South, which came under the same category, showed a total population of 707,685, leaving a balance in favour of the latter of over 250,000. Was it, under these circumstances, right to pass a Reform Bill which would have the effect of transferring political power from the South to the North? Then, again, on the other hand, as to the re-distribution of seats between the counties themselves, matters could scarcely be considered all square in face of such a fact as that the great county of Derby, with its 340,000 inhabitants, only sent six Members to Parliament, and Dorsetshire, with less than 200,000 inhabitants, sent fourteen. These numbers were attained by lumping county and borough Members. But in proportion as the franchise was lowered; the distinction between the two classes of representatives was obliterated, and each county was justified in testing its percentage of Members—borough and county—by its full population, urban and rural. He did not in the least desire to punish Dorsetshire, but he thought that Derbyshire had a superior claim to many a comparatively unpopulous, unenfranchised town for an addition to its Members. He happened the other day, in looking at a Lancashire paper, to see the account of a public meeting held at a place called Darwen, at which a case which seemed *primâ facie* strong (all *ex parte* statements are *primâ facie* strong) was made out for constituting it a borough, and, of course, thereby enlarging the national sum total of seven-pounders. Darwen had, it was said, near 20,000 inhabitants, with all the institutions usually belonging to a growing and flourishing place. He felt rather ashamed of himself for never having heard of Darwen, and so he looked it up. He then discovered that Darwen lay within the parish and postal district of a much better known and more populous town, one which already sends two Members—Blackburn. So, then, with Darwen in the field bidding to be a borough, one of three things must take place, two at least of which would disturb the calculations upon which the Government based its Bill, and would very seriously affect the balance and composition of the electoral body of Lancashire. The prayer of Darwen might be rejected and the borough of Blackburn retain its present limits; this would, no doubt, create a vast number of £14 county voters within the limits of the Palatinate. Or, again, Blackburn might be enlarged so as to let in Darwen. This arrangement would alter, by largely increasing, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's estimated sum total of working men to be added to the constituencies of England; but so far as it went, it would not alter the member power of the boroughs; or, in the third place, the petition of Darwen might be granted, and it might be admitted as a new borough. This third expedient would not only make a large addition of working men to the conjoint constituencies of the kingdom, but it would also alter and increase the balance of working men's power in the whole Parliament, by creating a fresh borough of the workman class at the expense probably of some seat of a different description. How, then, could they fairly discuss the value of the Franchise Bill while such questions were left dark? Anybody must see how unfair it was to call upon a Member of the House, especially if he represented Lancashire—even if he were leader of the House and sponsor of the measure—unless he had agreed to subject himself to political penance for his soul's good, to support this Franchise Bill without the means of knowing whether such a town as Darwen, the population of which was over 20,000, was to be an element in the borough system, with its seven, or in the county system, with its fourteen-pounders. Darwen was, of course, only one case out of others of a similar description. He would take another instance from the county in which he himself resided to show the unstatesmanlike way in which the measure was conceived. By the Bill, West

Kent, with its population of nearly half a million, would have its constituency enormously increased. He was not objecting to that; but the measure of this increase, and the character of the future electoral body, would be wholly different, according as the re-distribution of seats did or did not add to the number of borough constituencies in the country. No one could travel down the South Eastern or the Chatham and Dover line, and see the miles upon miles of new towns growing up about New Cross and Lewisham, Sydenham, Croydon, and Beckenham, and other places, without being impressed with a fear of the weight which so vast a concentration of inhabitants would bring to bear upon the county constituencies of East Surrey and West Kent under the proposed scheme—for it is plain to view that the vast majority of these genteel villas and semi-detached habitations (abodes of persons whose real occupation in life lay wholly in London) would send up their fourteen-pounders to swamp the genuine county voters. Again, in Lord Derby's Reform Bill, Gravesend, with its more than 20,000 inhabitants, was designated to be a new borough. Would it be so still? What also was to be done with Tunbridge Wells and Tunbridge, likewise numbering some 20,000, of a population made up of lodging-house keepers, who would all be qualified to be county voters without county feeling or county interests? Would these lodging-house keepers, he asked, be kept in the county, or relegated to a new homogeneous borough? Take also East Kent. Was the borough of Sandwich which, even with Deal and Walmer thrown in, now only counts 14,000 inhabitants—generally faithful it must be owned to the powers that be at the Admiralty—to be recruited by Margate with its 8,000 and Ramsgate with its 10,000 inhabitants? Ramsgate and Margate were also watering places, and therefore fruitful nests of fourteen-pounders, who would easily make up the amount of rental needed for the new county franchise by the lodgers they took in from town and the bathing machines which they let out. If these places were shut off into a borough—and he suggested Sandwich—well and good. If not, the bathing machines of Margate and Ramsgate might really return the Members for East Kent. In conclusion, he thought he had said enough to show that while Members on that side of the House were justified in opposing the Bill, hon. Members on the other side equally showed themselves the best friends of real Reform by supporting the honest and statesmanlike call for inquiry, and for completeness of plan made by the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor), rather than the desperate party move of a baffled Ministry —this spurious and truncated Franchise Bill.

Mr. THOMAS HUGHES said, he rose to give the best support in his power to the Government on this Franchise Bill. Before proceeding to explain his reasons for giving them that support—which he tendered very heartily—he was sure he should not say an unpleasant thing to the House when he stated that it was not his intention to quote the opinions of any hon. Members and to show that they had in any way changed them on the great subject of Parliamentary Reform. He thought that in the times in which we lived—times in which the faith of men, whether religious, political, or social, was being winnowed in a manner which was evidence of a very remarkable crisis in the world's history — it was often not a proof of strength, but of weakness, for a man to hold on to the same opinions, or, as they might be called, prejudices; and to call it consistency. It was desirable that a man in early life should have fixed principles and should adhere to them; but to hold on to mere opinions on such subjects as Reform was, he repeated, frequently an indication of weakness. The strong man knew that he needed not to care about preserving one opinion, because he was aware that he had principles in his mind to go to from which he could get other opinions as good or better; but the weak man, if he lost one set of opinions, did not know, having no principle in his mind, where to go for another set. He gave his support to the Bill exactly and precisely for the same reasons that induced the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire to oppose it. The noble Lord opposed the Bill because it was merely a Franchise Bill, and the right hon. Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley) asked what was the meaning of the Government in bringing in the Bill at all? He (Mr. T. Hughes) apprehended the meaning of it was precisely this—that the advanced or extreme Liberal party, as it was called, of whom he was a humble member, had at last found a Government who said, "The really important question, the one important question for the country at the present time, is Reform; and the important part of that question, the part without which all the other parts have no meaning for us at this moment, is the question of the suffrage." That was exactly the reason why he tendered his humble support to the Government on that occasion. He thought that the Liberals should be glad at having at length discovered a Government determined to look the question of Reform in the face, and with the wisdom to see what was the vital portion of Reform at the present time. At one time, and even since the Bill had been brought in, he had been inclined to think that even a lower borough franchise than that now proposed would have been better, and that the Liberal Members might perhaps be wise in still agitating for and endeavouring to obtain a yet lower borough franchise. An evening or two after the introduction of the measure he met an influential man among the trades union men and the artizans of London—an inhabitant of his borough, but not a voter; and on asking him what he thought of the Government Bill, the man replied, "Well, Sir, it will bring in a good bit of the best of us." Nothing stronger than that could be said in favour of the measure. It would just do that—it would bring in "a good bit of the best" of the artizans and mechanics of London and the northern cities; that was precisely the reason why it was a good Bill; and on that very ground it ought to be looked upon with favour by hon. Gentlemen opposite if they really desired a moderate measure. And this was a moderate measure, for, even in the estimates of hon. Gentlemen opposite, the utmost number whom it would enfranchise could not exceed some 200,000 of the best mechanics and artizans of the kingdom. It really seemed to him to be extremely insincere talk to say, as the hon. Member for Stoke (Mr. Beresford Hope) had done, that such a limited measure as that would open the floodgates to democracy, or, indeed, open them to anything except a great improvement in our representative system. He confessed he had been surprised at the manner in which some of the sentiments uttered on that side of the House had been received by hon. Gentlemen opposite. When he heard, he would not say the howls, but the noise, with which certain sentiments that he could not deem revolutionary were received on the other side of the House, he confessed that he had asked himself whether he was one of those who desired to upset that British Constitution which had lasted 700 years according to some Gentlemen, 600 years according to others, and only since 1832 according to one hon. Member on the Ministerial side. Did he, because he warmly supported that Bill, wish to marry two wives, or to partition the property of the noble Mover and Seconder of the Amendment? The noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire was perpetually saying that he conscientiously did this and conscientiously did that. Well, he (Mr. T. Hughes) could conscientiously say for himself that his earnest desire was to preserve that common England of theirs, in which the rich man had no greater stake than the poor man, and to hand it down to their children as good a country as they had themselves found it. It was for that reason that he supported the Bill; and he believed it would do much to accomplish that end. The resistance to the measure came from Gentlemen the uprightness of whose intentions he had no reason to doubt; but when they spoke of opposing that "political cataract," he could not help feeling that they were just the persons on whom that cataract would not fall. Those who would have to meet the first burst of its fury, when these floodgates of democracy were opened, were men like the hon. Baronet the Member for the West Riding (Sir Francis Crossley) and his hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Forster), than whom no better friends of the artizans and mechanics of this country, and no men who knew them better or were more trusted by them, though they were both masters, existed in England. Surely, therefore, hon. Gentlemen opposite might think twice before they indulged such idle fears when they saw two such men, who ought to dread these mischiefs if they had any reality in them, coming forward, not only to support that Bill, but to say they would hail with pleasure a considerably larger measure of Reform in the same direction. The hon. Member for Northumberland (Mr. Liddell) had contended that the mechanic and artizan class were already well represented in that House; but the hon. Gentleman would never have made that assertion if he had been as intimately acquainted with that class as he and many other Members were. He (Mr. T. Hughes) entirely agreed with the statement of his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that neither his hon. Friend, nor himself, nor any other Member of that House could really and efficiently represent the working men of our great towns. No man could ever do so except one who had lived and was living with them, who was sharing their ideas and also their privations. If the House would allow so young a Member as himself to criticize it in one point, he would say its fault, as far as representing this class of the community went, was its excessive solvency. The House of Commons was sometimes spoken of as a body whose Members owned he knew not how many thousands a year each. Whether that was the fact or not he could not tell; but it was impossible that those who lived in the affluence and luxury which the majority of that House enjoyed could really represent that great class in the country who had no accumulated property except a fund which belonged not only to them but to all their fellow subscribers in common, such as the funds of the trades unions and the friendly societies, or some other joint funds; and who, unless they had some share in such a fund, had nothing beyond the small quantity of furniture in their humble dwellings which they could really call their own, and had to rely exclusively upon the labour of their hands from day to day for the support of themselves and their families. That, to anybody at all familiar with those classes, made a chasm which was utterly impossible to bridge over, so far as representation was concerned, however much they might wish to do it. The conditions of their lives, the way in which they endeavoured to meet those conditions, and also the principles of their lives, were all entirely different from those of hon. Gentlemen in that House. Let him as he was upon them say the plain truth on these subjects. Those who took an interest in social and political subjects had imbibed what were called sound notions of political economy. They had read the regular text-books; they had a certain number of faiths which they held to almost religiously. They believed entirely and absolutely in the law of supply and demand as a law of nature which nothing could really and permanently interfere with. They believed that to buy cheap and sell dear was the rule by which all trade must be conducted; and they believed that the commodity of labour was just as much an object of barter as a bale of cotton or a bar of iron. They had also read Darwin, and books of that kind. They knew that the big fish must always eat the little ones, and that small persons must disappear before the larger. These beliefs were almost all accepted by the persons who sent representatives to that House; but the beliefs of those men whose admission to that House was now questioned were far less sound. They would be called by the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne) "sentimental rant," and he was afraid many of them would throw a shade of sadness on the face of the hon. Member for Westminster, because those beliefs were, first and foremost, that such a thing was attainable as a fair price for labour. They did not believe in what was called the "higgling" of the market. They believed that labour—the work of living men—could not be subject to the same laws as a mere bale of goods or a bar of iron. They believed, further, that it was the duty of the strong man in their trades to support the weak to a great extent, and that was the foundation of the unions of which he would speak presently. They believed, again, in the organization of labour. These faiths might frighten some hon. Members, but they were not visionary. He was not saying they were right or wrong, but they were held by far the largest portion of society. And were they to say they would not admit them there and let these ideas come into fair collision with their own? Would it not much more conduce to the good of the country and make these artizans wiser men if they could have their representatives—men who really and heartily accepted those beliefs—to state them to that House? So they might become wiser men themselves, and perhaps make us wiser on many subjects in which their interests are concerned. If he had been speaking twenty years ago instead of now, it might have been said that he was raising mere chimeras or indulging in what the noble Lord the Member for Stamford might have called sentimental rant. But within these twenty years the working class have accomplished results of which any class might be proud. First, as to the organization of labour: what was the state of the trades unions? Up to this very time these trades unions were actually outside the law. They could not be fully registered as friendly societies, and therefore were not assisted as other combinations were by the law of the country. Yet, in the face of this fact, what had they done? He would mention one with which he had been familiar for many years—which had become one of the most extraordinary organizations that had ever been brought together by men in their position in the world. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers consisted of 32,000 members—all skilled mechanics. It had a reserve fund of £115,000, £30,000 of which was invested in Post Office savings banks. It paid within a few pounds of £1,000 a week in its different benefits. It had branches not only in every great town in England, but also in our colonies and in the United States. Now, when they considered that this organization had been worked out by men not only unenfranchised, but many of them illiterate, under every difficulty with which man could have to contend, he asked, could such an organization have been carried out by men of any other class in the country more successfully or brought to a more brilliant conclusion? Again, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, which had only been founded a few years, had already 150 branches, and during last year spent between £11,000 or £12,000 in benefits to its members. That was the society which had frightened exceedingly the leading journal in this country. It was said they wanted nine hours' wages for eight hours' work, and had many other nefarious projects of that kind. But, looking at the average of their earnings, who did not feel that it was not unnatural they should have made such efforts to obtain a small advance on their wages? The average weekly earnings of the men belonging to the building trades in London were from 27*s*. to 28*s*.; and when it was considered that within a few years they had doubled and trebled the property of this great town—when it was considered that they had doubled the property of the noble Lord who moved the present Amendment, he thought they need not grudge them their success in having been able to obtain some little advance—perhaps 1*s*. 6*d*. a week—in consideration of what they had done and the intelligence they had shown. The building trades were a highly-paid class of workmen, yet their wages did not throughout the country reach 27*s*. a week. They were told by those who opposed the Government Bill that these men could, with average prudence, gain for themselves the suffrage under the present £10 qualification. Suppose a workman had employment for forty-eight or forty-nine weeks in the year—for allowance must be made for sickness, travelling to find work, and other things—taking his average earnings at 27*s*. a week, to come in under the present franchise he would be spending an amount on his house which, proportionately, they themselves would not be justified in spending in housing their families. Unless, therefore, Parliament lowered the present suffrage, they were calling upon the greater portion of the mechanics to spend more upon their mere housing than they had a right, as honest men and with a due regard to the claims of their wives and families, to expend. This, then, was the first way in which the mechanics and artizans of England had endeavoured to work out their principles—whether false or true—first by trades unions, and secondly by their different co-operative societies. The amount of intelligence and self-sacrifice which they had brought to the solution of the problem of co-operative societies was sufficient to put to shame all the other classes of society. These societies were constituted and carried out upon sounder principles than trade was now usually conducted in this country. They as a rule absolutely prohibited credit; they restored the system of ready money, and they gave a healthy tone to trade, which it had too much lost of late years. These societies had at all events proved the sincerity and the honest belief of those who promoted them. They had proved that the working men were ready to make sacrifices for their principles, and that the strong were ready to come to the help of the weak. The best men among them had said that they would not leave their class but lift it, and this was the remarkable feature of their organization. Many hon. Members had read books like that written by Mr. Smiles, entitled *Self Help*, in which self-made men were held up to reverence and respect. Many of these were artizans who had risen to wealth and eminence from the humblest walks of life. He had nothing to say against such men. They were deserving of much credit, but they were not representative men of their class. The really representative men of that class were animated by quite other ideas. Their principle was to refuse to come out of their class, and to stay and live in it with the view, so far as they could, of lifting the whole bulk of their brethren. The more hon. Members examined what was going on throughout the country, the more reason they would have to wonder at the extraordinary success that had attended their efforts. And now, having touched upon the methods by which the working classes had sought to carry out their views and ideas, and the success that had attended their efforts, the House would, he hoped, permit him to inquire what it had done for the working men while they had been working out their salvation in the different ways he had described. He had heard it said since he had been a Member of that House that the working classes had no grievances of which to complain. It seemed to him, on the contrary, that they had many grievances of which they had good right to complain. While they were labouring for themselves, and working out their own ideas, how had the Legislature helped them? For instance, had it housed, fed, or educated them? The House had done nothing to improve the houses of the working men, and the artizans of this great town were at the present time worse housed than at any period within his memory. He said that they were worse housed, and what had the Legislature done to improve their dwellings? Great public bodies and companies came to that House with projects to pull down their houses, and no stress had been put upon them to provide accommodation for those whom they displaced from their dwellings, and the lower classes of the metropolis had become worse and worse lodged for the last ten or twelve years. Then came the question of food. [An hon. MEMBER: Question!] It was the question, and he would assert that the adulteration of the food of the labouring classes had been a great grievance with them. Then with regard to education, the people of this country were the worst educated of any free people on the face of the earth. As it was a test question upon this Bill whether they would admit the working man to a share in the making of laws, did the House suppose that if they had had any direct action upon the making of those laws, or any means of making their own opinions felt, these questions would have remained in their present condition? Then there was the question of arbitration courts, as connected with the labour question, which had been bandied backwards and forwards, sometimes in one House and sometimes in another. Nothing, however, had been done, and the question remained just as it was twenty years ago, although the opinion of the mechanics and artizans had come round to desire these courts and to believe in them. He very much feared that, notwithstanding the Bill of Lord St. Leonards, this question was likely to remain unsettled. Then, again, there was the question of the Master and Workmen's Acts. That was a flagrant case. If, in a case of contract between master and man, the workman was charged with breaking the agreement, the first step was personal, and the workman was put in prison; while if the master broke his part of the contract the first process against the master was to make him pay a fine. The working men believed that this state of things was very unjust, and that if they were properly represented the employers and employed would be put upon a more equitable footing. Then came the question of the workhouse infirmaries. Would the Members of that House be content with them in their present state—a crying disgrace to the metropolis—if their own flesh and blood—he would venture to use the term though it had been sneered at by the noble Lord the Member for Stamford—had any chance of going to them? Then came the question of dangerous and unwholesome trades. Twenty years ago a terrible disease called "necrosis of the jaws" was discovered in Vienna, which had since spread to this country, and was found chiefly among the makers of lucifer matches. That had now grown to be a very large trade, and not less than 1,800 children were employed in the manufacture. Necrosis of the jaws was one of the most awful diseases that ever afflicted humanity, and it was said to be increasing. There were not one or two but a dozen other trades in which the condition of the labourer was such as ought not to be suffered in any civilized country. Would any one who looked at this subject fairly and dispassionately say that if the class upon whom these evils pressed—who worked in these workshops and lived in these houses—had been fairly represented, their condition would not have been improved? As an instance of the want of sympathy on the part of the House with the working classes, he would instance the existing laws regulating the sale of alcoholic drinks; for though a very large majority of the working classes complained of them as throwing temptations to insobriety in their way, the only answer they got from Parliament was that they ought to have resolution enough to resist those temptations. The right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) said that though he would oppose the £7 franchise he had no distrust of those who would be voters under the £7 franchise, he distrusted their leaders, meaning, probably, the managers of the trades unions, who were usually denounced by the newspapers as noisy demagogues. Now he (Mr. T. Hughes) had for years known almost all the leaders of the Trade Protection Societies, and he could say that a better set of men, men more thoroughly anxious to keep those unions and those organizations straight, to stop strikes, to do what they considered best for the interests of their own class, but also for the best interests of the public generally, did not exist. It might be supposed that those leaders were the people who fostered strikes. From his own knowledge, the Amalgamated Engineers — a most powerful organization, with branches over the whole of the British Empire—had not had a strike for eighteen years. The younger and more impulsive members had been anxious to try the question of raising wages in the old way; but they were held back by the leaders on whom so much abuse had been lavished both in that House and in the press. It might be said that he had proved his case too much, that he had shown that this society was too powerful; but the assertion made the other night by the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) was most probably the true one. He (Mr. T. Hughes) believed that the workmen would be as likely to go on different sides on all questions—even on social questions and the labour questions, in which they were the most interested—as any other class of society. In London the trades unions were split into two sections, quite as much opposed to each other as hon. Members in that House. In fact, one advocated, the other opposed strikes. In the same way, on the organization of the co-operative bodies the trades unions looked for years with the greatest possible jealousy, and even now regarded them without favour. He desired to see this Reform Bill of the Government passed. If it were not, he felt that the danger would certainly occur which had been touched on by no one but the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), who was received at the time with considerable incredulity. Only a week ago he read a paragraph in a newspaper stating that from one part of Wales ninety families of skilled artizans had sailed for America. That was not a solitary instance; and he (Mr. T. Hughes) feared that unless Parliament met the people fairly, and gave them a direct share in the representation of the country — made them what were called "full citizens"—before long we might find the skilled artizans estranged from their country. England was on the brink of a precipice. He believed there was yet time to apply the remedy, and that would be their admission to the franchise. Unless we did this, their minds would get more and more unsettled; we should find that they no longer held on to England with the same feeling as their fathers; they would continue to leave us more and more, while we should feel that we could spare them less and less, and we should at last feel that we had lost the pith and marrow of the working classes, who contribute so largely to the wealth and prosperity of the country. He believed such a loss would be most disastrous, and that the only way to stop it would be to treat the working classes fairly, and introduce to the franchise such a portion of them as they fairly could. No one would say that a poor 200,000, scattered over the whole country would be too large a number to admit, or would be likely to swamp the present constituencies.

MR. DOULTON said, he had found it somewhat difficult to bring himself to believe that his hon. Friend and Colleague (Mr. T. Hughes) had been speaking about the Reform Bill:—so far as he could see, the remarks of his hon. Friend had nothing whatever to do with what he conceived to be the main principle involved in this debate, and contained in the Resolution of the noble Lord the Member for Chester. He was glad that his hon. Colleague had not adopted the course pursued by preceding speakers throughout the debate, and especially by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Glasgow (Mr. Graham), by starting with the assumption that those who did not feel it their duty to support the Government by voting for the second reading of the Bill must necessarily be entirely opposed to all Reform. ["Hear!"] He would remind those who cheered this sentiment evening after evening that those to whom it was applied could afford to hear the insinuation, coming as it did from Gentlemen whose virgin enthusiasm for Reform had never yet borne the test either of experience or sacrifice. For himself he utterly denied the insinuation, and he should feel inclined to adopt in reference to those who uttered it the quotation so energetically given by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer a few nights ago, that—

> "These lies are like the father that begot them—
> Gross as a mountain, open, palpable."

He did not propose to discuss the clauses of the Bill that were termed the enfranchising clauses. He did not agree with those clauses; but he should not be inclined to oppose the second reading of the Bill, although there were many objections to which the Bill was fairly open, were it a complete measure. He attributed the faults in the Bill to the fact that the Bill had been drawn not so much with regard to the wants and requirements of the case as to satisfy the requirements of particular constituencies and to ensure the support of certain politicians. He thought it almost impossible to examine the clauses of the Bill without seeing that they were framed to apply especially to those districts that included the large northern towns, that they applied in a very small degree to the metropolitan districts, and still less to other districts. The reason assigned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for not having brought forward a re-distribution Bill was that there would not be time to carry the two Bills during the Session. He (Mr. Doulton) could understand this as a sound reason for not proceeding with the two Bills at the same time; but he could not understand it as being any reason for not having given the information that was required as to the second Bill. But he imagined that the reason assigned by the Minister for not placing the Re-distribution Bill upon the table was not the real one. It had been plainly intimated during the last few nights, and during the recess, that the real reason why the Re-distribution Bill was withheld was that there were certain hon. Members who were now prepared to support the Government Bill, who would not support it if the Re-distribution Bill were before it. If the Government saw in that any sound argument, they must suppose Members who would be affected by the Re-distribution Bill the greatest simpletons on the face of the earth; for it appeared to him that hon. Members could form an idea of what the general character of the second Bill would be, and would be able to apply it to their own constituencies even now, although it had not been introduced. If he was asked to give a blindfold support to the Government, and accept the Franchise Bill before they had placed on the table the Re-distribution Bill, he would ask what had the Government done to inspire him, as a Liberal, with confidence in their Administration? He would not allude to the course taken by the recent Administration, because he should be told the present Government was not responsible for it; but he would ask, what had been the course taken by the Government during the few weeks they had been in office in relation to two or three important questions? There were two questions, for instance, in which the Liberal Members took the greatest interest—the question of church rates, and the question embodied in the Test Bill introduced by the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge). With regard to the first of these questions, some persons were inclined to believe, on account of the speech made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that they were now much nearer to a settlement of the question than they were before; but he (Mr. Doulton) did not share that opinion. The right hon. Gentleman first attacked hon. Members on that side of the House, and then attacked hon. Members on the opposite side of the House, and he concluded by voting precisely in the opposite direction to what was expected from his observations; and they found that some other Members of the Government took no part in the discussion and refrained from voting at all. With regard to the Oxford University Tests Bill, the right hon. Gentleman had not recorded his opinion upon that measure either by speaking or voting, and some other Members of the Government had followed a similar course. In fact, the present Government seemed inclined to adopt a like course to that pursued by the late Government when questions were introduced by hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House—that was to make them "open questions," and he was inclined to think they might make the question of the re-distribution of seats an open one. As they could not get from the Government any distinct and clear notion of the Re-distribution Bill, they had a right to inquire what had been the conduct of the Government with reference to other questions. They were told, during the recess, that the Government would sound a trumpet on this question which would speak with no uncertain sound. During the last four nights he had been listening for the sound of that trumpet. He had heard many sounds proceeding from the

Treasury Benches that were more or less uncertain. He heard a few nights ago the still small voice of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), whose speech was remarkable for this, if for nothing else, that it showed them the soothing and hallowing influences of a short period of official life. They also had a speech from another hon. Gentleman—the piercing wild shriek almost of the hon. Member for Southwark (Mr. Layard)—but on the main question involved in the debate there had either been preserved, on the part of hon. Gentlemen who occupied those Benches, an undignified silence, or the sounds they had given to the House had been of the most uncertain and undecided character. If the Government, as a body, had done nothing to inspire him with confidence in their Administration, why should he blindly accept this Bill on the faith of another Bill, of which he knew nothing, being introduced? But let them look away from the Government as the Ministry, and ask what were the individual opinions of hon. Gentlemen on those Benches upon questions that would affect the re-distribution of seats. A remarkable speech was delivered a few years ago by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the virtues of small boroughs; and he (Mr. Doulton) would recommend that speech to the perusal of hon. Members. In it the right hon. Gentleman had said, in allusion to the Bill of Lord Derby, in which it was proposed to re-distribute fifteen seats, that the Bill was framed wisely with respect to the re-distribution of seats, and he frankly owned that the disfranchisement of small boroughs was a course that would tend to the deterioration of Parliament, for the small boroughs were the nursery ground in which our best statesmen were educated. It was also necessary to ascertain the opinions of the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) on this question, because it was clear that the Re-distribution Bill would stand no chance of passing in the House unless it had his support. The hon. Member for Birmingham had said of the small boroughs, "They take in men who cannot get in anywhere else; they are a refuge for the political destitute, and all I have heard in their favour has been simply this, that the persons who have found shelter in them are what are called deserving objects." When he (Mr. Doulton) was asked to accept this Bill on the faith of a Re-distribution Bill that was to follow, he was justified in asking whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had gone to the hon. Member for Birmingham, or whether the hon. Member for Birmingham had gone to the Chancellor of the Exchequer? If the right hon. Gentleman had adopted the principles of the hon. Member for Birmingham in reference to this question, he would commend the fact to the attention of those who represented small boroughs; but if the hon. Member for Birmingham had gone to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and would be contented with the re-distribution of fifteen seats, he would commend this fact to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. Supposing for a moment that this Bill was carried, and that a Re-distribution Bill was brought in, he wanted to know what was to prevent the Government from taking precisely the same course in reference to the Re-distribution Bill as they had taken in reference to the Reform Bill of 1860? He was amazed the other night to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department inform the House that it was the obstructions of the Opposition that had led to the withdrawel of that Bill. Why, he (Mr. Doulton) recollected that the obstructiveness came from the friends of the Ministers, and that obstructiveness reached its climax when an hon. Gentleman, who was not actually a Member of the Government, but who was deep in the councils and confidence of the Ministry, rose in his place and requested or advised the withdrawal of the Bill. He wanted to know, seeing that so many hon. Gentlemen who were Members of that Ministry were Members of the present Government, what could be expected but that a similar course should now be adopted? Although he did not expect that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would do as Lord Russell did when he came down to that House and shed tears over the withdrawal of the Bill then before it—he confessed he should not be surprised if there could be found some Member of the Administration who would be ready to place himself even in that humiliating position. But he would suppose that this Bill passed and the Re-distribution of Seats Bill did not—upon that point he would join issue with his hon. and learned Colleague; and his opinion was that without a measure for the protection of the voter and without some further check against corruption in small boroughs, this Bill would be a curse to small constituencies instead of a good. Would any one tell him that an addition of fifty or sixty to the voters of Totnes would improve the morality of that borough; or that an addition of 200 or 300 to those of Great Yarmouth, where he understood there were only thirty honest men, would abolish corrupt practices. He believed that this Bill, without any other measure, would make corrupt boroughs still more corrupt. He was not alone in opinion that a Re-distribution of Seats Bill was of more importance than this Bill, and that without that Bill this one ought to be rejected. He could not have a better authority on that point than the hon. Member for Birmingham, who, speaking of this question, uttered these words—

> "Repudiate without mercy any Bill that any Government whatever may introduce, whatever its seeming concessions may be, if it does not re-distribute the seats that are obtained from the extinction of small boroughs amongst the large towns. The question of re-distribution is the soul of the question of Reform, and unless you watch that you will be deceived."

Well, that was precisely what he (Mr. Doulton) was doing. He was watching it —and it was because he did not wish to be deceived that he could not give his support to the Government before seeing what they were going to do. Then they were told that if they opposed this Bill they must not hold up their heads before their constituents again. [Mr. LAYARD: Hear!] The hon. Member for Southwark cheered that statement. He hoped it would not be un-Parliamentary to say to him that it was grossly ungenerous, and, in the next place, that it was untrue. He was not at all unmindful of the threatenings held out of that House, and in it, to those who ventured to oppose the Government upon this question. He begged to say that he did not enter the House as a slavish supporter of the Government. He entered it as an independent Member of the House, and he should continue to discharge those duties so long as they were consistent with the preservation of his own self-respect and honour. If the Government would lay upon the table a Re-distribution Bill, and would fairly grapple with that question, no Member would more warmly support the Government than himself; but as he believed that no greater calamity could befall this country than the passing a measure lowering the franchise without a re-distribution, that existing anomalies would be increased, and that present evils would be intensified, he could not in conscience support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. MILNER GIBSON: Sir, I cannot take exception to the vote which the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Doulton) is about to give on the second reading of this Bill. If he could be sure there was to be a Re-distribution Bill laid on the table, he would have no objection to vote for the second reading of this Bill; but having no confidence whatever in the statements of the head of the Administration, and not believing that my noble Friend honourably intends to fulfil the promise he has made, of course the hon. Member for Lambeth is right with the views he entertains. But I am surprised with the difficulties the hon. Member now feels as to fragmentary legislation. If he thinks no Bill for the extension of the franchise, unaccompanied by protection to the voter—by which I suppose he meant the ballot—and unaccompanied by a great re-distribution of seats is worth acceptance by this House, I am surprised that the hon. Member voted last year for the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds—which certainly deserved the title—if any measure ever did—of a fragmentary part of Reform. I was certainly one of those who believed it possible that when this measure was proposed by the Government it might pass the second reading without a division. I felt a conviction, after all that has passed on the question of Reform, that there does not exist that sort of mortal fear of the extension of popular rights which existed in 1832, when the great Reform Act was passed. I was well aware, from my own personal knowledge, that many of the Conservative party entertained Liberal views with regard to the extension of the franchise. I felt confident that the Conservatives of 1866 were not the same as the Tories of 1832; and I also had a strong impression that if ever there was a measure which would command the general support of the whole Liberal party it was a moderate extension of the borough and county franchises when proposed by the Government, and accompanied by a repeal of the ratepaying clauses. Well, Sir, that measure has been for years a sort of fundamental principle with, I believe, the great bulk of the Liberal Members, and I had a certain conviction that when a measure of this kind was proposed by the Government it would meet with the general acceptance of that party. But, Sir, I have been deceived. I was too sanguine. Exception is taken to the measure partly on the ground of the procedure of the Government, on the ground of the mode in which the Reform Bill has been introduced; and exception has also been taken to the extension of the franchise, especially in boroughs, as in itself being a measure injurious to the public interest. Now, the reason I think that as it was best to bring forward this Franchise Bill by itself is, that if there were doubts upon the question as to whether that principle of the reduction of the franchise in boroughs and counties should be adopted, they should be cleared up. It was right, in the first instance, to clear the ground as to the franchise question, and that the principle whether there should be any reduction of the franchise in boroughs should be tested in this House. And I contend that in case this Bill is read a second time Parliament will have lost none of its power over the other branches of the Reform question. Even should you pass the second reading of the Bill you will be as free to amend and to alter the Bill in Committee as you ever could be, and you will be as powerful as ever to amend the Distribution of Seats Bill as under any other circumstances. Although party feeling may for a moment permit Members to express a suspicion which they do not really entertain as to the promises of the Prime Minister, yet I feel assured that every Gentleman in this House knows that those promises, having been so emphatically given before the country, will be faithfully kept. [Mr. DISRAELI: What are those promises?] To lay upon the table of the House a Bill which will show the intentions of the Government in regard to the distribution of seats, and to proceed with that Bill with the view of making it a law as soon as circumstances will permit. I say that it is right to ascertain the sense of Parliament upon the question of the reduction of the franchise, which we regard as a *sine quâ non* in any Reform Bill, before we proceed with the other branches of the measure. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) when he introduced the Bill of the Earl of Derby, in 1859, stated that he would oppose any lowering of the borough franchise. Subsequently, he stated that he was prepared to lower the borough franchise, and to do it effectively, so as—as I understood him—to give a full and adequate share of the representation to the working classes. But I have reason to believe that the right hon. Gentleman since then has relapsed into the opinions which he held when he introduced the Bill of 1859; and if I am right in that impression it becomes absolutely necessary for the speedy transaction of business in reference to Reform that we should have some understanding as to how we really stand in reference to this important principle. Now, the right hon. Gentleman just before the last election issued an address, which was called by some of the Conservative journals "a manifesto," and which certainly appeared to be an important declaration of the political sentiments of the leader of a great party. Well, what did the right hon. Gentleman say in that address as to the borough franchise? He described the proceedings of the Liberal party as so many attacks upon the institutions of the country, which had been successfully encountered and defeated by the Conservatives, and he proceeded to say—

> "The attacks upon the State, never conducted with so much energy, have nevertheless been more prolonged, and it was only a few nights ago when the House of Commons, impatient of protracted mystification, reflected the candour of the community, and declared by a vast majority that the franchise in boroughs should not be lowered, and that the principle on which Lord Derby wished to extend it was the just one."

Therefore, we see that this declaration lays down once more that the borough franchise is not to be lowered, and that the principle which Lord Derby attempted to introduce in 1859 of an identity of suffrage between counties and boroughs is the just one upon which Reform should be based. That is the question now before the House. Is the borough franchise to be reduced, or is it not to be reduced? We only ask you to answer that question one way or the other. We do not ask you upon the second reading to pledge yourselves to the £7 franchise, although we are in favour of it; all we ask you to do is to sanction the principle that the franchise should be reduced. It appears to me, independently of these considerations, that determining who are to be the persons who are to choose Members of Parliament is a totally different question from settling which places are to return Members. To ascertain what shall be the test of fitness to vote in boroughs and counties is a different and independent question from saying what places shall be represented in Parliament. In determining what places shall return Members to Parliament you have to take into consideration their population, and their wealth, and whether they represent any important industry or some great interest which has a peculiar claim to be represented in this House. None of these considerations will be touched by this Bill. But if you are also to take into consideration, among the other elements, the number of the electors, and are about to alter the franchise, I say you should do this first, in order that when you have settled this you may consider what places are entitled to return Members to Parliament. When you tell me that it is impossible to form an opinion as to whether the franchise should be reduced until you have determined how many Members are to be returned from this borough or from that county, I confess I am at a loss to understand such reasoning. I have never seen any grouping of boroughs nor any scheme for disfranchisement, or for the transfer of Members from some places to others, that would enable us to dispense with the extension of the franchise; there is nothing to prevent us from deciding whether the franchise is to be reduced without our having the details of a Distribution Bill before us; and therefore we thought it right to endeavour to obtain the genuine and unbiased opinion of Parliament upon this important question of the reduction of the franchise as soon as possible. I think it was the duty of Government to submit this question pure and simple to the House, in order that Members might be compelled to declare themselves upon it. [*Cheers, Counter-cheers,* and *laughter.*] I do not mean what I have said offensively. I am sure the duty, the object, and the desire of us all should be to ascertain the genuine feeling of Parliament upon this question, and we have taken the course most likely to accomplish that end. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) has told us that fitness was a secondary consideration in ascertaining those who should have a vote given them. Doubtless he said that he would not allow an unfit man to have a vote, but that it did not follow at all that a fit man was entitled to a vote. As I understood the hon. and learned Gentleman, he said that personal fitness constituted no claim to the exercise of the franchise, as you must rather regard the balance of power between the different classes. If Gentlemen take that view, of course I do not find fault with them, but I can only say that for myself I do not take that class view of the extension of the franchise. And although the hon. and learned Gentleman explained to us that the British Constitution is founded on a principle totally opposed to that which I have enunciated, he did not refer us to any great writer on the British Constitution who lays down such a doctrine. I know not of any authority who lays down the doctrine that persons whom you admit to be fit to exercise the franchise should not be permitted to do so. That certainly was not the doctrine of Blackstone, who laid it down that every man who was in such a condition of life as to be independent had a right to vote for those to whom the power was intrusted of making the laws that were to affect his life, his liberty, and his property. But that is a totally different principle from that of the hon. and learned Member for Belfast, who, in fact, is entirely opposed to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire on the question of fitness. For what said the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire when he introduced his Bill? He said—

> "We have never, in any of the arrangements which we shall propose to Parliament to adopt, considered for a moment whether they would increase or whether they would diminish the constituent body. Our sole object has been to confer the franchise on all of those to whom we thought that privilege might be safely intrusted."—[3 *Hansard*, clii. 982.]

Now that, I say, is our principle; and, taking into consideration the progress of education and the improvement of the people, I think we can go as far as to extend the franchise to the occupiers of houses in boroughs of the clear yearly value of £7. The hon. and learned Member for Belfast quoted the very fact that we have a rental qualification as a proof that fitness did not enter into our consideration; because he appealed to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway and said, "Will any one tell me that £7 constitutes fitness, and that £6 does not?" I must reply to him, with the permission of the House, by quoting from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, who I think put the point of fitness extremely well. In reply to an appeal made to him when he introduced his Bill in 1859, "Is £10 a test of fitness?" the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "It is said why should a man who lives in a £10 house be more fitted for the suffrage than a man who lives in a £9 house? That appears to me to be no argument; it is a mere sophism and cavil. If it be an argument it is an argument against all tests and not in favour of a £9 qualification; but the £10 qualification was intended

as a test, and the question is, Is it a test that is effective?' It is a test easily accessible. It is a test which, if adopted, is universal in its application, and it is a test which affords a fair presumption that the holder possesses those qualities which entitle him to perform acts of citizenship."—[3 *Hansard*, clii. 984.]

That explanation of the reason why we adopt a clear yearly value qualification to entitle persons to vote is a good and statesmanlike explanation. I am quite sure it is a more complete answer to the hon. and learned Member for Belfast's argument as to fitness than any I myself could make. Now, the great argument against the Bill appears to me to be founded on suspicion. You think that some net or trap is being laid, and that if you give any countenance to this suffrage Bill you will not be able to deal so well with other questions, or even that those other questions will be postponed. Now, I cannot argue against suspicion, but I maintain there is a very fair probability, as far as men can foretell human events, that the present Parliament will be able to deal with the Franchise Bill and also with the Re-distribution Bill. It is impossible in this question of Reform to deal with all branches of the question in one Bill. Has it ever been done? Can it be said that it was done in the case of the great Reform Act of 1832, when important branches of the question in reference to the settlement of the boundaries of boroughs were reserved to be disposed of? And what was the course taken by Lord Derby in 1859? Did he submit a complete measure; Why, Sir, he proposed that Parliament should sanction a £10 franchise in counties, but he said that the areas into which those counties were to be divided were not to be decided till a future Session. The hon. and learned Member for Belfast in his able speech, exclaimed, "What is the use of telling me about a £14 franchise in counties when you do not inform me what the area which will yield those voters is to be?" But neither did Lord Derby when he proposed to reduce the franchise to £10 in counties. Did he tell the House then and there what the area which was to yield those voters was to be? Nothing of the kind. I admit he stated fairly the general plans which he had in view; but he proposed to leave to a future Session of Parliament to pass an Act to settle those plans and define the boundaries of the new borough and county constituencies. What was the scheme which my Lord Derby at that time propounded? It was a most extensive one. He said, in effect, to the county gentlemen:—"Agree to the £10 voters in counties, and I am going to send a Commission, composed of Inclosure Commissioners, to every borough which returns Members in the kingdom, and I will include within those boroughs what is called the extramural population." To what extent that would be done nobody then knew. Lord Derby said that when these Inclosure Commissioners had prepared their scheme, which was to create new constituencies in which the new £10 freeholders were to vote, the Secretary of State was to submit a Bill to Parliament for the purpose of sanctioning by law these new boundaries and creating the areas which were to yield the new voters. Why, the Government of Lord Derby was open to precisely the same argument which is now used against us—it was only a promise. We might have said at the time, "How can we be sure that when the Commissioners have made their Report Parliament will confirm their recommendations? You ask us to extend most largely the franchise in counties, and to give it to a class of men who may overwhelm and counterbalance the power of the landed interest in those counties, and you tell us you will destroy the ill effects of this extension of the franchise in counties by some new areas which you propose to create in some future Session of Parliament, but no guarantee is given that the full scheme will ever be passed by the Legislature." Why, Sir, no such argument was used, because every reasonable man knew there must be Commissions to inquire into the question of boundaries, and that the inquiry would occupy some time; and accordingly we, honestly differing as we did from Lord Derby and the right hon. Gentleman in politics, did not for one instant presume to suspect that they did not honourably mean to carry out to the full the intentions which they had declared to the House of Commons. The question before the House is that this Bill be now read a second time. The question, therefore, on which we are now going to vote is whether there shall be a reduction of the franchise. If the noble Mover's Resolution were before us as a substantive Motion—which it is not—we might perhaps not then be understood. But I undertake to say that the community generally throughout the country will not have sufficient knowledge of our peculiar refinements in the way questions are put. They would all say, if the Amendment were carried, that the House of Commons had declared against the extension of the franchise. It may be very well, and I think it is satisfactory, to observe it, that Members take care to qualify the vote they are about to give by stating, "Don't suppose that we are against Reform; we have been Reformers for some time past;" and even the noble Lord who moves the Resolution for fear lest by accident he should be taken for an anti-Reformer, takes care to head his Resolution with a sentence which pledges the House once more to entertain and settle the question of Reform. But, Sir, the country will see that this is the time for action. They are tired of these theoretical statements and mere phrases about being in favour of Reform, and they will mark the men who have made those statements to their constituents and to the country in favour of Reform, and who, now that the time for action has come, draw back and attempt to get out of the question in this indirect and unsatisfactory manner. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Belfast, has thought it necessary to go into a very minute criticism upon the figures contained in the Returns, and has commented especially upon the celebrated rule of three sum to which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer drew the attention of the House upon the introduction of this measure. I was surprised to hear the hon. and learned Gentleman say that there was an error in that rule of three sum, because it appears to me to be a difficult thing to fall into any error at all in so simple a calculation. My right hon. Friend stated distinctly that in order to arrive at the fourth term he had taken the male occupiers contained in the columns. He said, if so many male occupiers of £10 and upwards give us so many registered electors of £10 and upwards, so many male occupiers of £7 and upwards will give so many registered electors of £7 and upwards. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Belfast said that the second term in the sum was wrong, because the number that would have been upon the register of £10 and upwards after the repeal of the ratepaying clauses had been omitted. But the hon. and learned Member for Belfast is in error in this respect; for when the estimate was given of the number of additional voters that would arise from the repeal of the ratepaying clauses and the arrangements with regard to compound householders, an additional number of 60,000 working men was estimated as likely to result from these causes. Now, this addition to the number of the working classes was far greater than need have been made, and was ample to compensate for the omission from the second term—which, indeed, was intentional and explained at the time—of the number that would be enfranchised by the repeal of the ratepaying clauses. The fact is, that the number of working men, if all between £7 and £10 are to be called working men, will be, according to the Government Estimates, which I believe to be as correct and as carefully made as it is possible for estimates to be, 144,000, and that number is increased to upwards of 200,000 by the addition of the whole of the 60,000 who are to be enfranchised by the repeal of the ratepaying clauses and the arrangement with regard to compound householders. Now, it is quite clear that a great number of those who would be put upon the register in consequence of the repeal of the ratepaying clauses are above the line of £10, and can scarcely be regarded as working men; and I think, therefore, that the number of those belonging to that class which the Bill will admit is not greater than that stated by my right hon. Friend. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Belfast then attempted to show that this £7 franchise would give the working classes the majority in a great many of the constituencies—I believe he said in the greater number of the constituencies; but, however that may be, he certainly said that they would be in a majority upon the whole of the borough voters. In this view I believe him to be mistaken; for the omission from the second term of the number to which I have alluded was, I think, amply compensated for by the fullest allowance being made for the accession to the strength of the working classes from other sources. But when the hon. and learned Gentleman says that the working classes would possess a majority of the seats, he arrives at that conclusion by supposing that a number of boroughs will be disfranchised and their Members given to places where the working classes are in the majority—a conclusion wholly attributable to his imagination, for no such proposal has been made. I was very glad, however, to hear the hon. and learned Gentleman say that the working classes would not combine. He said that they would act as a certain party—and I thought the analogy at the time a very peculiar one—sometimes acts in this House, and, as it is said, they are acting at the present moment—knowing that they hold the balance of parties, they would give their votes to that party which would be most likely to carry out their objects and give effect to their opinions. The illustration was a curious one, but I believe it to be a true and satisfactory refutation of the great alarm which has been expressed lest the whole of the working classes should act together, and avail themselves of the machinery of trades unions to coerce their Members to vote for particular candidates, and so forth. I believe, however, that nothing is viewed with so much jealousy by the working classes as the infusion of politics into trades unions; and the same remark will, in my opinion, apply to the benefit societies, and other associations formed for objects peculiar to the working classes. Those associations have, indeed, always refused, and will continue to refuse, for very good reasons, to permit the introduction of any political action. But, as I have before contended, we have been arguing this matter too much as one referring to classes. We talk as if the working classes were a distinct caste—like the blacks of Jamaica, for instance. We enfranchise men, not classes. The figures laid before the House may be regarded merely in the nature of concessions made with the view of removing alarm and of showing hon. Gentlemen who may entertain misgivings upon the subject what increase of power would be granted to the working classes. What is the extent of that power after all? In the event of the passing of this Bill the number of electors in England and Wales will be 1,350,000, and of that number one-fourth only will belong to the working classes. Have hon. Gentlemen considered how many working men, even after the passing of this measure, will be excluded from all share in political representation? Have they considered what a large number of persons are still without the pale? and is it not a reasonable proposition, seeing the vast increase which has taken place in the intelligence of the working classes to move with the times, and when everything else is progressing, not to allow the franchise alone to stand still? The hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing) said that the franchise ought to be kept high, in order that it may, as it were, lift up the working classes with it. This is indeed a strange argument, because if a high standard of franchise is to improve the working classes you ought to raise it from time to time. If it has this elevating effect it is the logical consequence that instead of lowering we ought rather to look forward to raising it. Can any argument be more fallacious? Does the franchise enable a man to earn more wages? Does it enable him to avoid expenditure upon his family? It has, indeed, no effect at all upon his condition. You may, indeed, say that if there is such a strong and eager desire among the working men to possess the franchise, that they would make any sacrifice in order to arrive at it. But I cannot understand the principle of the hon. Member for Wick, who, in taking what he calls the moral view of the question, says that the franchise is calculated to elevate the working classes. Is there anything in the argument employed by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), and repeated by so many speakers, that the franchise is extending itself by degrees, and that in the course of time a very large proportion of working men will be placed upon the register of voters, even if the £10 franchise be continued? The noble Lord who addressed us to-night (Lord Elcho) wished to know something about the year 1896—whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer had calculated how many artizans there would be upon the register in 1896. This is looking forward for rather a long period. But, Sir, it appears to me, if this self-adjusting process has been going on, we should find that the electors bore a larger proportion to the whole number of male adults now than they did in 1832. It is not enough to say the franchise is enjoyed by a greater number of persons absolutely. It is not enough to say that there are more electors on the register. The question is, are there more in proportion to population? When the first register was made after 1832, it was found that the proportion of electors to male adults in England and Wales was one in five—that one out of every five male adults had a vote—and that proportion still continues in 1865. If that be true, and I believe it to be strictly so, what becomes of the argument that the extension of the franchise has been going on of itself? I say that if by the progress of education and intelligence among the people more persons were getting the franchise, you would see the proportion not one in five, but one in a smaller number. I believe if you take the boroughs by themselves—taking the total number of electors—you will find the same result. While the population of the boroughs has increased 82 per cent the voters have increased about 80 per cent, or something like that. I quite admit that in particular boroughs, where large numbers of persons are heaped together, and where a great number of artizans are occupying houses which give them a qualification, there, perhaps, you may find, but only there, a greater number of voters in proportion to the population. But in dealing with these questions we must look at the totals of the whole number of the electors in the constituencies of the kingdom. It is only in that way we can judge of what is going on in the way of a gradual enfranchisement of the people. I think there is every ground for at this time introducing the question of the extension of the franchise. What can be more striking than the statement which we have heard from hon. Members as to the extent to which friendly societies are now being established in this country? In his speech the other evening my hon. Friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs made some very interesting statements on that head, which have been fully confirmed by a letter which I have received from the Registrar, and which are quite in accordance with the Reports which he lays before Parliament. A great increase in the number of those benefit societies—a very large increase—has taken place within the last few years; and I ask the House what can be a greater proof of the improvement among the working classes than to find they are willing to make a present sacrifice of their income in order to secure a provision for themselves, and, therefore, for their families, in time of sickness? No other class, as my hon. Friend says, has done that to the same extent; and I may mention this remarkable evidence on the subject, that upon an examination of some 500 members of one of those benefit societies made in Manchester and Salford, it was found that the persons who are contributors and supporters of those valuable societies are the persons who do occupy houses of the clear yearly value of between £7 and £10. I see, too, from some evidence given before a Committee in the House of Lords in a former Session of Parliament by Mr. Chadwick he found that a very large percentage of the members of those friendly societies occupied houses of a value between £6 and £9. As you went up to £10, or far above that amount, there were no members, and as you went down and got to £5 and £4 the number of members became considerably less. Well, I think it is a fact well worthy of your consideration. I believe the extension of the franchise which has been proposed by the Government is a moderate and safe extension of the franchise, and that it will introduce some new blood into our electoral registries which will be of great benefit to the State. I even take the argument of my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), understood according to his most recent explanation. What I understand him to say is this—As you go down in the present constituencies you get to a more corrupt class; but he said the great body of the working class outside the present constituencies are remarkable for their prudence, perseverance, and other good qualities. What, then, can you do better than dilute this poison which you say exists in the lower grade of the constituencies by an infusion of the more respectable portion of the artizans? I believe you may confer very great benefit on all classes of this country by calling to your aid an increased number of the working classes. I believe you will find that they will be less corrupt. It has been said they will be more so; but I say I think, on the contrary, there are no set of persons so little likely to be corrupted as the independent artizans. I think they are the class of men who are most likely to give an honest vote; I believe they are the class of men who are most likely to give an independent vote; and even if the most extraordinary and unlikely contingency should occur that we should pass this Franchise Bill before we deal with the re-distribution—[*Laughter.*] If hon. Gentlemen will interrupt me I shall not be able to say what I intend. [*Renewed laughter.*] I mean to say that if a dissolution should occur—[*Ironical cheers*]—after the passing of this Franchise Bill, and before the passing of the Re-distribution Bill—an event extremely unlikely to occur—I cannot see, any more than the hon. Member for Westminster, that we should have a worse Parliament because a moderate number of intelligent artizans has been added to the existing constituencies—a number which would not form any majority whatever, but only a fair infusion. I cannot see why a Parliament elected by constituencies so augmented should be a bad Parliament or one unable to deal with re-distribution or any other question. I remember that the late Sir Robert Peel said the Reform Act of 1832 was accepted by him as a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question. Well, Sir, irrevocable, I believe, that Reform Act to be; but final I do not believe it to be, certainly in the sense meant by that eminent statesman. It may, however, be said that the Reform Act did give a conclusive sanction to the policy of a gradual extension of popular rights and the enfranchisement of the people, I say the measures of Government are framed in the spirit of the Reform Act. They are but an attempt to give further application to those principles in accordance with the requirements of the time, and with due regard to the safety of the institutions of the country. ["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members may seem surprised, but I believe, Sir, that this Bill is destined to become law; and I believe, further, that its provisions will, in the words contained in the Gracious Speech from the Throne, strengthen our free institutions, and conduce to the general welfare of the nation.

Mr. GATHORNE HARDY: The right hon. Gentleman who has just concluded his animated and eloquent speech has shown that he is a man of very sanguine temperament. He believes that the Bill which he has been enforcing on our attention is one that will become law. The right hon. Gentleman said also that when the Bill was introduced he was confident it would not be opposed on the second reading. I think his prediction as to the final result in this case will be found very much in the same category as his confidence in respect to no opposition at the present stage. But the right hon. Gentleman who expected that this Bill would be received without opposition said my right hon. Friend in a manifesto which he sent forth to the country last year announced his intention of standing by the £10 franchise. Therefore, how are the two things reconcilable? How could the right hon. Gentleman suppose that a Bill lowering the franchise to the extent which that of the Government does would receive the cordial support of the whole House, when he knew my right hon. Friend had issued a manifesto in which he said that our support would not be given to such a proposition? The right hon. Gentleman has, no doubt unintentionally, misrepresented in every respect the Reform Bill brought in by the Government of Lord Derby. He said, "We did not treat Lord Derby as you would treat Lord Russell. We placed reliance in what he said; we did not offer the same insults to Lord Derby as you are offering to Lord Russell, by presuming that he would not carry out what he had promised to perform." The Bill introduced by the Government of Lord Derby was a complete measure of Reform, and dealt with the franchise and with the re-distribution of seats in boroughs and counties. So far from Lord Derby taking upon himself, as the right hon. Gentleman has alleged, to say that in a future Session he would make a proposition to Parliament for a revision of the borough boundaries, there was a clause in the Bill which made it compulsory on the Inclosure Commissioners, immediately on the passing of the Act, to go forth through the country and revise those boundaries. They are an independent body, unconnected with party, not carried away by any factious feelings. not prompted by this side or by that, and they were nominated, under the 57th section of the Bill, to go through the country and revise the boundaries. Where are the provisions in the present Bill for the re-distribution of seats and the revision of boundaries? You have no Bills for these objects, and I venture to say that until the Amendment was laid upon the table the Government had not considered far less prepared any such measures, and until then we had no definite pledge upon the subject. The right hon. Gentleman has said something about the progress of the franchise in proportion to the population, and like the Chancellor of the Exchequer has assumed that the £10 householders have scarcely increased more rapidly than the population, but the truth is that their number has swelled in a far greater degree than either the right hon. Gentleman or the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us. The latter told us that in 1833, when the first registration after the Reform Bill took place, the £10 voters were 174,000, the freemen and scot and lot voters were 107,000, making 281,000; and, comparing these figures with the number of voters on the register last year, he inferred that whereas the population had increased 79 per cent, the £10 voters have only increased 82 per cent. The right hon. Gentleman omitted to exclude from his calculation the scot and lot and freemen voters, who are dying out; for if the £10 householders now number 463,000, the increase, above 174,000, was not 82 per cent, but more than 150 per cent. He forgot that the Reform Bill was a disfranchising as well as an enfranchising measure. The right hon. Gentleman quoted with respect to the Bill of 1832 the memorable words of Sir Robert Peel, that he accepted the Reform Bill as a final settlement; but assigns as a reason for again interfering with the question, the long time which has elapsed since the passing of the Reform Bill; but what are thirty years in the life of a nation? The hon. Member for Montrose told us the other night that the Act of 1832 has saved us for thirty years from an unintelligent class of voters, but the right hon. Gentleman gives no period for the duration of this Bill; we are, according to his view, to be continually going on. The right hon. Gentleman in calling attention to the Amendment has asserted that the House is not about to vote upon the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, but on the second reading of the Bill. In 1859 the noble Lord at the head of the Government moved an Amendment to the Reform Bill of that day, and immediately afterwards explained to his constituents its meaning. He then said that he had moved it because a great number of his friends objected to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and that he did not think voting for that Resolution at all involved voting against the Bill. That was the view taken by the noble Lord at that time, but now that the Amendment is moved against the right hon. Gentleman, to vote for it is to be construed into voting against the second reading. A great deal has been said by hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House which could only be interpreted as meaning that they alone had confidence in the working classes; the Chancellor of the Exchequer, indeed, had said that while the Liberals viewed them with trust, modified by prudence, the Conservatives looked upon them with mistrust, tempered only by fear. That right hon. Gentleman for a long time acted with the party to whom he imputes those principles; and it may be proper to ask him whether those were the grounds upon which he then acted. And, taking this Bill upon its merits, I would ask, what is the trust on the one side and the mistrust on the other? The trust on the one side is £3 more than was offered by the other. But you stop at £7, and all the writers upon this subject, such as the hon. Members for Westminster and Brighton, who have written on Mr. Hare's plan, have a limitation; and none seem willing to give absolute trust. They say we are anxious to extend the power of the working classes, but are not prepared to give them a preponderance of power. Why should not that limitation be looked upon as an insult to the class if other limitations are so regarded? The hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) has written against the policy of giving the franchise to "the poorest and lowest" class, and maintains their use as a non-electoral body exercising a beneficial influence, though it would be highly mischievous in the present state of their morals and intelligence to bestow votes upon them. He thus expresses the opinion that some classes are not only wanting in intelligence, but that their moral state does not fit them for the full exercise of the franchise. I do not quote this in disparagement of the hon. Gentleman. I simply point out the fact to show that the position he takes up is perfectly consistent with that upon which we take our stand, the only difference being that the limitation in the one case is more extended than the other. But some have used violent language with respect to those who are acting against them on this question. We have imputed to us not only great ignorance as a party, but we are told that we are acting upon the present occasion with even unusual depravity. Those charges, in my opinion, only recoil upon those who make them. Is it not an insult to the middle classes to tell them the Parliament which they have returned never passes any measures because they are good in themselves, but only because it is induced to do so from some corrupt influence or terrorism? This assertion amounts to little less than telling the electors that the only way to get really good measures passed is to admit the least intelligent people to the privilege of the franchise. The object we ought to have in view in forming the governing body is to represent all, and give no class a preponderating influence. That, indeed, is the opinion, I believe, of all the philosophers who have written upon the subject. But we should have more than that; we should have a system which would permit all to gain an interest in the Government. There are many ways by which these conditions may be fulfilled besides a direct lowering of the franchise. The right hon. Gentleman who has last spoken has told us that a great deal too much has been said about classes: that the working classes have been set apart as if they were the blacks of Jamaica. But who has introduced the working classes into this debate? Either the statistics put before us were something, or they were nothing. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the measures to the House was founded on the statistics put before us. These not only go into questions as to the working classes, but do so very minutely, professing to give the numbers of the working classes in every one of the boroughs of the country. For what purpose? Why, the purpose was obvious from the mode in which they were used in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He told us that though he himself was not much afraid, yet that there were persons who might be afraid of giving too great power to the working classes, and, therefore, an accurate estimate of their numbers had been made. The Government, it was asserted, were indisposed to give a preponderating influence to the working classes, and consequently, having on former occasions been advocates of a £6 franchise, they now on account of those statistics brought the franchise up to £7. What is the meaning of that? Surely, the only meaning can be that we are to consider the statistics on which the Government acted, and see how far the working classes will be brought within the limits of the franchise by this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman told us that Parliament was bound by many considerations to enfranchise the working classes, and reminded us of the promises that had often been made, and the number of Bills that successive Governments had introduced. But those Bills were all Reform Bills. This is merely a Franchise Bill; and the right hon. Gentleman probably can remember how many Franchise Bills were introduced by private Members and as constantly rejected by the House. Both the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleague the Home Secretary charge us with inconsistency, because having voted in 1860 for the second reading of the Reform Bill we now turn round and reject this measure. Why, in 1860 there was a Reform Bill before the House, based on the same principle as the previous Reform Bills which had been introduced. The complaint of the right hon. Gentleman reminds me of what was said to Sir Charles Napier in Scinde—"You are punishing the Ameers of Scinde for taking your own advice. "No," replied the general, "I gave them certain advice, and they have taken only half of it." And he compared their case to that of a man, who being directed to take a Seidlitz powder, separated the ingredients and swallowed only one of them—"If he chooses to take only the acid powder," said Sir Charles, "I am not to blame if the result should be disagreeable." The right hon. Gentleman acts in this spirit; he wishes to keep apart the ingredients while we, though we admit that a whole measure of Reform may be medicinal and beneficial, decline the separate portions, for if we take this one separately, and the other powder is to follow, what may be the consequence upon the body politic I really do not know. The right hon. Gentleman put before us other considerations. He called attention to the income of the working classes, and said he could not be confuted on that point. Of course, when he himself professes to speak from no accurate information, and tells us there is no accurate information on the subject, it is no doubt impossible that he should be confuted. But, with respect to this income of the working classes, let it be remembered how large a portion of that belongs to agricultural labourers, upon whom it is no part of the present scheme to confer the franchise. As to amount of taxation, I believe that has been very much over-estimated. Mr. Leone Levi, in his very carefully compiled work, estimates this at much less than the right hon. Gentleman—namely, at about one-fourth, and the foundation of the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has also been satisfactorily disposed of by the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing). A Return obtained by my hon. Friend the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Banks Stanhope) showing the relative proportions of property in boroughs is highly instructive. Without wearying the House with figures, I will state the general results. Under £7 in boroughs the gross estimated rental is £2,058,846; between £7 and £10 it is £1,692,516; and above £10—that is to say, the present constituency—it is £25,888,248. That is fifteen times as much as the gross estimated rental on which you propose to admit to the franchise, and six times as much as all the others put together, both those who would be admitted under this Bill and those below £7. But if questions of income and taxation are to be now introduced, be it remembered that in the speech in which the right hon. Gentleman introduced this question no mention whatever was made of property. He never alluded to it. In that speech numbers alone were dwelt upon, and he dealt with the subject as it might have been dealt with in a Bill for establishing universal suffrage. The right hon. Gentleman told us elsewhere that the friends of the Bill have been called on to prove the grievances and defects of the existing system. Well, that has been attempted to-night by the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. T. Hughes) in a speech which carried me in imagination to a social science meeting, which I have never personally attended, enumerating different topics which he appeared to suppose would be dealt with by the next Reformed Parliament — questions which certainly appeared to me to have very little to do with the present Bill. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) in one of his speeches supposed the case of a merchant carrying on a thriving business, and asked, "Does the merchant say, 'I will not improve my business because I cannot prove it to be bad?' No, he lays out more capital." But what are you asked to do in the present case? You are doing a good and thriving business, you are legislating effectually for the country, and what is suggested to you is, not that you should lay out more capital, but that you should take in a number of partners with no capital to speak of, and with comparatively little intelligence. I cannot understand how the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to employ that argument. Probably being at Liverpool, he was led by association of ideas to talk about merchants, but he never could have thought out the results of his own comparison. On various occasions the hon. Gentleman has spoken of the great decrease which has taken place in the working classes upon the register since the passing of the Reform Bill. I am unable to ascertain on what data he founds that statement, and therefore, though we may contradict, we cannot, as he says, confute it. But, supposing the facts to be as he states, what follows directly from them? The Reform Bill was a disfranchising as well as an enfranchising measure, and if it had been carried out in the spirit in which Lord John Russell desired, it would have been a disfranchising measure to a still greater extent. Since then the scot and lot voters have been gradually dying out, and therefore when you talk of the voters of the working class having decreased upon the register, you are only stating one of the necessary results of the passing of the Reform Bill. And mind you are now endeavouring to put again upon the register those whom your fathers by the Reform Bill of that day carefully struck off, so that you cannot say that you are carrying out the principles of that measure. The right hon. Gentleman said there are no working men in counties, that there is but one here and there. I complain, and not without cause, of the miserable statistics which have been furnished on that point. In the first place, though the franchise is fixed by the Bill at £14, in the whole volume of statistics there is not a single reference to that figure, while £12 and £15 are mentioned over and over again. I may be mistaken, but an examination of the figures suggests to me that £12 was the figure originally in the Bill, and that this was afterwards altered to £14. In saying that there are no working men in the counties the right hon. Gentleman shows, I must say, an extraordinary ignorance of the facts. The other day I took the opportunity of speaking on this point to a gentleman well acquainted with local affairs, and for many years connected with the registration of the county, and he told me there were vast numbers of workmen on the register for West Kent, and that in one parish alone he knew of 100 genuine voters of the artizan class. I believe that taking into account the operation of freehold building societies in Lancashire, Yorkshire, the northern districts, and, to a great extent, in the southern districts also, you must add to the working classes said to be enfranchised by this Bill a number which will make the total greater by many thousands than the limit beyond which the right hon. Gentleman thought it would not be safe to go. The abolition of the ratepaying clauses will add to their number, and I cannot advert to the ratepaying clauses without remarking that ratepaying is the oldest franchise known to this country. Whenever there were a large number of voters "scot and lot" was the usual qualification. Of these some paid scot, or rates, while others were liable to be drawn by lot for juries. At one period obviously these must have been proper persons to be upon the register, though now they had all been done away with. Payment of rates for three years previously to registration was considered essential by the noble Premier at the time when he first sketched out the Reform Bill of 1832 on the celebrated piece of notepaper; and by the Municipal Franchise Bill, when first brought in, two and a half years' payment of rates was required. Both the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer grounded their arguments for this Bill on the Municipal Reform Bill. I am not going to say much against the corporations of this country, but I am bound to say that, in my opinion, there has not been that great success in the municipal corporations of this country which has been attributed to them by some persons. After the careful inquiries conducted in the House of Lords, when the question as to what sort of a constituency you had got in the municipal boroughs was examined, they found that under the Small Tenements Act, and by landlords compounding for rates, persons got on the register who paid no rates, and they reported that they considered it an indispensable thing, in order that you might have an uncorrupt and pure class of voters, that you should have men who regularly paid their rates, and who paid them not indirectly through their landlord, but directly to the tax collector himself. Therefore I say that by this Bill you are in effect forcing the franchise upon the people who might take it themselves, but will not. Those living in houses compounded for, if they are anxious for the franchise, can now claim to be rated, and on paying their rates they can be enfranchised. A gentleman has furnished me with a return of the number of compound householders in London, which he tells me is correct, and according to it there are in London, excluding the City, 74,051, but on the register there are only 16,778. We thus see how much the franchise is valued by this class of persons. They will not claim to be rated; they will not take the trouble to have their names put upon the rate books in order that they may obtain this franchise, for which we are told they are sighing so much. According to the hon. Member for Westminster—

> "A man who does not care whether he votes is not likely to care which way he votes, and he who is in that state of mind has no moral right to vote at all."

Yet upon such persons this Bill proposes compulsorily to thrust the franchise. It seems to me that though there has been an agitation in the country, there has been no enthusiasm for this Bill. When I look back to the Bill which was brought in by the present Government, with Lord Palmerston at its head, in the year 1860, providing a £6 and a £10 franchise, I want to know what was the reason that at that time all was apathy and stillness? There seemed to be no difficulty in getting rid of the Bill either in this House or with the people. Why is it that at every meeting now they say they want something more than this Bill, and when you offered them more on that occasion they would not stretch out their hand to take it? It is a great tribute to the power, the wisdom, and the decision of Lord Palmerston that he was able for six years to sit upon the safety-valve of this steam boiler which is below us, and which, we are told, will explode if we do not carry out the plan the Government has put before us to let off the steam. The noble Viscount, it appears, was able to control it; but the moment he is gone everything is changed, and we are told that we are pledged on this side and on that to pass the Bill the Government have brought in, and yet the right hon. Gentlemen who occupy that Bench, and the noble Lord (Earl Russell) who sits in the other House, have been content with these pledges round their necks, with these heavy weights upon their consciences, and have submitted for six years to go on under the guidance of Lord Palmerston, holding office which they obtained by a promise to reduce the franchise, not thinking their honour was the least impugned; and now they bring in this miserable, not Reform Bill, but fraction of one, and say that unless we pass it we are violating our pledges. The right hon. Gentleman has alluded to an argument of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) as to what he thought constituted personal fitness; and he has endeavoured to show the distinction between what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) and the Member for Belfast the other night. My hon. and learned Friend said, "You could not by mere money payment test personal fitness." Arguments have been adduced to-night to show that there are thousands of persons of high education and considerable property, having every qualification which would fit them to become not only members of the electoral body, but members of the elected body, who are excluded from the franchise because they live in lodgings or in houses with their parents. All these persons are fitted for the franchise, and the mere £10 qualification does not enable you to arrive at their fitness. No doubt a person possessing a certain amount of property is more likely to obtain education and become intelligent; but in no other way can it be a test of personal fitness. The hon. Member for Southwark the other night told us that he did not ask for any confidence on our side of the House, but he thought they had a right to ask for confidence on that side of the House, and that he was very much surprised at the course hon. Members had taken there. Great exception has been taken to the Resolution which has been moved; the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has called it a Resolution which meant something different from what it expressed, and others have given it a variety of nicknames; but nobody, it seems to me, has addressed himself boldly to controvert the point of objection made by it, though I will admit that in the speech which the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade has made he has to a certain extent addressed himself to it. The right hon. Gentleman, not unskilled in drawing and defending Resolutions, objects to the present one, so that it is rather important to know the course which has been taken by a great authority on this subject. If it is so very reprehensible to move a Resolution, and to combine persons and parties of different opinions in this House in support of it, why was it wise, and prudent, and good to move a similar Resolution in 1859? Lord John Russell told his constituents that he could not have combined his party against the second reading, and, therefore, he moved the Resolution in order to combine the greatest number against the Reform Bill of the then Government. If that was a legitimate mode of dealing with the question adopted by Lord John Russell, I do not see that we are taking a very unfair or very unconstitutional step in imitating one who has been a writer on constitutional history, and who is so great an authority on that subject. But the noble Lord further told his constituents that he moved the Resolution because, if a Bill were allowed to pass the second reading and to go into Committee, very little alteration could be made by opponents, because the Government could more easily keep together their supporters, and get through the clauses in the early hours of the evening, so that Members coming later to support their Amendments would find the clauses to which they objected already passed. Lord John Russell continued—

> "These, therefore, were the reasons upon which I determined, not without advice and concurrence, to proceed with a Resolution. I looked to my old Friend Sir James Graham, who had been united with me in preparing the Bill of 1831. I consulted Lord Palmerston, to whom that respect was due, and whose opinion is of the utmost value. I consulted Mr. Sidney Herbert, who wished to see a good Reform Bill, and at the same time did not like to appear in opposition to the Government upon other than fair and reasonable grounds. I consulted Mr. Bright, a politician of another class, whose opinions in many respects differed from mine, but who is as hearty and sincere a Reformer, and who agreed with me as to the defects of Lord Derby's Bill, and as to the manner in which it ought to be rejected—treated I would rather say, because if the Government had accepted the spirit of the Resolution, the Bill need not finally have been rejected. I thought it right in my position to get as much concurrence of opinion as possible. I have been charged with combination and intrigue, and my conduct has been characterized by other hard names; but I think concert among men for a great public object, having nothing in view but what is for the public good, is honourable to all those who can concur in such agreement."

I venture to say that the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) does not need any vindication of his character and position. I venture to say that he and others who have supported him on that side of the House as well as on this have concurred for a great public object—namely, that this question should be dealt with in a statesmanlike manner, as a whole, and that this Parliament should deal with it not from year to year, but in one Bill, and at once. This is due to our own characters and to our own position. He went on to say—

> "It was not difficult to frame a measure which would have been supported by a great majority of the present House of Commons, and which would not have been the subject of differences when it went into Committee. That would have insured the passing of a Reform Bill in the present year; and mind, when you say a 'Reform Bill,' I am not speaking in the sense of many Members of the House of Commons, who said, 'The essential thing is to pass a Bill,' and who went no further. Those Gentlemen said, 'Let us pass a Bill,' without inquiring whether it should be a good Bill or a bad Bill—a Bill that would last twenty years, or five years, or only one year. I think that was a most irrational proposition. What I wish is to see a Bill upon which the people of this country can rest."

That was the noble Lord's opinion expressed to his constituents when he went before them in 1859, and yet for wishes such as his the noble Lord the Member for Chester and those who support his Amendment are held up to obloquy and indignation. The hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) made a remarkable speech in this debate which had many merits. It did not, however, relate specially to this Bill, but went a long way beyond it. He talked about working men being admitted to this House. I deny that it is necessary for working men to be represented by working men, any more than it is necessary for clergymen to be represented by clergymen. The hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. T. Hughes) professed to know all about their wants and desires (and very strange some of them seemed to be), yet for some inscrutable reason professed that he could not properly represent them. Many who have sat here have passed through the workshop, and must have possessed an intimate knowledge of the working classes. Mr. Brotherton was a conspicuous instance of a self-raised man, having risen from the condition of a factory boy to be a Member of this House, as he used to avow (and all honour to him for it), and there are other Members who have similarly elevated themselves. Is it to be said because they have so raised themselves out of the working classes they have ceased to remember what they were and to represent them? But the hon. Member for Westminster says we ought not to be satisfied until we have working men here, and I, for one, should be delighted to see some of them within these walls. It might be a great advantage to them and to us that such should be the case. We must, however, go a long way beyond this Bill before we attain that object. We may have men sitting in the House of Commons who live on the earnings of the working men as managers of their trades unions, but how the real working man who lives by his own labour can sit here unless you provide him with the means to do so I am at a loss to understand. The Bill as it stands would not, it seems to me, except in certain towns, throw the whole electoral power into the hands of the working classes, nor do I think it would enable them to be represented in Parliament by working men. They would, on the contrary, I am afraid, be represented by agitators, if not, as has been said by many great philosophers, by millionaires. The hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), who is an authority on this subject, wrote a pamphlet in 1860 on the scheme of Mr. Hare, in which he condemned, I venture to say, any measure based upon the principle on which the present Bill is founded. The Bill of 1860, be it remembered, was one of a more extended character, because it proposed a re-distribution, but notwithstanding that was the case, the hon. Gentleman wrote as follows:—

> "If the suffrage is extended on the principles hitherto received, access to the House will be rendered more difficult than ever to intelligence and independence, and Members will more and more become the delegates of petty local interests, and of temporary popular feeling; but under Mr. Hare's plan, every opinion would be represented."

Now, far be it from me to complain of that statement, but I am, at the same time, I must confess, somewhat surprised that the hon. Gentleman should have taken so strong a course as he has done in addressing his constituents on the present measure. He must, I think, regret some of the language which he used on that occasion when he spoke of hon. Members on this side of the House as being prepared to take a step little short of murder in order to get rid of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The hon. Member said the Tories objected to a middle-class man being at the head of affairs in this country, and that they would therefore be glad to hunt the Chancellor of the Exchequer to death. Such expressions were, however, it appears to me, hardly justifiable. The Tory party ought, in my opinion, to be the last to complain of the selection of a middle-class man for high office, seeing that they selected the late Sir Robert Peel as their leader; and I, who belong to the middle class, am proud to say that neither in past records of the party, nor in their present conduct, have I ever seen on their part the slightest indication of so discreditable a feeling. But the hon. Member for Brighton went further, and while considering the extension of the suffrage on the plan proposed by the present Bill, proceeded to say—

> "The little interest taken even by sincere Reformers in the approaching (1860) Reform Bill is a matter of general remark, while many Liberals, in addition to the whole body of Conservatives, regard it with more or less alarm. Why is then this listless indifference chequered with dread? Not surely because it is supposed our representative system cannot be improved. Its serious defects are manifest to the most careless observer, but Reform is little cared for by the Re-

former, and is dreaded by the Conservative because it is felt that the Reform Bill we are to expect will, in some cases, only trifle with, and in others exaggerate the worst defect of our representative institutions."

That was the calm and deliberate opinion of the hon. Gentleman, and I regret that the hon. Member for Westminster is not in his place, for he also has written much on the subject. Speaking in this debate of the Bill before the House, he said—

"I think it is a good Bill in itself, and is calculated to do so much good that I am prepared to accept it as it stands, and leave the question of the re-distribution of seats to be dealt with by a future Parliament."

In his writings, however, he adopts a different view, for I find he says—

"In a good half measure of Reform"—I suppose this would be considered such a measure—"there are at least two essential requisites. In the first place, it should be aimed at the really worst features of the existing system. Secondly, it should be conceived with an eye to the future changes which may be expected hereafter. The first condition will be in a considerable degree fulfilled by any measure which clears away the small constituencies. The most peccant element in the present state of the representation is not the small number of electors taken in the aggregate."

Now, from that, and other writings of the hon. Member, I gather the views of the hon. Gentleman to be that you should in the first place provide for the re-distribution of seats, and in the next place deal with the franchise, not simply by lowering it so as to give power to the majority, but either as proposed by Mr. Marshall, or in the manner advocated by Mr. Hare to give a representation to minorities. It is thus evident that neither the hon. Member for Westminster nor the hon. Member for Brighton is, or at least was, content with a Bill for the lowering of the franchise and the re-distribution of seats, unless accompanied by certain checks which would direct and control the further progress of Reform. With this imperfect Bill, so condemned by these writers by anticipation before us, we are called upon to give our confidence to the Government on this great question. Now, I frankly own that for my part I never had less confidence in any Government which has set upon those Benches. What I should like to know is the ground on which that confidence ought to be based? We have been told by their friends and supporters that this Bill is to be measured by the statistics which they have laid before the House; but those statistics are put before us, not only in general terms, but as we are to find them in each of the existing boroughs; and this makes me confident that when this measure was introduced no steps had been taken by the Government with a view to framing a Bill for the re-distribution of seats. Indeed, this is absolutely certain, for no hon. or right hon. Gentleman speaking on their behalf has ventured to assert that such a Bill was then ready, or even in course of preparation. That such is the case has, indeed, been proved by the quotation which was made by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he stated that he left that question entirely to the future. But the Government tells us that we shall be perfectly safe in admitting the working classes under this Bill—assuming that some of us have a dread of them—because it will only admit a minority to the exercise of the franchise. Now how, I should like to know, are we to ascertain that to be the fact, unless we have before us some statistics with reference to the new as well as the old constituency? I do not believe, I may add, that the promised Re-distribution of Seats Bill is ready now, for I am perfectly certain that in the vehement speech which we have just heard from the right hon. Gentleman opposite he would have told us that it was shut in a box in the office of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ready to be produced as soon as the second reading of the Franchise Bill was agreed to, if he could have said so with truth. He knows, however, that no step towards framing a Bill for the re-distribution of seats was taken until the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) was placed on the Notice Paper; and is it, I would ask, improper upon our part, to say that we are not disposed to accept a promise to introduce a measure which it may not be in their power to fulfil; upon which, indeed, the Government may never agree? The right hon. Gentleman, in 1857, was not himself ashamed to bring forward a Resolution against the Government of a noble Lord under whom he afterwards served, or to invite support for that Resolution from all sides of the House. That Resolution was successful. The right hon. Gentleman upset the Government by means of a combination—a means which he seems now to view with so much apprehension. I was myself a party to that result, and the vote which I then gave I believe still to have been right. The defeat of the Government was, at the same time, effected by a combination to which not only the right hon. Gentleman but the noble Lord now at the head of the Government was not ashamed to be a party. The right hon. Gentleman says that we shall have before us the measure for the re-distribution of seats, and we can then deal with it as we like in Committee. It is very doubtful whether we shall arrive at that position, and, therefore, I prefer dealing with the question now. Parliament has a character of its own to support, and it does not do for the Government to tell Parliament to accept a partial measure on the condition that something is hereafter to be brought forward to make the measure perfect. Parliament is a Legislature not for temporary purposes, but for posterity, and with a due regard to its own honour and dignity, it is not reasonable to ask Parliament to pass a Bill on the ground that something else is in contemplation, which, in fact, may never come before it. If Parliament, under these circumstances, passed the Bill, the measure might cause effects which Parliament never contemplated, because it was intended to be coupled with something else to moderate and control it. The principle of this Bill is not the admission of the working classes, but the extent to which that admission shall be carried, for they are largely within the pale already. Now, this extent must be measured by the effect of the Bill on the constituencies, and we cannot judge of that effect without further statistics, and knowing what are the constituencies to be represented; and, as Earl Russell said, we ought to have a Bill (not a succession of Bills) on which people may rest—a Bill which settles the question, and settles it by this Parliament. We cannot control future Parliaments; but to pass an imperfect scheme is tempting them to new action, so do not let us put into their hands that which is only part of a Bill, but which may, by keeping questions open, induce them to do something quite different from what we intend. If we pass this Reform Bill, we leave the door open to agitation, and bring the House into a state in which it will be unfit to carry on the business of the nation, so that we must put off those measures of amelioration to which attention was called by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill). Instead of settling the question of Reform, we shall only place before the country a measure which will lead to constant agitation, and enable those who are in favour of ulterior measures to agitate for a re-distribution of seats and for a new Bill giving the working classes a really preponderating power in Parliament. We feel deeply that this question is of no little importance. It is one which affects the destinies of this country most materially, because this proposition for the extension of the franchise is simply a rule of thumb change, a lowering without modification or check; it is a placing the franchise on an incline, and once on the incline it has an inevitable tendency to reach the bottom. I will not state this as a Conservative opinion, but will assume, as the hon. Member for Westminster does, that De Tocqueville was a democrat rather than one who felt bound to prepare for democracy; and what does he say?—

> "Where a nation modifies the electoral qualification, it may easily be foreseen that sooner or later that qualification will be entirely abolished. There is no more invariable rule in the history of society."

A distinguished Frenchman, who has been a long time in this country—M. Louis Blanc—and who has written two volumes of letters on England, may be taken as an authority on this question, as he has lived in communication with advanced Liberals, and has been intimately connected with leaders in trades unions, and with the active portion of the working classes. He says—

> "The country, once on the incline of gradual extension of the suffrage, will soon have descended that incline to the end—that is to say, to universal suffrage. That is what those who hold to the past thoroughly understand, and what alarms them. It is certain that universal suffrage in England would displace so much more surely and earnestly the present power, as it would introduce into the political arena a class which, independently of the strength resulting from numbers, would bring to it that of a ready-made organization. The trades unions have given the working class such habits of discipline that it could in given circumstances move as one man, and one may conceive that the partisans of things as they are grow pale at the notion of an election conducted like a strike."

Let it not be said, then, that it is only by bigoted Tories that this view of trades unions is taken, when it is seen that this writer looks to the trades unions as a political organization which might be made to work as one man for political purposes. I now come to another point adverted to by the hon. Members for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) and Lambeth (Mr. T. Hughes), and by others, who tell us that we will not deal with questions relating to education, pauperism, the criminal classes, and sanitary measures, and that a reformed Parliament is needed for these great questions. The hon. Member for Birmingham has said very much the same thing. That hon. Member has sat in the House for twenty-two years, but when has he proposed a Motion in respect to education? If this House was remiss in the discharge of its functions, why, then, did he not call it to a sense of its duty? I say it was the duty of those declaimers against Parliament to have placed before Parliament measures, and to have asked Parliament to deal with them. The hon. Member for Lambeth has the power to bring his measures before the House. Let him do so, and do not let him abuse the House for neglecting measures which have never been submitted to it. The hon. Member for Birmingham said that the lower classes were left uneducated, but that with an extension of the franchise they would not be long without a common school education. I believe that if the House were influenced by them it would not provide schools for them. I know of good schools, perfectly free, which there is found a difficulty to fill. Unless it were made compulsory for children to attend school, they would be taken away, as they are at present, at an early age, to take part in that education for the work of after life which tends to the support of the family. But if you proposed to have compulsory education, would the toiling masses be satisfied at having their children taken from them when their labour aided in maintaining the family? On these grounds, then, this measure cannot be supported. The present Parliament has not failed to do its duty upon such questions. I say, besides, that inasmuch as this is a partial measure the Resolution is a proper one to move—I say that the division will be taken upon that Resolution—I say that as in 1859, so now, the Resolution is the tangible thing on which we are to vote. When hon. Gentlemen opposite argue in favour of the Bill we are prepared to meet them, and to contend that, looked at in itself, as the hon. Member for Westminster looks at it, it is objectionable, because it will override the counties with an urban population. I object to it because we do not know what is to follow it. I object to it because we do not know who these leaseholders are who are to be brought from the boroughs to vote in the counties. It is remarkable that it should now be proposed so to bring them in, because in 1859 the whole argument of Lord Russell in this House was that the great distinction as between the freeholders in the counties and the leaseholders and occupiers in boroughs should be maintained. But now all that is to be changed. As to the copyholders, they are of no great importance, because they are a continually diminishing class, and in some respects are like the freeholders. Further as to the £14 occupation, we have no Returns whatever, and no data as to the kind of constituents between the higher class of voters and those whom this Bill will introduce into the counties. With regard to the suffrage in the boroughs, I object to a simple uniform lowering of the franchise to £7 throughout the country in the manner proposed by this Bill. In one place it will create large unwieldy constituencies, and in another it will swamp the existing constituencies by entirely new elements. It will give to the working classes, who have now an enormous influence beyond their own body, and especially over the small shopkeepers, an undue preponderance of political power. I believe also that the representatives who would be returned would, to a certain extent, be deteriorated. Millionaires would find a readier access to this House by modes which men of intelligence and moderate means would be unable or might be unwilling to adopt. I say further, that no rest is promised to us by this Bill; but, on the contrary, we are to enfranchise constituencies which may be immediately afterwards disfranchised, and to mock people with the franchise, who will no sooner have it given them than it will be taken away from them again. It is impossible to tell, until we know what boundaries you are to adopt, whether large masses of voters will be turned over from the boroughs to the counties, or *vice versâ;* and in that way the balance may be very materially affected. We ought not, then, to be called upon to pass a measure alike so imperfect and partial. Very few hon. Gentlemen on the other side have addressed themselves to the Resolution before us or to the arguments of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), and when reasons have failed them, they have resorted to menace and invective. The right hon. Gentleman opposite tells us that certain men will be marked men. Another hon. Gentleman opposite writes a letter, and says that certain things should be done to make us more civil. We were, I suppose, to be taught civility by a mob with bludgeons. It has been assumed that the hon. Member could not have been serious, and must have meant that as a mere jest; but his language stands on record nevertheless; and I think it is a matter to be noted that an hon. Member of this Assembly has not thought it beneath his dignity to invoke the aid of a mob to overawe the deliberations of the legislative body to which he himself belongs. He may, perhaps, be so enamoured of the banquet of Reform which he has set before us that he wishes to make us partake of the splendid feast in spite of ourselves. Dryden relates an old fable, "the Cock and the Fox," in which the fox carries away the cock, and professes to have acted for his good. Reynard says—

> "To bear you from your palace yard by might,
> And put your noble person in a fright;
> This, since you take it ill, I must repent,
> Tho' Heaven can witness with no bad intent,
> I practised it to make you taste your cheer,
> With double pleasure, first prepared by fear."

The hon. Member simply meant, by alarming us a little at first, to prepare us to pass this Bill with additional pleasure and zest. I say, Sir, that if we assent to this Bill we shall abdicate our functions, and when it is passed we shall be a mere Parliament on sufferance, without the requisite moral weight or authority to deal with the other questions which we are told are to come afterwards. For all these reasons, Sir, and believing that we have before us a means of settling this great question, and that it is due to ourselves, to the honour of Parliament, and to the best interests of the nation that we should not accept this partial, dangerous, and, I think, most insidious Bill, I shall cordially vote for the Resolution.

On Motion of Mr. Leveson Gower, Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

The Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that Mr. Speaker had been obliged, by the state of his health, to retire from the House for the remainder of the night:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

PETITION FROM HARDEN.

Complaint made to the House by William Ferrand, esquire, Member for the Borough of Devonport, of a Petition from Harden, in favour of the Representation of the People Bill [presented upon Thursday last], as containing several fictitious signatures, in breach of the privileges of this House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it be an Instruction to the Select Committee on Public Petitions to report specially to the House upon the genuineness of the Petition purporting to be a Petition from the Inhabitants of Harden, and of the signatures thereto."—(*Mr. Ferrand.*)

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the circumstances connected with the preparation of the Petition from Harden [presented upon Thursday last], and into the genuineness of the signatures thereto."—(*Mr. Ferrand.*)

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

LANDED PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT (IRELAND) [ADVANCES] BILL.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury be authorized to direct the further Advance of One Million Pounds, out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom, for the purposes of Improvement of the Landed Property in Ireland.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

NAVAL SAVINGS BANKS BILL.

On Motion of Lord Clarence Paget, Bill for the establishment and regulation of Savings Banks for Seamen and Marines of the Royal Navy, *ordered* to be brought in by Lord Clarence Paget and Mr. Childers.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 114.]

GLEBE LANDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir James Fergusson, Bill to enable Ministers of Parishes in Scotland to let on lease, feu, or sell their Glebe Lands, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir James Fergusson, Major Walker, and Mr. M'Lagan.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 115.]

House adjourned at a quarter after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, April 20, 1866.

MINUTES.]—*Took the Oath*—The Lord Bishop of Cashel.

Public Bills—*First Reading*—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) (77).

Committee—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer (75).

Report—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment (76).

COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH (IRELAND) —LORD CHIEF JUSTICE LEFROY.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

THE MARQUESS OF CLANRICARDE said, he wished to make a brief explanation of a personal matter connected with the observations which he had felt it necessary to make on the previous evening with reference to the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland and to the learned Chief Justice who presided over that tribunal. The noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Chelmsford) had reproached him for not having given notice of his intention to make the comments which he had made respecting that learned and venerable Judge. Now, the fact was that on last Tuesday night he had crossed the House and inquired of the noble and learned Lord opposite whether he was acquainted with any member of Lord Chief Justice Lefroy's family (one of whom now sat in the other House of Parliament), and suggested that the noble and learned Lord should communicate with that hon. Gentleman on the notice he had given, in order that the discussion might be fixed for any day which might be most convenient for the friends of the learned Judge. He did not, however, receive any intimation that a postponement was desired, and therefore he was not chargeable with having given no notice of the question to which he had last night felt it his duty to call their Lordships' attention. He might also say he had mentioned that he meant to bring the matter forward to the noble Lord at the head of the Government.

LORD CHELMSFORD said, that it was quite true that the noble Marquess had mentioned to him on Tuesday evening that he purposed bringing forward that subject; but he must confess that the whole matter had escaped from his recollection—and he begged pardon for that circumstance—until he read the noble Marquess' notice on the Votes on Thursday morning. Certainly, however, there was nothing in the terms of that notice which gave the slightest intimation that the noble Marquess would make the statement he had done in regard to the Lord Chief Justice of the Irish Court of Queen's Bench. The notice stated, among other things, that he would refer to "the state of the Court of Queen's Bench," which might have been taken to mean that he would allude to the ventilation of the court, or some similar matter.

EAST INDIA MILITARY, &c., FUNDS TRANSFER BILL—(No. 75.)

(*Earl de Grey and Ripon.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Moved, That the House be now put into a Committee on the said Bill.—(*Earl de Grey and Ripon.*)

THE EARL OF ELLENBOROUGH said, he entirely approved the objects of the Bill, which was entirely in accordance with the spirit of the guarantee clause in the Act of Parliament, that the persons interested in the Military Funds of India should not suffer by the transfer of India to the Crown. Upon these grounds the present Bill was a matter of policy, because it must tend to the well-being of the social and moral condition of the army to tranquillize the minds of those who were interested in the administration of these Funds. He had no particular account of the Military Fund in Bombay. In Bengal it amounted to a very large sum. There was an unsettled account between the Government and the Fund of not less than £500,000. If the question of the exchange of India were decided in favour of the Fund, the Fund would be solvent; if otherwise, the condition of the Fund would be one of great difficulty. The Fund at Madras was decidedly solvent. He was informed that negotiations had taken place between the Directors of the Fund and the Indian Office, and that there was a disposition on the part of the Government of India to deal liberally with those interested in this Fund. It was the belief of the Government that under the Bill as it was originally laid upon the table, the Council of India would have ample power of dealing with this question. On looking at the Bill, however, he found that this would not be the case, and he had therefore prepared an Amendment enlarging the powers of the Council of India. To this Amendment he understood the noble Earl was prepared to accede. The Fund was one of the most complicated nature. It was understood by the administrators that honour, and not law, alone was to be their guide. They were, indeed, bound not to go to law, but to abide by the decision of the Court of Directors. The agents for these several Funds had, indeed, acted in the character of a friend—as the Lord Chancellor might act in the Court of Chancery in the interest of the widows and orphans who might come before the Court. Their position was thus very different from that of the Government. He thought it desirable in the first instance that the Government should make use of the existing machinery for administering the Funds, so that the claimants should not find any change in the mode of proceeding, and so that everything might be conducted in the same manner as hitherto. It must be understood that the applicants were either widows or orphans, who had often no friends to act for them, and these unfortunate persons would otherwise be compelled to employ agents of their own. He trusted that the noble Earl would adopt the existing machinery, at least for a time, until the Indian Office could form its own establishment, and until the clerks could learn the manner in which the Funds had been administered. The widows and orphans would thus find no change to their disadvantage. It was impossible in the face of what was going on not to apprehend that these Funds would be materially diminished at some future day.

Lord LYVEDEN said, he entirely agreed with the noble Earl's Amendment, and merely rose to ask his noble Friend at what time he would lay before the public his scheme of compensation to Indian Officers.

Earl DE GREY and RIPON said, he was not in a position to give an answer to his noble Friend, but he hoped to be able to do so before long. The subject was now receiving his serious attention. With respect to the Bill, he was glad to find that it met with the approbation of the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Ellenborough). It was his desire and that of the Indian Council to deal with those who were interested in the Funds in the most liberal spirit, and he agreed with the noble Earl that it was not desirable to preclude the Council from giving greater advantages to the subscribers, if upon mature investigation it should be thought reasonable to do so. He therefore accepted the noble Earl's Amendment.

Motion *agreed to:* House in Committee; an Amendment made: The Report thereof to be received on *Monday* next.

SEA FISHERIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM—REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE rose to call Attention to the last Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom; and to ask how far Her Majesty's Ministers intend to Act upon the Recommendations contained in that Report; To ask also, Whether Negotiations have been opened with France to obtain reciprocal Advantages for the Fishermen of both Nations, as advised by the Commissioners; Further to inquire whether the Government proposed to amend during the present Session the Defects of the Irish Acts relating to Oyster-beds which recent Trials have made manifest. The noble Marquess said, the Report to which he wished to call their Lordships' attention was a very remarkable document, and well worthy the consideration of the House. The Commission was issued in 1863, and the Report had been only lately made, but it presented ample evidence of the zeal and assiduity with which the Commissioners had discharged their labours. The Report was in two volumes, consisted of 1,588 pages, most of them closely printed, and 61,000 questions had been put. He regretted to say that he could not agree in all the sweeping free trade recommendations of the Commissioners, although he was glad to find that those which related to the oyster fisheries of England and Ireland had been accepted by the Government, and he hoped they would be acted upon at once. With regard to oyster fisheries, the Commissioners state that—

> "The oyster fisheries in the bays and shallow waters along the coast have everywhere been represented to us as in a state of great depression, owing to the scarcity of oysters. In many places the oysters have within the last three years almost entirely disappeared. The valuable oyster fisheries off Jersey, which between the years 1855 and 1860 gave an annual return of from £30,000 to £40,000, have, during the last three years, produced from £3,000 to £4,000 a year only. In the estuary of the Thames the greatest scarcity prevails, and the price of the native oyster has more than trebled during the last four years."

This was not merely a matter of £30,000 or £40,000, but it was one which involved a serious diminution of the food of the public; the price of oysters had trebled, and had really become quite beyond the means of the mass of the population. Their Lordships hardly knew to how great an extent fish was used on the tables of the people in this metropolis. In the Report a remarkable calculation was made which showed that very nearly as much fish was consumed in London as beef. That fact would probably astonish their Lordships. About 90,000 tons of fish were brought yearly to the metropolis, of which there were some 80,000 tons of large fish, while whiting and small fish comprised the remainder. The Commissioners, while generally averse from legislation for free fisheries, recommended very strongly that a Bill (which, however, he did not think went far enough) should be passed upon this subject. They said—

> "While we do not consider it expedient to impose any general restrictions upon the fishing of inshore oyster or mussel beds, we strongly recommend that every legislative assistance be given to individuals or corporations who may desire to form private beds for oyster or mussel culture. In doing this it will be necessary to keep two objects in view. In the first place, to provide a means by which companies or individuals may easily acquire such a title to adequate portions of the sea bottom as may make it worth their while to expend capital in stocking and tending the fishery; in the second place, to see that in so doing pre-existing rights of fishery are not unduly interfered with, and especially that the property in the sea bottom so acquired does not extend so far as to confer a virtual monopoly of the whole productive area. We are disposed to think that the most convenient course would be to empower a public Board to grant leases of the sea bottom after making proper inquiry into the circumstances of each case. Such power should only be exercised after proper notice to the public at the place proposed to be so dealt with, and with due consideration of the interests of the existing fishing population. . . And it would be more satisfactory to the public of the place where such an appropriation might be contemplated, if proceedings were commenced before the Board, and an inquiry on the spot held by them, or by persons duly authorized by them."

He should like to hear that a public Bill on the subject would be introduced very speedily, and he would suggest to the Government and to the Chairman of Committees that all Private Bills relating to oyster fisheries ought to be suspended until such a measure had been passed. There were now three or four Private Bills before Parliament affecting, he believed, the best oyster beds in the world, and the persons who had to defend their rights, and who wished to keep off those who were about to invade their grounds, would be put to great inconvenience and expense; while the Committees who were to adjudicate upon those rights could know nothing of what the public legislation on the question might soon be, and they might therefore insert regulations which might be found at variance with the general policy of the public laws. The consequence would be a contradiction and confusion which it was most desirable to avoid. It was a great hardship to the fishermen and poorer inhabitants who might be affected by the Private Bills to have to come before the Committees of Parliament when the matter might be regulated so much better by Public Bills. The greater part of the inquiries in connection with the subject ought to be conducted not in Committees of that House, but upon the spot where every means of obtaining information was at hand. A defect had been found in the Irish Fishery law which rendered some of the most important parts of it null and void. The matter to which he alluded had been brought to light on trials which had taken place in Sligo and Castlebar. It was there found that though the Board of Works had a right to grant licences, those licenses might be afterwards set aside unless the persons holding the licenses could prove that there was no public right—not at the time when the licenses were granted—but when the Act was passed. Of late years considerable sums had been invested in these speculations; but the business had been paralyzed in consequence of the decisions to which he referred, and nobody cared now to take any steps until the point in dispute was cleared up and the validity of the licenses fully established. Their Lordships who had looked at the Report must have been gratified at the general state of sea fisheries. It was, however, to him a matter of sincere regret to find that the evidence and statistics of the Irish sea fisheries laid before the Commission represented a very great falling off in the number of boats and men employed along the coast. A Return provided by the Irish Fishery Commissioners, and corrected by their last Report, showed that there were 19,883 vessels of all classes in 1845 (immediately before the famine), 15,932 in 1848 (immediately after the famine), and 9,300 in 1865: and that there were 93,073 men and boys employed in 1845, 70,011 in 1848, and 40,946 in 1865. The Return showed a diminution within the last twenty years of 10,583 boats and 52,127 men. While there had been this diminution in Ireland, in England and Scotland there had been a large increase every year. There was also a decrease in the number of vessels registered as in active employment in Ireland. In 1862 there were 2,338, and in 1865 there were only 805; and, of course, there was a similar falling off in the number of men employed. The trade of Ireland with foreign parts exhibited a similar decline. In 1862 1,105 vessels were entered inwards from foreign ports, and in 1864 only 924. It was too clear from these statements that there was a serious falling off in the trade of Ireland, and he hoped the facts would arrest the attention of the Irish Government. It could be no matter of congratulation to Ireland or the United Kingdom that in twenty years there should be a diminution in sea-going men and boys to the number of 52,000. He hoped the Government, in dealing with the recommendations of the Commissioners, would establish a close time for oysters and prevent their being taken out of season. He hoped that Bills were in preparation, and that they would be produced early.

The Earl of COURTOWN said, he was well acquainted with the oyster fisheries of Ireland, and was able to state that those fisheries which had been overfished in order to stock new beds in the estuary of the Thames and elsewhere, had been greatly improved during the last two years by the lengthening of the close season, which the Fishing Commissioners had extended two months. After the famine, very many of the Irish fishing boats were allowed to go to decay; but of late the spirits and enterprize of the fishermen had somewhat revived; many new boats had been built, and these were of a superior description to those in use before.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE said, that in Ireland there was a law for regulating the close time; but there was none in England.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY said, that the Government were fully sensible of the importance of the subject to which the noble Marquess had directed their attention. With regard to the recommendations of the Commissioners, it was impossible to give effect to more than a very few of them without coming to some understanding with the French Government respecting the alterations to be made in the existing Fisheries Convention with that Government, which would be in many respects affected by the changes which the Commissioners suggested. Negotiations had been entered into by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who had already forwarded to the French Government a copy of the Report of the Commissioners, and called attention to the recommendations contained therein, Her Majesty's Government trusted that, when the French Government had considered the subject, the two Governments might be able to come to some conclusion with regard to the recommendations made He could not, of course, say how far the French Government might be disposed to assent to them, and could only say that the matter was under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. With regard to the oyster fisheries, which, no doubt, required considerable regulation, Her Majesty's Government were prepared to give effect to the recommendations of the Commissioners; the Bill was already in preparation, and he trusted that he would be able shortly to lay it before the House. No doubt some legislation was required upon the subject; but he believed the present deficiency in the supply of oysters was consequent upon a failure in the brood, the result of natural causes with which we were unacquainted, and which it was beyond the power of legislation to correct. Yet, by regulations, the present supply might perhaps be greatly increased.

THE POOR LAW—STRAND UNION WORKHOUSE.—QUESTION.

The Marquess TOWNSHEND said, he had addressed a communication to the President of the Poor Law Board, drawing his attention to the practice of Carpet-beating in the Strand Union Workhouse, and asking him to inquire into it, and had received a reply to the effect that immediate steps were to be taken to put a stop to it. But the practice still continued; it was an abominable nuisance; it filled the air with poisonous dust, the windows of the wards were compelled to be closed when ventilation was most needed, and the noise was distressing to those who were ill. Another and a more important Question was with reference to the number of cubic feet allowed in that workhouse to the unfortunate inmates. It was hardly credible that the number of cubic feet in the infirm wards was only between 430 and 450. Even in the sick wards, where it was highly desirable that there should be sufficient space, there were only 780 feet; whereas the amount recommended by the Poor Law Board was upwards of 1,000 feet. In considering this matter it ought to be borne in mind that in the Strand Union-house only one-eighth of the number of inmates were ablebodied, the remainder being infirm. If it were not for the efforts made by the master and servants of the institution to make the inmates tolerably comfortable, things would be infinitely worse than they were. This workhouse furnished only one example of the miserable way in which the poor of the metropolis were treated. He trusted that the Poor Law Board would direct their attention to the improvement of the existing state of things. If necessary, further powers might be given to the Department in order to enable them to make proper arrangements for the poor. At all events, he trusted that attention would be at once given to the matter, and that prompt remedial measures would follow. The noble Marquess then asked Her Majesty's Government, What Explanation can be given for the Continuance of the Practice of Carpet-beating in the Strand Union Workhouse, notwithstanding the urgent Remonstrances made against it many Months since; whether any, and, if so, what Improvements have been made in the general Arrangements of the Casual Wards of that Workhouse respecting which Complaint was made at the time above-mentioned; and what Number of Cubic Feet of Air is apportioned to each Inmate of the ordinary wards of that Workhouse?

Earl GRANVILLE, in reply, said, he had received information from the Poor Law Board to the effect that the matter had been referred to the Workhouse Committee; who had stated, in reply, that no complaint had been made to the workhouse authorities either by the medical officer or any of the inmates. In reference to the second part of the Question, he might state that at the time referred to the Poor Law Board had not received any complaint on the subject of the casual wards. Since then, however, great improvements had been effected, and an extra ward added. The casual wards had also been put under the periodical inspection of the police, and three weeks ago all the arrangements appeared to be satisfactory. With regard to the number of cubic feet of air in the wards of the workhouse, he thought the noble Marquess had been misinformed as to the number of feet which the Poor Law Board deemed necessary. It was considered by them that 300 feet, and not 1,000 feet, as stated by the noble Marquess, was sufficient.

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 76.)—(*The Earl Russell.*)

REPORT OF AMENDMENTS.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

The Marquess Townshend

The Earl of LONGFORD said, that this Bill dealt with several statutes, partially repealing some and altogether repealing others, without any explanation of the provisions retained or repealed. This Bill had been undergoing alterations almost up to the present moment, and might perhaps be altered to a still greater extent before it became law. He begged to suggest that it might be worth while next Session to consider whether the portions of the statutes to be retained might not be consolidated with advantage. This Bill, he might remark, was a most important one; indeed, it was a corner-stone of our Parliamentary system.

Earl RUSSELL said, he did not know that it would be necessary either now, or at any future time, to adopt such a course as the noble Earl had suggested.

Report *agreed to:* Bill to be read 3^a on *Monday* next.

DISEASED CATTLE—THE CATTLE DISEASES ACT.—QUESTIONS.

The Duke of BUCKINGHAM, in rising to ask the Lord President a Question respecting the arrangements made by the Privy Council for the experimental treatment of animals suffering from the cattle plague, said, that as the period for which the Cattle Diseases Act was passed had nearly expired, he thought it desirable that the public should be made acquainted with the result of its operation; and as some special circumstances had been brought under his notice, he had thought it right to put this Question to his noble Friend. Under the Act of Parliament passed this Session compulsory powers were given to slaughter all animals infected with the disease, and also animals which might have come in contact with them; and these powers had been delegated to the local authorities. The object was of course to put an end to the disease, or, in other words, to "stamp it out." The result had been that the disease was stamped out in certain districts, though at the cost of a considerable sacrifice of that description of property. The Act also gave power for the retention of cattle for experimental treatment — a most valuable power, no doubt, if properly exercised, with care that such animals were kept in proper places where the existence would not affect the cattle of other owners. It had recently been communicated to the magistrates of the Buckinghamshire Quarter Sessions, who had been exercising the powers for the compulsory slaughter of cattle, that without any notice to them certain cattle had been retained for treatment under very dangerous circumstances. It was stated, and stated correctly, that an Order in Council had been issued, which did not, however, appear in the *Gazette*, giving the power to retain animals for experimental treatment. And power was vested in the Privy Council, who had vested it in local authorities, who had again delegated it to certain individuals. It appeared to be the fact that ten animals were being treated in a yard from which the drainage ran into a neighbourhood where it was feared its effects might prove injurious. This yard was also in close proximity to a high road, and was not a place that would have been selected by the local authorities for the treatment of diseased animals. The people of the neighbourhood had no objection to experimental treatment when it seemed to offer a chance of saving animals; but they objected to the place in which such treatment had been applied to those ten animals. It would appear that those animals had been treated under the authority of the Royal Commissioners; and he, therefore, wished to ask the Lord President, What Arrangements have been made by the Privy Council for the experimental Treatment of Animals suffering from Cattle Plague, under the provisions of the Cattle Diseases Act; how many animals have been or now are under Treatment; and whether the Assent of the Local Authorities of the District had been obtained in such Cases, or any Communication made to them?

EARL GRANVILLE had not had an opportunity of communicating with the Royal Commissioners on the subject of the noble Duke's question. The Government had transferred the whole matter of such experiments to the Royal Commissioners, and had given them authority for the purpose of conducting their investigations. Very eminent men were on the Commission, and they had been conducting their inquiries with great assiduity. The Commissioners had thought it better not to communicate to the Government the results of particular experiments, but intended to reserve all for one Report, which, he believed, would be ready by the end of next month. That Report might make it necessary for the Government to order further experiments; but, at present, they thought it better to leave the matter in the hands of the Commissioners. Some applications had been made by individuals for permission to make experiments. Only two of those applications were of any importance. One was from Mr. Nicholls in Scotland; but the Privy Council did not think the case was one for exceptional powers, and they were confirmed in that opinion by the Secretary of the Aberdeen Association, which had shown such remarkable zeal in respect of the cattle disease. The other was from Baron Rothschild, and their Lordships were no doubt aware that Mr. Worms' treatment had been tried on animals belonging to that hon. Gentleman; but, from the information which had been received by the Privy Council, they were not led to believe that Mr. Worms' treatment was of a successful character. Unless the strongest grounds were laid for the application it would be impossible to give particular individuals a permission which was refused to the farmers generally. He would make inquiry of the Royal Commissioners on the subject of the case brought under their Lordships' notice by the noble Duke.

THE MARQUESS OF BATH said, he desired to call the attention of their Lordships to an inconvenience under the Orders of the 24th of March. In them a most valuable provision was contained in Schedule C, by which no licence for the removal of cattle could be granted unless the owner of the cattle made a declaration that they had been on his farm for twenty eight days. There could be no objection to that; but the inconvenience arose in the case of calves, as the farmers had been in the habit of moving them at seven or eight days' old:—so that the Order now necessitated the killing of calves, as the farmers could not keep them. He should suggest that if any amended Orders were issued the point should be considered.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON said, he understood the noble Duke who put the Question to say that in the case he referred to the Order had never appeared in the *Gazette*. Under the Act it was necessary it should be so published, otherwise it was valueless.

EARL GRANVILLE said, the observation of the noble Earl involved a legal point, but he did not think it was ever intended that a separate Order in Council should be made and published in the *Gazette* for each cow that had to be experimentally treated.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON said, he did not suggest that, but the General Order affecting the retention of cattle for experimental treatment he understood had not been published. There was another point. He did not see in the Act any authority vested in the Privy Council to delegate to the Royal Commissioners or to any person their permissive power in respect to animals coming under the operation of the Act.

House adjourned at half past Six o'clock, to Monday next, Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, April 20, 1866.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—On Trade in Animals *nominated.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Resolutions* [April 19] *reported* — Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) [Advances].

Ordered—Forsyth's Indemnity*, read 1°, 2°, *committed, considered* in Committee, *reported*, read 3°, and *passed;* Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) [Advances].*

First Reading—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) * [117]; Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) [Advances] * [118].

Second Reading—Representation of the People [68], adjourned debate *resumed*, and again *adjourned.*

Special Report of Select Committee—On Contagious Diseases * (No. 200).

Committee—Exchequer and Audit Departments (*re-comm.*) [79] [R.P.]; Local Government Supplemental * [107].

Report—Contagious Diseases * [78]; Local Government Supplemental * [107].

Considered as amended—Cattle Assurance * [90]; Customs Duties (Isle of Man) * [91]; Prosecution Expenses * [28].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being informed by Mr. Speaker, that he had received notice that a Commission to give Her Majesty's Royal Assent to certain Acts of Parliament is ordered for this day, and that, being disabled from attending with the House in the House of Peers, he should be obliged, by permission of the House, to withdraw before the arrival of the Usher of the Black Rod,

MR. WALPOLE said, that some years ago provision was made for the compulsory absence of the Speaker by a Resolution which enabled a Deputy Speaker to be appointed to discharge the duties of the office for the time contemplated by that Resolution. That Resolution had been acted upon recently during the illness of the Speaker, in consequence of an unfortunate accident which they must all regret. The House by Resolution could enable Mr. Speaker, not merely for the whole evening, as contemplated by the Standing Orders, but for any limited time to vacate the Chair whenever an occasion rendering such a course desirable should occur. A Commission was about to be held by command of Her Majesty in the House of Lords, and in order to enable the Speaker to vacate the Chair and to obviate his attendance in the other House he would move a Resolution to that effect, at the same time mentioning to the House that the Speaker did not absent himself from the Chair more than was absolutely necessary, and that directly the Royal Assent had been given to the Bills in the other House, the Speaker would resume his position in the Chair.

Resolved, That during the temporary absence of Mr. Speaker from the House, this day, for the reason stated by him, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means do take the Chair as Deputy Speaker, and do attend with the House in the House of Peers, and do report to the House the Royal Assent to the said Acts.—(*Mr. Walpole.*)

MEMBERS' APPROPRIATION OF SEATS IN THE HOUSE.—QUESTION.

MAJOR STUART KNOX wished, as a Member of that House, to ask the Speaker, Whether he had not a right to put a question upon a matter affecting the privilege of the Members. In the course of the debate during the last two or three days Gentlemen had come in the House at about twenty minutes to four o'clock, and, after putting tickets in the backs of the seats, they had placed their hats in the seats they wished to occupy for the remainder of the evening. During their absence an Officer of the House, with great courtesy he would say, had taken those hats away, and left their owners to seek for them in the lobby. He wished to ask, whether this course had been pursued in consequence of the orders of the Speaker, and whether it was right that Members of the House of Commons should be treated in that way?

MR. HUNT stated, that previous to the present Session he had always understood that it was a rule of the House that papers or cards might not be left by Members on the Benches in order to preserve certain seats, but if they left their hats, it was sufficient evidence that they were in or about the House. That being the case, hon. Members were allowed to retain the places where the hats were left provided they were taken up just previous to the time of prayers. That day he had had the misfortune to be serving on a Committee upstairs, and being anxious to secure a seat he had come down and placed his hat, in the shape of a representative, on the seat which he usually occupied. Having done that, he returned to his duties, and about twenty minutes before four o'clock he came to the House in time for prayers, intending to take his hat and his seat, and found, to his great astonishment, his hat in the possession of the Doorkeeper, and another Gentleman in his place. Now, if the old rule were to be infringed upon and hon. Members serving upon Committees could not leave anything in the House by which they could preserve their seats, it would come to this, that the idlers of the House would be able to obtain seats during the debates, while the working men would be debarred from doing so. He could not believe that that would be the wish of the House, and he also thought that some courtesy should be shown to those who spent a great part of their time in the Committee-rooms upstairs. If that rule should not be adhered to, Members would not be willing to serve on Committees.

MR. LOCKE KING likewise complained of the inconvenience to which he had been subjected by the infringement of this rule of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Some years ago the House made an Order to the effect that the only mode of securing a seat for the evening should be for Members to be in attendance at the time of Prayers. It was found that great inconvenience resulted from leaving a glove or a book in order to secure a place, because it might be removed inadvertently, or by accident, and the consequence was disagreeable discussions between hon. Members. The Order of the House is that the only way to secure a seat shall be by attendance at prayers, and that then a card shall be placed at the back of the seat. I have given no further order or direction upon the subject. Questions were put to me in the course of last Session, and I asked the Serjeant-at-Arms whether he conceived that he had authority to issue directions under the Order adopted by the House? He said he conceived that he had; and he has in the exercise of his discretion given instructions which give effect to the Order in the manner intended by the House. Of course, it is entirely in the power of the House to make any further Order it may think suitable for the general convenience of Members.

MR. SANDFORD complained that he left his hat on a seat that day, while he went to the table to get a card for the back of his seat, and when he returned from the table he found that his hat had been removed. He thought if such directions as had been complained of had been given by the Serjeant-at-Arms he was guilty of a great dereliction of duty—and that some further instructions ought to be given to the Serjeant-at-Arms to prevent the recurrence of such a thing.

SIR LAWRENCE PALK stated that, under the present arrangements, it was really impossible for Members to secure seats in the House when engaged upon Committees. The accommodation was inadequate. Now that the House was about to enter on what appeared likely to be a long series of debates, it was important that the Representatives of larger and important interests should be enabled to hear, and, if they desired it, to take part in them. Various important suggestions had been made on the point, but the reply generally was that so large a sum of money had been expended on the inconvenient House in which they were sitting that the outlay necessary to make further alterations in it could not be afforded. He thought it better, however, that it should be at once acknowledged that an error in the construction of the House had been committed, and that it was expedient it should in some way be so enlarged as to furnish a decent amount of space for the accommodation of Members.

NOTTINGHAM TOWN ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Sir Robert Juckes Clifton, baronet, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Nottingham.

That Samuel Morley, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Nottingham.

That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions :—

That Sir Robert Juckes Clifton was, by himself and by others on his behalf, guilty of undue influence at the last Election :

That Samuel Morley, esquire, was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery at the last Election :

That Charles Paget, esquire, was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery at the last Election :

That it was proved to the Committee that Joseph Richard Whitchurch and William Calah, junior, were bribed by William Marriott, with the knowledge of Sir Robert Juckes Clifton's Agent, by the corrupt payment of excessive travelling expenses to vote for Sir Robert Juckes Clifton :

That the said bribery was practised without the knowledge and consent of the said Sir Robert Juckes Clifton.

That at the last Election for the said Borough an excessive number of persons were employed on behalf of Messrs. Paget and Morley as messengers, canvassers, and protectors from violence.

That in three wards alone, out of seven, nearly 200 Voters were so employed by Messrs. Paget and Morley, who received from their agents sums varying in amount from 15 shillings to £4 10 shillings.

That amongst the Voters so paid were John Flint, George Fish, John Campion, John Foster, Charles Taylor, James Wright, Jesse Chambers, Thomas Selby, Edward Claypole, William Evans, George Hudson, Thomas Hooton, Edward Wheatley, Henry Mayfield, Thomas Chetwin, John Hillary.

That Henry Merrin was bribed by William Milner (junior), by the promise of £4 for his own vote, and the vote of his father, Frederick Merrin, to vote for Messrs. Paget and Morley, which sum he afterwards received :

That some of the Voters were allowed to continue their usual work during all the time of their employment, but nevertheless were paid at the same rate as those who attended all day; some were so old and infirm as to be incapable of rendering any efficient service ; some were paid for a larger number of days than that for which they were engaged, or during which they were in attendance, while none of them were proved to the Committee to have rendered adequate services or work for the payment which they received :

That it was not proved to the satisfaction of the Committee that this colourable and extensive employment of Voters was with the knowledge and assent of Messrs. Paget and Morley, who, while leaving the conduct of the Election entirely in the hands of their committees, appeared to have implicitly relied on their discretion and judgment :

That your Committee are not of opinion that bribery in the form of direct money payments extensively prevailed at the last Election for the Borough of Nottingham :

That no such case of general riot at the last Election for the said Borough has been proved as would make the said Election altogether null and void on that account;

That violent and tumultuous proceedings took place at the last Election for the Borough of Nottingham, and on the day of polling especially bands of men armed with sticks, and others on behalf of Sir Robert Juckes Clifton, by committing serious outrages on the property and persons of the inhabitants, created an alarm which was not without its influence on the result of the Election :

That the state of excitement and alarm which prevailed immediately before and at the Election afforded an apparently justifiable pretext for the hiring and payment by the Agents of Messrs. Paget and Morley of an excessive number of Voters, under the colourable pretence of employing them in carrying on the machinery of the Election, and the protection of the supporters of Messrs. Paget and Morley, which, in the opinion of the Committee, led to a practice so extensive in its application and demoralising in its effects, as well as unjustifiable and illegal :

That, in the opinion of the Committee, corrupt practices have not extensively prevailed at the last Election for the Borough of Nottingham.

Report to lie upon the Table.

CHAPLAINS IN THE ARMY.

QUESTION.

GENERAL **DUNNE** said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, If it be true that the Chaplains in the Army are not paid until their pay is three months in arrear ; and, if so, why they are subject to an inconvenience to which no other class of Officers is subject, and if a promise which it is said has been made to remove it will be carried into effect, and when ?

THE MARQUESS OF **HARTINGTON** said, in reply, that the practice had hitherto been that chaplains in the army should draw their pay in the same manner as staff officers did, when their pay was three months in arrear. In February this year it was arranged that chaplains in the army should, if they thought proper, receive their pay when one month was in arrear. It had always been the system that staff officers should draw their pay in arrear instead of in advance, and there did not seem to him to be any grievance in that respect. The only objection to remove the ground of complaint was that to do so it would be necessary to provide in some one year a larger sum of money.

EXHAUSTION OF THE COAL FIELDS.

QUESTION.

MR. **LIDDELL** said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department, Whether the attention of the Government has been directed to the rapid exhaustion of our Coal-fields; whether they are in possession of accurate information upon the subject which they are prepared to lay upon the table of the House; and, if not, whether they are prepared to direct that further scientific research be made into this vitally important question?

SIR GEORGE GREY: Sir, the attention of the Government, in common with most other persons, has been directed to the alleged rapid exhaustion of our coal-fields, and the statements made with regard to the probable time of their duration. But the Government is not in possession of any accurate information on the subject. I am not aware that any person is in possession of information which may be called certain and accurate, but the Geological Survey Department has furnished a good deal of information on the subject, and upon this information I believe some of the statements which have been made are founded. The Government are not at present aware that any advantage would be derived from instituting an inquiry independent of the Geological Survey Department.

INDIA—DELHI PRIZE MONEY.

QUESTION.

GENERAL DUNNE said, he wished to ask the Vice President of the Board of Trade, Why the instalment of the Delhi Prize Money which has been last distributed in India has not also been distributed to the Troops in this Country?

MR. MONSELL said, in reply, that when the rolls for the third distribution of the Delhi prize money arrived at the India Office they were immediately sent to the Prize Court, where they arrived on the 5th of April, and without delay were sent to the Committee to investigate claims and distribute the money.

THE GERMAN EMIGRANT SHIP "HERTHA."—QUESTION.

LORD BURGHLEY said, he wished to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council, By whose authority the German Ship *Hertha*, with Emigrants for New York, was removed, on the 23rd of January last, from Spithead to the Motherbank, in consequence of an epidemic sickness existing among the Emigrants; what is the nature of that epidemic, and what became of the bodies of those who died while the ship was lying at the Motherbank; whether it is true that upwards of fourteen deaths occurred at the Motherbank, and upwards of forty on the passage from Bremen to Spithead; what is the tonnage of the *Hertha*, the number of passengers and crew, and if there was a medical officer on board; how many invalids were left in the Quarantine Hulk after the departure of the *Hertha;* and whether the Government will, in consequence of the greatly increased population of the town of Ryde and of the adjoining village of Binstead, in addition to the number of houses lately built on the Isle of Wight shore opposite to the Hulk, give orders for the removal of the Quarantine Hulk more to the westward, to Newtown, or to some other place where there is no large amount of resident population?

MR. H. A. BRUCE: Sir, the *Hertha* was chartered by the New York and Hamburg Steam Shipping Company. She sailed from Hamburg with a large number of German emigrants. When she was lying at Spithead, it was found that some of the passengers were suffering from epidemic sickness. Mr. Baker, who is Russian Vice Consul at Portsmouth, and agent to the above-named Company, after consultation with the Admiral Superintendent of the dockyard at Portsmouth, ordered the *Hertha* to be removed from Spithead to the Motherbank, in order that she might have a quieter berth. The epidemics under which the passengers were suffering were small pox (of which none died), diphtheria, and typhus. The bodies of those that died were sown up in new canvas, with iron bars attached, and were buried at a red buoy on the Motherbank, in six fathoms of water (dead low water, spring tides). This red buoy is about one mile and three-quarters from the shore, and about two miles from Ryde Pier. Thirteen deaths from diphtheria (all young children) and one from typhus occurred at the Motherbank; it is not known how many died on the passage from Bremen to Spithead. It is believed about thirty. The tonnage of the *Hertha* is 870 tons. The number of her passengers and crew, 270. There was a surgeon on board, who was assisted by another medical man from Portsmouth. Seven invalids and twenty-one members of their families were left in the quarantine hulk after the departure of the *Hertha.* The Government are advised that the present position of the quarantine hulk is the best that can be found. It is one mile and three-quarters from the shore, in a well sheltered situation with good anchorage; the prevalent winds are south and south-west, which would oppose infection reaching the Isle of Wight. He would undertake that careful inquiries should be made, but he could not hold out any hope of the anchorage of the hulk being changed.

METROPOLIS—FINSBURY PARK.

QUESTION.

Mr. M'CULLAGH TORRENS said, he would beg to ask the hon. Member for Bath, When the purchase is likely to be completed by the Metropolitan Board of Works of the 250 acres of land they were empowered to buy and appropriate for Finsbury Park by the Act of 1857; and whether they have agreed to sell, for building purposes, twenty acres out of the 120 acres now possessed by them, contrary to the intention of the Act referred to?

Mr. TITE, in reply, said, the Metropolitan Board of Works had purchased 120 acres, at a sum of £24,000, for the purposes of the Act. With respect to the disposal of that land, they had not parted with any portion of it whatever or in any manner. No such arrangement as stated had been come to with respect to the twenty acres referred to by his hon. Friend.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.

QUESTION.

Lord ROBERT MONTAGU said, he rose to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether the Government have any intention to introduce a Bill to amend the Public Health Acts, and whether it will contain any Clauses which deal with the pollution of rivers, in accordance with the recent Report of the Commissioners?

Mr. H. A. BRUCE said, in reply, that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for amending the Public Health Acts very shortly; but it would not deal with the pollution of rivers. The Commissioners only presented their Report on the Thames River a few days ago. The more difficult inquiry into the waters of the

manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire was not completed, and till it was completed no general measure on the subject would be satisfactorily considered.

THE DANUBIAN PRINCIPALITIES.

QUESTION.

Mr. SANDFORD said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Conference at Paris on the subject of the Danubian Provinces has been broken up, and for what reason; and if the Government will lay upon the table of the House the Papers relating to the proceedings of the Conference?

Mr. LAYARD, in reply, said, the Conference at Paris on the subject of the Danubian provinces had not broken up. They continued to sit from time to time, and while they did so it would be obviously improper to lay on the table any Papers relating to the proceedings of the Conference.

THE SMOKE NUISANCE.

QUESTION.

Sir ROBERT PEEL said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department a Question with reference to the pledge given by him before the Easter recess as to the introduction of a Bill on the subject of the nuisance resulting from the Smoke of Furnaces in Towns and Country districts?

Sir GEORGE GREY: Sir, I have addressed a circular letter to some of the largest towns in the Kingdom with reference to the subject which my right hon. Friend brought before the House. The result of the answers which I have received is that in every one of those towns in different parts of the country there is power on the part of the local authorities to prevent the nuisance arising from the smoke of furnaces, but there is a great diversity in the mode in which the law is enforced? [Sir Robert Peel: What law?] The law requiring the consumption of smoke or preventing nuisances arising from smoke. There is a great laxity in the course possessed by some of the authorities in the institution of prosecutions against persons violating the law. I shall lay on the table a copy of that circular letter, and I may add that a Bill is in preparation by my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council, one of the objects of which will be to provide some summary mode of proceeding by which in the matter of the nuisance of smoke and other nuisances local authorities may be compelled to do their duty.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

IRISH RECORDS.

QUESTION.

GENERAL DUNNE said, he rose to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Building intended for the Records of Ireland has been finished, and when they will be placed there; and further, what measures was to be taken by the Government for editing and publishing such Records, and to move for a Copy of the Treasury Minute on the subject? He urged the propriety of removing to Ireland all Records properly belonging to that country, and pointed out that but a small sum had been expended on Irish Records compared with that expended in England and Scotland.

MR. CHILDERS, in reply, said, the Irish Record buildings had just been completed at a cost of £36,000. The architect of the Board of Works had had the advantage of seeing the arrangements at the Record Office in Chancery Lane, and it was believed that the Board of Works had availed themselves fully of every suggestion which the experience of the Record officers there had enabled them to offer, both as regards security and facility of reference. The space provided in the building would afford ample accommodation for all the public Records now dispersed over different offices in Dublin, with a due allowance for their increase in future years. These were first the legal Records in charge of the Master of the Rolls, and appertaining to the Courts of Chancery and Common Law, the Prerogative, Probate, and Admiralty Courts—they were now for the most part in the Four Court Buildings; secondly, the State papers and public Records, such as those of the Irish Parliament and Privy Council—these were now in the Birmingham Tower at the Castle; thirdly, the Landed Property Records—these were now in the lower part of the Custom House. Besides these were valuable documents in the Registry of Deeds and the Registrar General's Office, which, after a lapse of years, might be considered as Records. In 1864 Mr. Hardy, the Deputy Keeper of the English Records, and Mr. Brewer made a valuable Report on this subject, recommending a careful examination of all papers before their transfer, and the weeding out of those absolutely useless. They were also of opinion that the Records should be, as in England, placed in charge of the Master of the Rolls, with a Deputy Keeper under him. On this point the Treasury had communicated with the Irish Government with a view to the necessary Bill being prepared to transfer the different Records. The Records now in the office of the Rolls could be removed at once, and preparations had been already made for their removal. He hoped to bring in a Bill this year for the other Records, and, as it would take some time to weed them out and also to transfer from the Rolls, Records, no time would have been lost. As to his hon. and gallant Friend's second question, calendars had already been made, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, of a portion of the Patent and Close Rolls. The formation of calendars of the other Records would be one of the first duties of the new Consolidated Department.

AFFAIRS OF ROUMANIA.

QUESTION.

MR. DARBY GRIFFITH said, he would beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is the intention of the British Government to oppose the desire which has been manifested by the people of Roumania, to elect Prince Charles of Hohenzollern Sigmaringen as their ruling prince? The question was one which affected the happiness of a kingdom and the tranquillity of Europe. Some time before Easter he had called the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the part the right hon. Gentleman took in 1858, in regard to the future prosperity of these people, then called Wallachians and Moldavians, but now designated by a more generic name. At that time, before his attention was occupied with more pressing matters, the right hon. Gentleman had succeeded by his intervention in procuring the suppression of the arrangement for the separation of the two provinces, which was provided by the Treaty of 1856; and by the Convention of 1858 these people were allowed to choose their own form of Government. They agreed to unite, and the Conference of Paris had acknowledged them. The question now was, whether the wishes of the people were to be superseded by a Conference sitting at Paris, or whether, having shown good grounds for obtaining that which they desired, their wishes were to be permitted to take effect. He hoped his hon. Friend would be able to give a satisfactory answer.

MR. LAYARD said, it was obvious that a question affecting a matter in which so many European Powers had a right to take part could not be answered on the part of the British Government alone; but he might say that the treaties on this subject bound the great Powers of Europe, in conjunction with Turkey, to provide for the election of a native prince.

ELECTORAL RETURNS.—QUESTION.

MR. HUNT said, he wished to ask the President of the Poor Law Board, When the Returns moved for by the hon. Member for Lincolnshire will be laid upon the table of the House? The order for making the Returns which related to the electoral statistics of counties was made on the 16th and 21st of last month. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Poor Law Board was asked last night when the Returns would be ready, and he was reported to have said that the clerks of the unions were not obliged to make those Returns, and that unless some remuneration were given for the extra labour it was not very certain when they would be laid upon the table. It appeared to him that the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman would act as a direct suggestion to the clerks of the unions to take their time in preparing the Returns. He was sure that the Returns would contain much valuable information without which it was impossible fairly to discuss the Franchise Bill. In his opinion, when the House ordered Returns of this kind to be made it pledged itself to vote any money that might be required to insure their being made within a reasonable time, and under such circumstances he did not think it would be unreasonable that some remuneration should be given to the clerks of unions who were engaged in making up the Returns asked for. He therefore wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether he would promise to make some remuneration to those employed in the matter, provided the Returns were made within a reasonable time?

MR. C. P. VILLIERS repudiated the idea that he had intended by the answer he gave last night to throw out a suggestion to the clerks of unions to delay the Returns. His statement last night was identical with that which he had made on two previous occasions — namely, that the parochial officers were under no obligation to make these Returns, which had no bearing upon, nor connection with, their official duties, and the only reason they had been asked to draw them up was because they happened accidentally to have in their possession the particular books from which the Returns were obtained. When Government desired the Returns which had already been laid upon the table to be made, some remuneration was given, in order to accelerate their progress. As he had already informed the hon. Gentleman during the evening, he had inquired whether there was any precedent for the House voting money for Returns moved for by a private Member, and he had found a precedent for such a proceeding. He had also told the hon. Member that so far from there having been any unnecessary delay in the production of these Returns, 164 of them had been made already. In reply to the Question of the hon. Gentleman, he would now say that an arrangement would be made with the clerks of the unions to remunerate them for their labour in the matter on the same scale as that given in the case of the Government Returns.

MR. DISRAELI said, that very great anxiety existed throughout the country generally in reference to these Returns, as it was believed that the alterations in the county suffrage proposed by the Franchise Bill were more considerable than those to be made in the borough franchise. As Government had supplied full information with regard to the electoral statistics of boroughs, perhaps they would not think it an unreasonable request that further information should be given with regard to the electoral statistics of counties. He was perfectly satisfied with the explanation given by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Poor Law Board, as he understood from his statement that the Government had made up their minds that, before the House went into Committee upon the Franchise Bill—if they ever did arrive at that stage of the Bill—the fullest statistical information should be laid upon the table with reference to the county franchise.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER could assure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire that every effort would be made by the Government to insure the Returns being laid upon the table of the House within a reasonable time The right hon. Gentleman was mistaken in his assumption that the answer of his right hon. Friend contained anything like a pledge that the progress of the Bill would in any way depend upon the time when the Returns were made. But he hoped that no such difficulty would arise and that a complete Return, or a Return as nearly complete as circumstances would permit, would be made. He also wished to demur to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northamptonshire, as one likely to lead to dangerous consequences if it were supposed that whenever the House had ordered a Return to be made on the Motion of a private Member it must be considered pledged to remunerate those engaged in making such Returns. In his opinion each particular case must stand upon its own merits, and no general rule should be adopted in the matter. It had been the practice for the House to order from public officers of many classes Returns which were not subjects of special remuneration, and which were yet not subjects of statutory obligation. That might be considered a customary right exercised in the public interests, and he did not think that they should be justified in altogether changing the custom, as otherwise no Return could be ordered on the Motion of a private Member until its cost had been estimated. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by withdrawing his Motion for going into Committee of Supply.

SIR LAWRENCE PALK said, that the statement made by the President of the Poor Law Board last night was to the effect that unless some remuneration were given to the parochial officers it was very doubtful when the Returns would be made. He thought that in a case of such importance as the present, where the votes of some hon. Members might be determined by the result of the Returns, the Government should make it their business to procure the information as speedily as possible, and to award the remuneration that might be found necessary to insure the result. The Government had granted remuneration from the public purse in the case of the boroughs when they required the information for their own purposes, and it did appear to him to be unfair that a similar course should be refused in the case of Returns which were ordered by a unanimous vote of the House.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[BILL 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING.

DEBATE RESUMED. FIFTH NIGHT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was—

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

HON. F. LEVESON GOWER said, he did not often trouble the House, and would not detain them long on the present occasion, but having, ever since he had enjoyed the honour of a seat in that House, always professed himself out of doors in favour of an extension of the franchise, brought about by the reduction of the electoral qualification, and having never spoken upon the subject in that House, he was unwilling to let this discussion close without taking some part in it. Nothing had so impressed him throughout it as the inadequate manner in which the Amendment of his noble Friend (Earl Grosvenor) represented the views of those who supported it; and in fact the measure of the Government had formed the chief subject of the discussion. Hon. Members in succession had denounced the measure in the strongest terms, it had been pointed out as the first step in the downward career towards democracy, and the right hon. Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley) had described it as a measure for the suppression of the agricultural element in county elections. It appeared to him, however, rather remarkable, that those who ascribed to the measure such a pernicious character should not have met it with a direct proposal of rejection, and should be satisfied with merely voting for an Amendment, which, in the words of his noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley),

> "Does not even express disapproval of the provisions of this Bill, if the opportunity had been given of dealing with the question as a whole."

The Amendment plainly implied that the Government proposal was part of a larger scheme which might meet with approval; and therefore he was unable to conceive how those who were opposed to the whole principle of extension by a reduction of the franchise could vote for it. The hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh), in a statement made to his constituents, had expressed regret that the Government proposition had not been met by a direct refusal; and at the same time explained his reasons for voting with Lord Russell at the time of Earl Derby's Reform Bill. The hon. Gentleman said that he voted for it not because he was in favour of an extension of the suffrage, but as a piece of Parliamentary tactics designed to get rid of Earl Derby's Reform Bill. He (Mr. L. Gower) would not stop to ask whether such a course was morally justifiable, but he thought that those who adopted it should fully explain their reasons for so doing, or the decisions of the House might be exposed to public censure, and Members might lay themselves open to a charge of insincerity. With respect to the topics raised by the Amendments of his noble Friend (Earl Grosvenor), they had had little discussion. That might be owing to the very able speech of his noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn, and certainly it was a tribute to that speech to say, that no argument of the slightest force had since been stated which was not to be found in that speech. He had not since heard one single argument that had not been put forward by his noble Friend. What was the course taken by his noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho)? He had adopted the unusual course of repeating *seriatim* the objections of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn. This course appeared to him (Mr. L. Gower) to be an inconvenient one, because it tended to prolong their debates to an unnecessary length, and in this case especially not required, because any arguments urged by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn were sure to be heard by the House with attention, and did not require to be repeated by other hon. Members. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) towards the end of his speech compared the course pursued by the Government to that of an architect "who in building a palace began building it room by room without an estimate or general plan." He (Mr. L. Gower) would illustrate his view by a somewhat similar comparison. He thought that the conduct of the Government resembled that of a builder, who had been entrusted with the repair and enlargement of a farm, but who said that he had not men or time to complete the job at once, but that in the first year he would renew the farm-house, and that in the second year he would repair the farm-buildings. He regarded that as an apt illustration of the course taken by the Government. But the tenant-farmer, who was a cautious and prudent man, might be represented by the hon. Member for Bridgewater (Mr. Kinglake), and he would say, "I will assent to the rebuilding of the house, but I should like to have a plan of it and of the farm-buildings." Well, he (Mr. L. Gower) would suppose the builder ready to give plans, though he maintained that the two undertakings were quite disconnected, and that it would be more convenient to proceed with them separately. He put that forth as an illustration of his view of the case. The two plans of the Government were not to be regarded as similar to the items of a Budget, where they could not vote one without affecting the other: in this case no such alternative existed. He thought the question depended on the grounds on which the extension of the franchise was advocated. If the question were as to the fitness of those to whom it was proposed to extend the franchise, the redistribution of seats had nothing to do with it — it was an entirely different matter. He was ready to support the Government measure for the extension of the franchise, because he believed that those to whom they proposed to give it were equal in intelligence, and con-

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duct, and political knowledge, to those who were £10 householders at the time of the Reform Bill. In what way can the fitness for the franchise of an householder in Leeds depend upon whether Honiton or Middlesborough returned a Member to Parliament? The subjects of the extension of the franchise and of the redistribution of seats were entirely distinct. He must say he thought the class argument a dangerous one, and regretted that it had been introduced into the discussion. Many of the objections against the Bill started with the assumption that there was a political antagonism of classes. Now he (Mr. L. Gower) did not believe that there was any such antagonism in this country. In countries where some classes enjoyed, or rather were cursed with, privileges at the expense of other classes, class antagonism might exist; and even in England in former times there might have been some such antagonism, but it had ceased to exist in consequence of the cessation of class legislation; and indeed it was a very remarkable circumstance that, since the abolition of Protection, there had been no such antagonism manifested. The House had been frequently reminded of the existence of trades unions, and the attitude of working men as to strikes. Upon that subject he would beg to refer to a speech made by Mr. Roden, a manager of some large works in the Potteries, who had under his control several thousands of working men, and who had also had some experience of strikes. Mr. Roden used these words at a public meeting,—Nobody "would accuse him of any particular partiality to trades unions; but still he must say, that it appeared to him that working men had a right to combine for their own protection as much as the employers had; and the real question was, whether they should endeavour to deprive working men of their political rights?" It had been said that if the working men could make their organizations for trade purposes, they might do so to obtain political objects; but then the truth was, that they differed among themselves as much as the members of any other class, with regard to political questions, and would take different sides. The question as to wages was different, because all working men, whether Churchmen, Dissenters, teetotallers, or what not, had a common interest in obtaining a rise in wages; but their feelings on political matters differed, and they would no more combine than any other class. This would be met, however, by the assertion that they would do so, not for general purposes, but in order to pass some communistic law. In opposition to this it should be remembered, that the duties of Government were various. If they were confined to taxation, it might be fairly urged that the working classes would probably combine for the relief of their class; but the endless subjects with which Parliament and Government had to deal would insure diversity of judgment among the workmen as they exercised the franchise. If the probability were admitted, however, of their combining with a view to obtain some general object, such as the subdivision of land, founded as their schemes would be on unsound views, and opposed as they would be to the whole of the intelligence and wealth of the country, it could not but be admitted that even their smallest possible chance of success would be as remote as the scheme itself would be extravagant. The next question to which he would advert was, as to the supposed danger of treating the question of the franchise first, and that of the redistribution of seats subsequently. It was said that, if the first measure passed, a more democratic Parliament would be left to deal with the other. It must, however, be borne in mind, that they could not in any event control future legislation; and for himself he believed that future Parliaments would take much the same views as those that had preceded them in reference to great and important questions. It would then as now be formed by the force of public opinion. He heard the other day the hon. Member for Dublin (Mr. Pim) bring forward this view as a reason against any change. He (Mr. L. Gower) adduced it as a reason why the change should not be feared. There were also many details of legislation in reference to which a closer communication with a great number of their countrymen would, he believed, effectually improve legislation. In a popular constituency he formerly represented there were many non-electors addicted to politics; and when he expressed a hope that they would communicate with him more freely, the answer was that they did not like to do so, because they were not electors; and he must say that he thought that it would be a very great gain, by enlarging the constituency, to enlarge the information at the service of Members. There was this advantage also, that the franchise would give this class a greater cause to take an interest in political questions. He did not for a moment pretend that hon. Members opposite were not as sincerely anxious to promote the welfare of the working classes as were Members on his own side; for his opinion was, that every Gentleman in the House had at heart the wish to raise and elevate the working classes, but they distrusted them politically. Many hon. Members had, during the discussion, paid their tribute of praise to them; but he could not help saying, that however satisfactory their compliments might be to the working men, the value of that tribute would have been enhanced if a little more confidence had been shown in them. He confessed that they might well feel as he should, if a person were to show him great civility in the street but never asked him to his house. He thought that he had said enough to show that he was sincere upon this question. His noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) had brought an accusation of insincerity against Members sitting behind the Treasury Benches by saying, that they thought one way and would vote another, and that some of them would square with their constituency by voting for the second reading, intending to get rid of it hereafter. He, for himself, could only say that he knew nothing of that feeling, and he did not think that such accusations ought to be made, especially as, however undeserved they were, they were incapable of refutation. There was no doubt that when a great measure like this was brought forward there must be a difference of opinion, and that some hon. Members who voted for it might have misgivings as to its consequences; but this was not sufficient to found a charge against them of dishonesty. Notwithstanding such misgivings, they might feel the importance of settling this question, for they might know that, so long as it remained unsettled, agitation would continue, and that it was utterly impossible that the question could be settled by hon. Members opposite. The delusion that had existed as to the country being indifferent to the matter was now entirely dissolved. No one could now doubt that the feeling of the country had been shown on this occasion more than on the previous ones. If hon. Members opposite tried to settle the question, they would certainly fail; and then a Liberal Government would have to bring in a more extensive measure. He would conclude by pointing out to those Liberal Members who were still undecided as to the manner in which they should vote, that they would incur a serious responsibility by throwing out this measure. Many Gentlemen who voted for the first Reform Bill had certain misgivings as to the course they pursued, but he did not believe that one of them afterwards regretted his vote. So, on the present occasion, he felt confident that those who voted for the Bill now under the consideration of the House would eventually, whatever their misgivings now might be, feel that they had advocated a measure that, in the fullest and best sense of the word, was a conservative measure, the tendency of which was to strengthen the institutions of the country, and promote its happiness and prosperity.

Mr. GREGORY said, that in spite of the resolute and dashing speech of his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade delivered last night, and in spite of the extremely sensible and thoughtful speech to which hon. Members had just listened, he was very much afraid the verdict of the country would be that the battle was going sorely against the Government. Many admirable and brilliant speeches had been made during the debate; but to the two speeches delivered on the other side of the House, one by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), and the other by the hon. Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) he contended that no answer had yet been given. The reason probably was that no answer could be given to them. Their heavy fire had so completely silenced the fire of their antagonists, that the House had heard nothing since but wild, erratic discharges against everybody and everything except the Amendment that was before them. Therefore he might, perhaps, be allowed to ask hon. Gentlemen opposite, whether it was altogether judicious in them to prevent hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House from discharging their firearms—if he might be permitted to say so without offence—by such a constant volley of after-dinner grape shot as that with which they had saluted his hon. Friend the Member for Southwark (Mr. Layard). That hon. Gentleman said that he had great cause of complaint, for he announced at the commencement of his speech, that he was going to demolish the arguments of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, but on being twitted upon the subject on the previous evening by his noble Friend (Lord Elcho), he remarked to hon. Gentlemen opposite that they would not allow him to do so. Now, though it appeared that the interruptions which his hon. Friend had said he had sustained had prevented him from being argumentative, at all events they did not prevent him from being witty. He cracked jokes at the expense of the hon. Member for Birmingham, to whom he applied terms extremely irreverent. He compared him to a stuffed lion, and Snug the joiner. His hon. Friend went on after that, in spite of the interruptions he received, communicating to the House several truisms about bribers being worse than the bribed. That was an observation at which he thought hon. Members should not take offence. They all agreed about that. He was speaking as hon. Members always did upon such subjects in the House of Commons,—he was speaking abstractedly. But the whole burden of his hon. Friend's speech from beginning to end, as far as he could see, was this—his immense admiration for the working men of Southwark, and the immense admiration entertained in return by the working men of Southwark for him. He certainly thought it would have been better if hon. Members opposite had not interrupted his hon. Friend; for of course it would now appear in all the papers that took his side of the question, that he would have demolished the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn had he been allowed to do so, and that all his arguments were so cogent and so irrefutable, that they could be met in no other manner than by a course of interruptions. He (Mr. Gregory) might now perhaps be permitted to allude to one or two speeches delivered on the Ministerial side of the House in favour of the Government proposal. One of the speeches that struck him very much, not from any rhetorical merit or logical force, but on account of a remark that was in it, was the speech delivered by the hon. Baronet the Member for the West Riding (Sir Francis Crossley). That hon. Baronet had assumed to himself the function of being a kind of lecturer to the House of Commons upon all matters in which he thought that they did not behave as he would have them do. On the occasion now particularly referred to he apparently thought that Her Majesty's Government had not advisers enough, and so he proffered them a piece of his advice, and that was, that if there should be any difficulty whatever in passing this Bill, they should at once resort to a dissolution of Parliament. Now he (Mr. Gregory) must say that he thought that worse advice than that could not have been given. If there were estrangements at the present moment, if there were differences of opinion among Gentlemen who usually supported the Government, the mere hint, or the mere notion, of such a thing coming from any organ of the Government would magnify the difficulty, and he would venture to say would lead to the complete dislocation of the party. And how would such a crisis be met? He believed that it would be met by an Address to Her Majesty stating that Parliament was perfectly prepared and perfectly willing to consider the question of Reform. That the present Parliament was a Parliament that had been elected under the auspices and under the influence of Her Majesty's Government, who had a working majority of sixty-five when the House assembled; and that if the Government were now waterlogged, or in a state of congestion with regard to the question of Reform, it was not the fault of Parliament but of the manner in which their measure had been brought forward and managed since its introduction. He trusted that the House would have no more suggestions such as that of the hon. Baronet; for he believed that an assemblage of independent Gentlemen, such as the House of Commons, was not to be intimidated by threats of dissolution, or influenced by cajolings of the duration of Parliament. He would now turn to another speech, that of his hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster). He had listened to that speech, as he always listened to his hon. Friend, with very great pleasure. It was a well-considered, judicious, and temperate speech. He pointed out that the present Bill was a compromise which it astounded him that Conservatives did not receive with open arms. He said that a few years ago nothing would have astonished him so much as that advanced Liberals would have been satisfied with such terms. His hon. Friend added also, and he (Mr.

Gregory) was much struck with the remark, that he considered a Reform Bill upon the basis adopted by the Government would be a settlement of the question for a political generation. Now all this was excellent, and it was delivered in those accents of sincerity, and with that freedom from all mental reservation and equivocation which made the speeches of his hon. Friend listened to with so much respect and attention. He (Mr. Gregory) would say to his hon. Friend, "We are prepared to meet you half way, and to accept that lovely form which you offer to our arms;" but when he came to grasp it, it turned out to be something perfectly impalpable—a spectre, a phantom, like one of Professor Pepper's ghosts—a thing that men clutched at, but never clasped. This fair form, with her advantageous settlements, whom his hon. Friend offered as the future partner of their lives, was only an outline, and the manner in which the lineaments of that outline were filled up would determine as to whether it should be an angel or a monster. His hon. Friend had said, "Take it; never mind; you will be all the better for it;" just as his hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin (Mr. L. Gower) had said, "If you do not take her you will have to take something worse"—He (Mr. Gregory) was afraid that their old friend the Sybil was about once more to offer her books for sale, for his hon. Friend said, with great emphasis, "Beware! If you allow this opportunity to pass and do not accept the Bill, nothing but regrets will remain for you hereafter. Now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was well versed in Italian literature, and he probably remembered a famous sonnet of Machiavelli, "On Opportunity." In that sonnet Opportunity was represented as a fair girl gliding forth, with one foot on a wheel, and "with light wings bound on her to make her so swift in flight that none could overtake her." But then behind her lurked a dark form, vainly weeping, vainly endeavouring to arrest her flight, whose name was "Repentance." His hon. Friend the Member for Bradford also, he had no doubt, remembered that sonnet. [Mr. W. E. FORSTER expressed dissent.] His moral evidently was, that unless we took the Bill, Opportunity would have fled, but Repentance, vain Repentance, would remain. This had been the argument ever since a new Reform Bill had been introduced. In 1852 it was proposed to lower the borough franchise to £5, and what was the result of that proposal? Opportunity fled and Repentance remained in the shape of a £6 franchise. The second Bill lowered it to £6, and again Opportunity fled and Repentance remained behind; but it assumed the form of a £7 franchise; and if the opportunity of £7 now flies for another year, the only repentance that will remain will be of a Reform Bill complete and thorough in its parts, which would be accepted cordially by the Liberal side of the House, and which, after so many Conservative admissions, could not with decency be rejected by them. But had nothing, he would ask, been gained by the delay which had taken place on the question even in the case of the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) himself? Why, he recollected having asked the hon. Gentleman—who now urged the House to accept the Bill before them because they might get worse if they did not—on the occasion of the debate on the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines), how it was possible to accept a measure like this when, even on his own showing, it was the mere prelude to fresh agitation, a stepping-stone to household suffrage? "Tell us, if we pass this Bill, for how long a time it will affect a settlement of the question?" The reply of his hon. Friend was, "For perhaps five or six years." Now, however, the hon. Gentleman was ready to admit that the measure under discussion would be a settlement for "a political generation." What was the precise signification which his hon. Friend attached to that expression he could not say, but he had no doubt he meant by it a considerable interval of time; and he, therefore, was perfectly ready to accept his definition. So much for the "Be wise in time argument." For his own part, he might add he should not be frightened, if he thought the present Bill a good one, by the idea that it would not effect a settlement of the question beyond a period of twenty or thirty years. There was nothing final in politics; and at the expiration of the period he had just mentioned he was convinced, if peace continued, and education progressed as it was doing, there would be a large body of his fellow countrymen who would be as well fitted for the exercise of the suffrage as the *élite* of the working classes of to-day were when compared with those who in 1844 supported that great Chartist petition to which his right hon. Friend the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) had referred last Session, and of which the prayer included the suppression of machinery and the abolition of the monopoly of the Press, of any State religion, and of the National Debt. On the latter of which subjects he might observe, in passing, that his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate) made a remark the other evening of which he should like to have some explanation, when he said that "with a larger infusion of the democratic element in the House of Commons an objection to the payment of the National Debt would naturally arise." The House, he might add, had heard a great deal on various occasions about the necessity of being wise in time, and the accidents which might happen, and the "ugly rush" which might take place in the event of employment becoming scarce and the rate of wages low; but had we not, he would ask, had examples lately of the scarcity of employment and of a diminished rate of wages without the occurrence of any of those consequences which were now predicted? Yet, where had been the ugly rushes? Was not the great manufacturing heart of England paralysed but a few years ago, and was not the conduct of the operatives in Lancashire characterized on that occasion by a prudence, a moderation, and an admirable bearing that must constitute with many others, as it did with him, the best argument that could possibly be employed for the enfranchisement of the working classes, and must weigh more than all the denunciations pronounced by those persons whose wish of disaster was probably father to the thought? He had, on several previous occasions, expressed the opinion which he entertained with respect to the lowering of the borough franchise, and he had grounded his objections to the proposal, not on any indisposition to admit the working classes to the franchise, but on the manner in which it was sought to carry it into effect. In the observations which he had at various times made on the subject, many of those who were the organs of those very classes, he believed, sympathized. He had recently had several papers, as well as letters, most admirably expressed, sent to him by working men, and he found that they objected to a £7 franchise by itself as being a mere brick and mortar franchise, as being a blind and indiscriminate test, as arbitrary, and as unreasoning, as not including the very men of all others whom it should include. They alleged, moreover, that it was offensive to their feelings, inasmuch as it based their qualification for the exercise of the suffrage rather on the structure in which they happened to live than upon their own personal fitness. They, moreover, expressed a jealousy that persons under the operation of the Bill might be admitted to the franchise who would be a disgrace to their class, and they differed from the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns), who contended that the principle of admission to the suffrage ought rather to be one of classes than of individuals. The right of admission they, on the contrary, contended should be tested by individual fitness: in that view he (Mr. Gregory) concurred, and it was because he did so that he had advocated and placed his name on the Bill which was brought forward by the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Clay). That measure was one in his opinion that was well calculated to meet the requirements of the day, because it would include within the franchise all those who ought to be included, while it would exclude all whose exclusion was desirable. Under its operation fresh recruits would be enrolled, an incentive would be held out to education, and a reproof to ignorance, and all irritating remarks as to the unworthiness of those excluded and the excellences of those admitted would be avoided. If in the end, in time far beyond our time, and even our children's time, it became a suffrage enfranchising the whole nation, he for one would be perfectly ready to accept the conclusion, for a gradual political training would have been obtained, and the danger flowing from ignorance and its vices would be replaced by the decisions of educated and thoughtful men. Such being his views on the subject, he could not accept the argument of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), who urged the House to pass the Bill, because the admission to the suffrage of the number of working men who would be enfranchised under its operation was a good thing in itself. Mere multitude, unless a well composed multitude, would do no good. He (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) suggested that even if 200 working men came in they could not predominate, for that the

Liberals and Conservatives, who would be in a ratio of two to one as regards these working men, could always unite to overthrow them. That was a very fallacious argument. Any Secretary of the Treasury would inform him of the power of twenty united men on a great division. Such a body, elected as a class, would be compact and united together, so as to enable them, on important occasions, when the two great parties were evenly matched, to throw the weight of their influence upon the one side, to the overthrow of any Government, unless their political claims were satisfied. They would virtually dictate the policy of the country. He, however, did not believe that the working men would elect persons of their own class to represent them, but, on the contrary, that their choice would fall on persons of greater mark, and on a greater variety of reputations than the householders would select—that a great soldier or sailor, a great engineer, a man of tried benevolence, or a politician of known worth, if he presented himself to a constituency composed of the *élite* of the working men, would have a better chance of being elected than if he presented himself without a considerable balance at his banker's to a constituency of small shopkeepers. This would be the case in many constituencies where the preponderating power would be in the hands of the most enlightened portion of the working classes. It would be the case, perhaps generally, in a time of great excitement. Corruption would then lose its power; but would it be the case in those small boroughs, the voting powers of which it was proposed to increase? His hon. Friend the Member for Bradford gave instances of the good sense, sturdy independence, and freedom from corruption of the upper stratum of the working men of his acquaintance in the North of England. He spoke according to his experience of the towns in the North, and looking at one side of the shield saw that it was gold; but were he to turn to the boroughs in the South and East, he would see that the other side of the shield was composed of very different metal. He (Mr. Gregory) said, take care lest a more vertical lowering of the suffrage may not be bearing the franchise into that portion of the constituencies which have hitherto been corrupt, and whether the main effect of the Bill may not be the widening of the area of corruption. His hon. Friend the Member for Montrose (Mr. W. E. Baxter), who always spoke well and to the point, said, "You can cure all the evils of corruption if you only adopt the American system of having large constituencies, in which anything in the shape of bribery is impossible." He had never been more astonished than when he heard this observation from the hon. Gentleman, for if there were one thing more notorious than another it was the prevalence of corruption at the American elections. In England the corruption was only retail—in America it was wholesale as well as retail; and the worst of the corruption there was, that it extended from the constituency to the representative. This tendency had been remarked by a writer whose authority would be admitted by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill). M. de Tocqueville said:—

> "In democracies statesmen are poor and have their fortunes to make. The consequence is, that in aristocratic states the rulers are rarely accessible to corruption, and have very little craving for money, while the reverse is the case with democratic nations."

In America, as everybody must be aware, the purchases of votes were made, not by one or two at a time, but by 300, 400, and 500, and these persons marched to the poll—to the secret vote, as it was called—with a white or striped ticket, as the case might be, to show their employers that they had fulfilled their duty to their country. His hon. Friend alleged that there were no individual cases of bribery. But in the *New York Times*, one of the most moderate and best written papers in America, he found the following description of an election which took place at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1860:—

> "The open purchase of votes has been a remarkable feature of the day. The voters, when led up to the ballot-box, would with one hand drop the ticket, and with the other receive the bribe. The negro vote rated high, some coloured brethren receiving $50 each. Individuals of comparative wealth declined to vote unless paid to do so. Voters publicly put themselves up for purchase. Bids would commence at $10 and run up to $50. Great good humour and merriment prevailed all day. The announcement of Padelford's unsuccessful attempt to bribe the town-clerk of Cranstone undoubtedly lost him a large vote."

Probably if he had succeeded he would have got a very large vote.

> "In other towns wholesale bribery was even more open and outrageous. . . . Good order has been maintained throughout. Everybody drinks, but everybody appears to be used to it."

The paper from which he had taken this extract was the *New York Times*, one of the best written journals in America. It recently expressed a confident hope that in a short time, owing to the operation of the Bill now before the House, the American system would soon exist with full vigour in this country. Their "brethren in England" were congratulated on the prospect of being able to sweep away the aristocracy and the church, and to place themselves in all respects on the same satisfactory footing as the American people. But the *New York Times* was notorious for its constant denunciations of the national shortcomings, the notorious bribery of the constituent and the representative. Here was a passage giving a description of the unblushing corruption attendant on the passing of a city Railway Bill in 1860:—

> "Most of the American people are stolidly indifferent to the proofs of corruption on the part of their representatives. It seems to be taken for granted; and to whatever extent it may be carried, it excites no astonishment and arouses no special indignation."

And this was the state of things, on the introduction of which into England the American journal offered us its congratulations. Although he (Mr. Gregory) felt full confidence in the general good sense and demeanour of the working classes of this country, he yet could not extend the same confidence to the persons who upon many questions would direct and advise them. His hon. Friend the Member for Bradford described the working classes as far too independent and clear-sighted to be led away; but they knew that there were men who generally acted as their leaders, men ready and plausible in speech, who were prepared for their own private purposes "to make the worst appear best counsel, soft to ear," and by appealing to the honest and warm-hearted feelings of those men to lead them for the time to most disastrous conclusions. There could not be a better example of that fact than that furnished by the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), who reminded the House that, some few years ago, there was a large proportion of the working classes in favour of our going to war on behalf of Poland. He himself remembered seeing in the lobby a deputation from the various trades who waited upon Lord Palmerston, and who asked the noble Lord to proclaim war against Russia on account of Poland. Lord Palmerston, in reply, reminded the deputation of the destructive effects of such a course; that a war would cause the disruption of commerce, the cessation of trade, extra taxation, the want of employment, and general distress. Their answer, however, was, that they were prepared for all those results, and notwithstanding they desired war. Now, he did not think that there could be a more unfortunate illustration of the danger of committing political power indiscriminately in the hands of the working classes than the facts which he had described. The hon. Member for Bradford furnished another illustration of the danger of such a course, when he mentioned the fact of the late Mr. Cobden's visit, some years ago, to the West Riding of Yorkshire. Mr. Cobden was loved, and cherished, and respected by all who had the good fortune to know him, and especially by the working classes, but he found the population of that place to be ten to one against him when he denounced the Russian war. Other occasions of war might arise, and then the most virtuous, the most prudent, and most trusted leaders of the working classes might appeal to them in vain, if their hearts were set upon war, even though the war itself might be of the most Quixotic and mischievous character. The hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Hughes)—not the conspirator, not the gentleman dwelling in the cave of Adullam, but the philanthropist Member for Lambeth—in his speech the previous night, had called himself essentially the representative of the working classes in that House, but he (Mr. Gregory) thought that if the House contained a large number of Gentlemen holding similar opinions to those of the hon. Gentleman, they would exercise by no means a salutary influence. Here was a slight *résumé* of what the hon. Member said:—He spoke rather contemptuously of what he termed so-called sound notions of political economy. He asked why there should not be strikes to get an advance of wages of 1*s.* 6*d.* per week, because Lord Westminster's property had been doubled by the working men. They had great grievances, he said. While they were working out great ideas how had the Legislature housed and fed them? He (Mr. Gregory) presumed it was the opinion of the hon. Gentleman and of those who had returned him, that it was the office of the Legislature to house and feed the people. The hon. Member went on to inquire, How came their food to be adulterated? The next question he supposed would be, How came bluebottle flies into butchers' shops in hot weather? Next he asked, How came necrosis of the jaws to be introduced into this country among persons who made lucifer matches? a thing, he contended, which would not be suffered to exist in any other country in the world; and in the same sentence he added that it had been imported from Vienna. The hon. Member also was indignant with the answer which had been given by Parliament as to the proper mode of dealing with intoxicating drinks, forgetting that the object which Parliament had in view was to prevent the poor man from being shut out from the refreshment which he so greatly needed, and which the rich man could at all times command without any difficulty. If these were to be the arguments and the claims of the representatives of the artizan classes, he certainly wished to have safeguards against the preponderance of those classes. He did not like the word classes; but the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had, in all his recent speeches, based this Bill exclusively on the admission of classes. Had Mr. Clay's Bill been accepted we should have heard nothing of classes: the franchise would have depended on individual merit. Now, he was forced against his will to compare and balance the power and pretensions of classes. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleague the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the city of London (Mr. Goschen), had said that this was essentially a class measure, that the Reform Bill of 1832 had bridged the chasm between the upper and middle classes, and that this Bill would bridge the chasm between the middle and the lower classes. He differed from the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Graham), who said last night that it was not right or proper that the middle class should predominate in this country. It was his (Mr. Gregory's) opinion, and he believed it was the opinion of the majority of that House, that the middle class, which goes upwards into the highest extreme of society, and penetrates into the lowest, was the class of all others that could exercise the best influence on the policy and the Government of the country. They might be slow in their ideas. They might not have within them, according to a phrase he had read, "great lamps of internal consciousness," whatever that might mean. They might not entertain novel ideas upon politics, morality, and religion. They might be "Philistines" in short; but he must say that he saw, under their direction, a better chance of economy, peace, moderate progress, and freedom,—and by freedom he meant freedom of individuality of action and will,—than in any other form of government whatever. These opinions were held, he believed, by many hon. Members who would support the Amendment; and it was the best reply he could give to those who said that all who voted for the Amendment were illiberal and reactionary. This was the reply to those who said that no one could be Liberal unless he accepted and turned up his hat for the proposal of the Government. Stand off, for we are holier and more liberal than ye are—such is the language held towards those whose only crime it was to demand, that a measure of such infinite importance as this, should be treated as one comprehensive measure, each part of it being connected with and illustrating the whole. His right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. M. Gibson) said last night, "Let us have some understanding as to where we are on this important question;" but the moment others repeated the observation, the right hon. Gentleman turned round upon them, and said it was dictated by a spirit of suspicion against the noble Lord at the head of the Government, and that it manifested an uncharitable feeling and a want of confidence in and of love of the Government. He (Mr. Gregory) was quite sure that his right hon. Friend would have quoted at that time, if he had thought of it, the well-known words of a modern poet—

> "In love, if love be love, and love be ours,
> Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers;
> Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all."

He never in all his life heard such dogmatism as was exhibited on this subject—dogmatism on the part of those who claimed the rights of private judgment in matters of religion, but who refused it to others in matters of politics. In the novel of *Tom Jones*, Parson Thwackum was described as discoursing on religion with Philosopher Square, and he said:—

"When I speak of religion, I speak of the Christian religion; and when I speak of the Christian religion, I speak of the Protestant religion; and when I speak of the Protestant religion, I speak of the religion of the Church of England; and when I speak of the Church of England religion, I speak of that branch of the Church of England to which I myself belong, and the opinions of which I am determined to enforce."

Now, it appeared to him that they had their Thwackum in that House, who said, When I speak of Liberals I mean those Liberals alone who support the Liberal Government; and when I speak of those Liberals who support a Liberal Government, I speak of those who support the advanced section of it; and when I speak of those who support the advanced section of the Cabinet, I speak of certain Gentlemen below the gangway; and when I speak of a certain number of Gentlemen below the gangway, I speak of myself; and if any one differ from me, let him be excommunicated, and let him depart hence a conspirator, dirty and degraded. There was a notion among a certain sect called Swedenborgians, that in heaven all married folks melted into one angel; and it would almost appear as if the theory prevailed, that all those who were to be permitted to sit in the Paradise of the Liberal benches must submit to be melted and fused into one hon. Member, the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). He did not wish to make any observation in the smallest degree offensive to the hon. Member, and he was quite of opinion that the attacks made upon the hon. Member were very often useless and painful. It must, however, be borne in mind, that the hon. Member was the representative of certain principles, and that out of the House he used expressions by no means complimentary to the House or to the Members of the House, who had not the opportunity of replying to them in platform speeches. Moreover, he thought that the hon. Member thoroughly enjoyed the conflict. The other evening the hon. Member told the House a story about a Scotch terrier, but he (Mr. Gregory) had read a story about another Scotch terrier which, perhaps, might be some relation to the dog referred to by the hon. Gentleman. The story was told in a most amusing book called *Rab and his Friends.* A gentleman observed a little dog following a gamekeeper, which appeared to have a singularly pre-occupied look, and to be an unsympathetic dog, not enjoying the gambols of his fellows of the canine species. The gentleman asked the reason, and the keeper replied, "Eh, sir! Life is full of seriousness to him; he never can get enough of fighting!" Pugnacity begets pugnacity, and so he was convinced that the hon. Gentleman was not displeased at the combats he provoked, and of which apparently he never could get enough. Those who refused to accept the present Bill had been reproached with making use of expressions of distrust with respect to the Government. They well knew that the Government advised with and consulted the hon. Member for Birmingham, and that their course of conduct was directed by him. As to what the hon. Gentleman intended, the House must be guided by his own words, and he had distinctly told them that he looked on this Bill as a mere leverage for other Bills. The hon. Gentleman was a very clever man, but there was another very clever man from whom the hon. Gentleman might take a lesson. That other clever man was at that moment expiating his offence against society by a forced residence in Coldbath-fields Prison. He alluded to the convict Caseley. Caseley was asked the other day to give evidence in the Court of Queen's Bench respecting the most prompt and easy mode of making an inroad into other persons' property by forcibly opening their safes; and he replied that that was a matter depending on the use of lawful or unlawful means: lawful means, in burglar's phraseology, signifying such as performed the operation silently, slowly, but surely; and unlawful means being such as operated quickly, but made a noise and alarmed the neighbourhood. Well, the hon. Member for Birmingham had alarmed the neighbourhood, and the noble Lord the Member for Chester had sprung the rattle. He must now protest against the manner in which those Members who took an independent course on this question had been treated in that House, and out of the House, by the organs of the Government. They did owe party allegiance to the Government under whose banners they had enrolled themselves. No one was more ready to act up to that allegiance than himself. As a general rule, he was ready to surrender any private opinion for the good of party; but, on a great occasion like this, the greatest question of modern days, when he saw it treated as a juggler's trick, half shown and half concealed—when he saw the House of Commons managed as pious missionaries manage their savage converts, not telling them too much for fear of embarrassing their simple minds; and when he saw the old constitutional Whig party, which had stood by every Liberal Government with desperate fidelity, not mingling in tea-room plots or smoking-room cabals; when he saw that party utterly ignored, and the state policy advised and steered by the advice of a Gentleman from whom they differed *toto cœlo*, they had a right to enter their protest, and they had done so. Because the noble Lord who introduced the Amendment said he wished to see not merely a part of the Bill, but the whole of the Bill, he was told, "Your words say one thing, but they mean another." Because he had framed the Amendment so as to endeavour to get within it as many supporters as possible to give effect to it, it was whispered confidentially about that it was the work of the arch enemy. Indeed it had been said, that there were at least a hundred Gentlemen ready to swear that they had seen the original wording of the Amendment in the handwriting of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli). When the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer-Lytton) said, "Show me the position in which England will be when this Bill passes," the Secretary of State for the Home Department replied, "Such an observation on your part could only originate in your distrust of the working classes." He (Mr. Gregory) might here parenthetically observe, that if the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertford distrusted, the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary distrusted also; or why stop short at £7, and not go on to household suffrage. That was the way in which they were treated. The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir G. Grey) had appealed to them to be candid and to show their cards; and to that appeal his answer would be this—What would have been their position if Lord Palmerston had lived? Would they have been now discussing such a Bill as this? He did not believe they should. He believed the country would have been perfectly content to go on under the prudent management of the noble Lord and the financial genius of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There might, no doubt, have been a Reform Bill, as he was bound to say that he did not think the House could have escaped from the pledges that had been given on Reform; but it would have been a well-balanced and entire measure; untainted with suspicion, it would not have said one thing and done another. It would have given them a redistribution of seats, which, after all, was the essential thing. It would have enlarged the County franchise; and if the Borough franchise had been lowered, it would have been so adapted to the whole that the measure would, from the authority of the noble Lord, have been accepted by all the Members on that side, and would not, he believed, have been refused by hon. Gentlemen opposite. He (Mr. Gregory) did not hesitate to say, that he would rather not have broken the £10 line if he could have helped it. He would have widened the Borough suffrage to any extent, but by other tests. That scheme, however, he feared could not be realized. What therefore remained to be done? Could Reform be resisted, and ought it to be resisted? He believed it could not, and it ought not. A few years ago those who opposed Reform had, on their side, the sympathies of the head of the Government—a great portion of the Cabinet and of a large number of those who sat on these benches—and the feeling of the country was averse to change. But, he was bound to say, a great change had taken place. He regarded the present movement, however, as one that differed from the ordinary course of public movements; because, instead of being a movement upwards on the part of the people towards the Government, it was a downward movement on the part of the Government towards the people. The petitions, the remonstrances, and the prayers of the Government to the working classes, rather than the petitions, remonstrances, and prayers of the lower classes to the Government, had created the movement. That was one characteristic of this Reform movement. Another characteristic was that it had been retarded by its chief advocates, and precipitated by its opponents. He believed it had been retarded for many years by the hon. Member for Birmingham's denunciations of all those things which Englishmen hold dear. But a compensating power existed in politics as well as in nature. The great opponent of the hon. Member for Birmingham, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), made use of some observations which had been misrepresented, misquoted, and misunderstood; but he was bound to say that they had sunk like words of flame into the hearts of those who earned their daily bread by labour. They asked, "Do you believe us to be drunken, ignorant, venal, and violent? If you do not, you have one way to show it, and that is by giving us the franchise." He (Mr. Gregory) would rather have a Reform Bill ten times over than that there should be a collision or ill feeling between the upper and lower classes. He quite agreed with an observation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that words coming from a Gentleman of the position and power of the right hon. Member for Calne ought to be unambiguous, because they were written, as he said, with a pen of iron and on a rock. But when he was in Dalmatia a little while ago he heard a proverb which he thought applicable, in this instance, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was this—"If you go out stealing fowls, tie up your own hen by the leg;" and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer blamed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne for making an explanation of those words which had been misunderstood, misquoted, and misrepresented, he ought to recollect how, some year or two since, he himself had been an equal sinner, and had been obliged to write a well known "preface" explaining certain expressions which had created at the time a considerable amount of uncomfortableness among his colleagues and elsewhere. He thought, notwithstanding all this, that great progress had at length been made in this matter. Not one speaker of any eminence had yet got up either on the Liberal or Conservative benches and said that Reform was unnecessary. Everyone said they were all for it, and always for it. It was quite the realization of the canon of Vincentius of Lerins—"quod omnibus ubique et semper." They all agreed as to Reform, and when they did agree their unanimity was wonderful. Was it not possible for the Government to do something to meet the honest difficulties of the case? He would suggest that the Government might pull the question out of the mire of party strife by agreeing, if their Bill were read a second time, to introduce a Bill for the redistribution of seats, and that the two Bills should then proceed through their other stages *pari passu.* He was quite aware that it might not be possible to pass a complete measure this Session, but, by adopting this course, they would next Session get rid of all the difficulties which had arisen. They would get rid of all discussions as to the principle of the Bill, and the great number of questions which would arise in committee; and he really believed there would then be a possibility of satisfactorily settling the question. He only threw out the suggestion—he had consulted nobody whatever about it; but the Government, he thought, ought seriously to entertain it. This determination to have the whole scheme before them, had been stigmatized as a plot, a cabal; and hints had been frequently expressed of coalitions and amalgamations. He knew of no plot; he utterly repudiated all idea of the existence of any party faction, or of a desire on the part of Liberal Members to get rid of the present Government. He, for one, looked forward to the great financial abilities of the Chancellor of the Exchequer being employed for many years in settling questions of the greatest magnitude as affecting the prospects of this country, which, he believed, no one could handle but himself. He also looked forward to the settlement of questions connected with that distracted country from which he had come, which, he believed, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had both the heart and will to settle—questions from which every other Minister had recoiled, and from which, so long as they did recoil, Ireland would be our weakness and our shame. But one thing he would say, and he was confident his words would find an echo among many hon. Gentlemen, he did deprecate that constant abuse, that misinterpretation of motives which had been attributed to every one who might go into the same lobby with the noble Lord who moved this Amendment. He considered that this attempt to drive away from the Liberal benches men who entertained moderate and reasonable views was an unwise attempt. The time might come when a policy might be endeavoured to be enforced upon the Government which they would gladly resist. They would then look for the support of those independent men whom they now called men who could not be depended on, and they would find they could be depended on. He could assure the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, by the vote which he and the Friends around him would give, they would only be expressing the opinion which they heard on every occasion and on which ever side they turned. In many instances Gentlemen on that side of the House might give the Government their vote on the present occasion, but they would not give it with a willing mind. There was a pressure put upon them; he would not say by their constituents, but the pressure of friendship, of old-established ties, and old political associations. He recognised these ties and gave credit for these motives, and all he asked of them and of Gentlemen who sat on the Treasury Bench was, that they would, in return, give to him and to those who agreed with him, credit for submitting to what he trusted would be but the temporary severance of party ties and political friendships, only under an overwhelming conviction that there was something far above friendship and party; he meant, their duty to their country.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. YOUNG) entreated the indulgence of the House while he stated, with as much brevity as he could command, the opinions he humbly entertained with respect to the measure before them, and while he attempted to give the answer which occurred to him to some of the objections urged against it. He would not be understood as wishing to imply that the Bill under discussion was not of sufficient magnitude to merit, and indeed demand, their earnest and anxious consideration; or that the principles which it involved, and the arguments by which it was supported, ought not to be subjected to the closest examination and the sharpest criticism. Yet he could not help thinking, that those who had spoken against the measure, looking to the asperity of their hostility to it, had hardly given enough weight to the moderation of its provisions. The scope and tenour of the Bill might be stated in a single sentence: It proposed to reduce the occupation franchise in boroughs to £7 and in counties to £14; and that it offended the political opinions of hon. Gentlemen opposite, that was the extent of its offending. Regarding it from a Conservative point of view, and with reference to the mere extent of the changes it proposed, it contrasted favourably in respect to the county franchise with the measure introduced by Lord Derby's Government in 1859, and not unfavourably in respect to the borough franchise with the opinions expressed in the same year by the leaders of the Conservative party. The Chancellor of the Exchequer quoted a passage from the speech delivered by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire after the reassembling of Parliament in 1859. He (Mr. Young) wished to refer to a speech made by the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) on the same occasion, in which, after stating that the Government were prepared to admit a lowering of the borough franchise, he said that that subject, like other parts of the Bill, was one which might be treated in Committee, and which ought to be properly treated there; and the hon. and learned Gentleman went on to remind them that in his place elsewhere, the then First Minister of the Crown (Lord Derby) had declared before the dissolution, that if the question had been between a £10 and an £8 suffrage in boroughs, the matter would not have been difficult to arrange. He doubted not that there were conscientious and consistent Liberals as well as conscientious and consistent Conservatives who would be disposed to consider a proposal to reduce the franchise without any determination to reject it, but who objected to the present Bill on the ground that it was not accompanied with a measure on the cognate subject of the distribution of seats. Those Gentlemen were the proper, and the only proper supporters of the Amendment of the noble Lord. There were likewise Liberal Members who were sincerely and on principle in favour of a reduction of the franchise, and also sincerely and on principle in favour of a redistribution of seats, but who might think that on the balance of expediency it would have been better to have dealt with those two subjects not separately but together. Now, with great respect for those who thought otherwise, he must be permitted to say he was strongly pursuaded that that was precisely one of those matters upon which a member of a great party might waive his individual opinion in deference to the leaders of the great body of the party. And if such deference was paid, those who paid it were not amenable to such charges as had been been brought against them by the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire. Without such a waiving of individual opinion on such points of expediency it seemed to him that party government would be impossible in that House. He need hardly say that remark of his was not applicable to those who elevated such a point as the course of procedure on a matter of that kind into the dignity of a great question of political principle; but, of course, he might express some surprise that the mere question of expediency as to the bringing in of a Franchise Bill by itself, or in conjunction with another relating to the redistribution of seats, should be elevated into a matter of principle upon which a great party fight should take place. Besides those who did not concur with the Government in the expediency of treating the subject of the franchise separately, and who objected to the Bill before the House on that ground, and on that ground only, there were undoubtedly others whose objection rested upon a much wider ground, viz. that of the principle of the measure itself. They had discussed the Bill upon its merits, and upon its merits condemned it; condemned it as revolutionary, because it involved a transfer of political power; condemned it as democratic, because it gave supremacy to numbers. Several hon. and right hon. Members who espoused this view had addressed the House in language which could not be misunderstood. A great deal was said in the early part of the debate, as to the precise meaning of the Amendment; but that Amendment was clearly expressed, and no doubt could be entertained of its plain, natural meaning. The Amendment declined to discuss the principle of the Bill as inexpedient. Those who condemned the measure on its merits, and yet supported the Amendment, necessarily said one thing while they meant another. The Amendment was one which could easily be understood; and if any doubt had been expressed with regard to it, probably it had arisen, not from the Amendment itself but from the meaning attached to the words of those who intended to vote for it. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, in his admirable speech, told them that those who supported the Amendment were not to be considered as condemning the principle of the Bill; and so, with perfect consistency on his part, he refrained from discussing the principle of the measure. But what was to be said of those who had discussed it, who had said everything they could against it, and had arrived at the conclusion, satisfactory to their own minds, that in point of principle they could not support the measure? How were they consistent in affirming it was inexpedient to discuss the question, and yet proceeding to express their hostility to it? It was with regard to such speeches that the assertion was made that they said one thing and meant another. He did not mean by this to find fault with the conduct of those hon. Gentlemen, for they might, perhaps, be justified by Parliamentary usage in refraining from moving a direct negative to the second reading, and in supporting a Resolution by which they hoped indirectly to attain their object and defeat the measure. On the propriety of such a course he wished to offer no opinion; but it was surely no injustice to them to say, that if they had seen their way to success they would have acted in a more straightforward manner, and would have proposed a direct negative; or, if they had desired to give more emphasis to their opinions in the shape of a Resolution, that Resolution would not have limited itself to affirming the discussion of the principle of the Bill to be inexpedient. For his own part, the moderation of the measure was to him a great recommendation, for he had never professed the extreme opinions of the advanced Liberals. He should, however, be doing an injustice to the provisions of the measure were he not to state, that the more he had studied the subject and weighed the arguments on either side, the more satisfied had he become that the Bill was founded on sound constitutional principles; and that, so far from being pregnant with danger to the Constitution of the country, it was calculated, as it was certainly intended, to give them greater strength and stability. He would state briefly, if the House would bear with him, the grounds of that opinion, and in doing so he should follow the logical order adopted by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast, in a speech which had deservedly called forth the highest praise. The view taken by the hon. and learned Gentleman with respect to the Bill was, that without a redistribution of seats—without knowing the nature of such a measure—it would be impossible to estimate accurately the amount of voting power which the Bill would confer on the supposed balance of political power. The hon. and learned Gentleman then proceeded to lay the foundation of his argument in some constitutional principle applicable to the franchise; and accordingly he commenced his speech by endeavouring to ascertain the principle of the Constitution with respect to the suffrage. He (Mr. Young) agreed with the hon. and learned Gentleman as to the issue before the House, but felt inclined to divide it into two issues—one with respect to the second reading of the Bill, and the other that raised by the Amendment. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seemed to have a similar view of the question, for he said it might be divided into two matters—one relating to the Bill dealing with the Franchise, the other as to the manner in which the Government proposed to deal with the whole question of Reform. The first was raised by the motion for the second reading, and the second was raised by the Amendment. At the outset of his argument the hon. and learned Gentleman said, it was important to ascertain what the principle of the Constitution was on the subject of the franchise. This he defined to be the creation and maintenance of an equilibrium in the representation of all classes, by such a distribution of the franchise as would establish a balance in the voting power of all parties. The hon. and learned Gentleman maintained that, according to the principles of the Constitution, the supremacy of numbers was guarded against by fixing a point below which the suffrage could not fall, and that the fear of an undue weight of property was guarded against by fixing a point above which the suffrage should not rise. Where the hon. and learned Gentleman found this second point he could not discover. Where was it? He could not refer merely to the peerage, because that would be beside the question. But was that a true statement of the principle of the Constitution in regard to the suffrage? Did the hon. and learned Gentleman give a just application of the term "the middle class" as lying between one point and the other? He would venture to affirm that the principle of the Constitution on which the suffrage was at present based was to give a vote to the borough occupier of £10 and upwards, without reference either to his class, or the numbers of his class, or the degree of intellect, education, or amount of property which he might possess. It was true that the lower the class to which the voter belonged the greater were the number of limitations. In boroughs the occupiers of houses between £10 and £20, and in counties the occupiers between £50 and £100, were more numerous than those above those figures. But, though this was so, was it not inaccurate to say that the suffrage had any relation to the numbers composing the class of voters, or that it contemplated their combining for any one object? The Constitution regarded these voters as citizens of the country, and took no account of classes or trades; and it fixed no point above which the suffrage was not to rise. The hon. and learned Gentleman ignored fitness as a qualification for the suffrage, and said that was an invidious distinction. Above all he affirmed that it was beside the question, or was at best only a secondary consideration. But was it really the opinion of hon. Members opposite that fitness to exercise the franchise was beside the question of who should have the franchise, or was merely a matter of secondary importance? He thought that the opinion expressed by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Adderley) was more in accordance with that of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He said that so far as the general principle of representation was concerned, they were all agreed that it was to be based upon worth, industry, and intelligence. Which was he to take as the opinion of hon. Members opposite? The right hon. Gentleman said they were all agreed that the qualifications for the suffrage were worth, industry, and intelligence, while the hon. and learned Gentleman maintained that fitness was beside the question, or only of secondary importance. The constitutional principle announced by the hon. and learned Gentleman was however very cleverly, and if he might say so without offence, dexterously conceived, in reference to the use he intended to make of it. If he (Mr. Young) might be called upon in turn to state the true constitutional principle in the matter of the franchise, he thought it might be expressed in two words—self-government. It was, no doubt, possible to say that the franchise was only a means to an end, and that if the end were attained it might be dangerous and unwise to meddle with the system under which we enjoyed good government. But this appeared to him to conceal a great fallacy. He would quite admit that the country was not suffering from bad government. They all admitted this; but the question was one of self-government, and it was a mischievous fallacy to say, that where they had good government they were to let things alone on the principle of letting well alone. They all knew that good government might exist and had existed without any popular government—without any element of self-government. We in this country had long been of opinion that, without the popular element, without self-government, there could be no stability; and so long as men possessing industry, intelligence, in a word "fitness," were excluded, no matter how excellent the government might be, it was not self-government with respect to them. That was our constitutional principle, and he defied hon. Gentlemen to examine our Constitution as they might, to examine the Reform Act of 1832, and they would find no other principle than this—to make the government of the country self-government with respect to everybody fit to be entrusted with a voice in it. There might, no doubt, be fair ground for difference of opinion as to where the limit was to be fixed—whether at £10, £9, £8, or £7. The hon. and learned Member for Belfast, in a very eloquent and impassioned part of his speech, asked, "What is there in the eternal fitness of things which prescribes £7 as the limit?" But they on that (the Ministerial) side of the House said nothing about "the eternal fitness of things;" such language was entirely that of the hon. and learned Member himself. What the Government said was this, that the £7 limit was proper, not in "the eternal fitness of things," but according to the fitness of things at this time. If they were to speak of "the eternal fitness of things," he would ask, what was there in "the eternal fitness of things" that would lead the hon. and learned Gentleman to fix on £10? Ten pounds was fixed on in 1832 as a safe point according to the fitness of things and the condition of the country at that time, and £7 was held to be a safe point now. But the House was not asked to affirm the £7 limit, nor any other particular sum; that was a matter to be considered in Committee. The only thing that the House was asked to affirm was, that, without any reference to the eternal fitness of things, the reduction of the franchise both in counties and boroughs was proper. In 1859 the hon. and learned Member for Belfast maintained, with respect to the Bill of Lord Derby's Government, as a proposition which had the support of himself and his party, that it was a question, not for the second reading, but for Committee, whether the town franchise was to be reduced or not. In the same way the House was not asked now to determine whether £7 was the proper limit to fix for the borough franchise, and £14 for the county, but merely to say that it was fitting that some reduction should be made in both. Now, a great deal had been said in the course of the discussion about this being a revolutionary and a democratic measure. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer-Lytton) was kind enough to favour the House with a definition of revolution, and the hon. Member for the Wick Burghs (Mr. Laing) with a definition of democracy. The right hon. Baronet said the measure was revolutionary, because a transference of political power leads to revolution, and this Bill would produce a transfer of political power. The hon. Member for the Wick Burghs said the measure was democratic, because democracy gives supremacy to numbers, and so would this Bill. With respect to the Bill being revolutionary, it was well to understand what was meant by so formidable a word. It meant this and nothing more,—that if they introduced any persons who had not the franchise now to share it with those who had, to the extent of that introduction political power was transferred from its present possessors to those who might be newly introduced. But if this language held good with respect to the present Bill, it would apply equally to the Bills of 1852, of 1854, and of Lord Derby's Government in 1859; for each of those Bills wrought, in precisely the same sense as the present Bill, a transfer of political power. And then, if it was a democratic measure, because it would give supremacy to numbers, what would hon. and right hon. Gentlemen say of the Act of 1832? If ever there was a revolutionary measure within the spirit of the definition that was one, because it effected an immense transfer of political power. It was a great experiment, too, because the country was proceeding upon untried ground with only the light of argument and reason to guide it. And with respect to its democratic nature, did it not give supremacy to numbers in the sense of the hon. Member for the Wick Burghs? for whenever anything was determined by vote there was supremacy of numbers. They had supremacy of numbers in that House. They had it under their existing electoral system. The voting power of the youngest, the least experienced, and, if he might say so without offence, the most foolish Member of that House was equal to that of any other Member. All votes were equal within those walls, and equal in the country, and it was the supremacy of numbers that told in each case. But if the right hon. Gentleman meant that numbers were to destroy the proper influence of character, position, intelligence, education, and wealth, they might depend upon it that these were things that neither legislation nor numbers could destroy or impair. Parliament could not create, neither could it impair or destroy these influences. They had had their natural operation under the Reform Act of 1832, and he did not even understand the meaning of those who declared that they would cease to exist upon the addition of voters between £10 and £7. Now, he would ask hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who objected to this measure as revolutionary and democratic, whether the Reform Act of 1832 was a great success or a great failure? Had it not been a great success? Everybody must admit that. But they had heard with respect to it, when in the same stage of existence as the present Bill, every argument now used, everything which had now been said about democracy and revolution, only then it was said with tenfold power. The falsification of all the prognostications of evil which were expected to follow the Act of 1832 ought to make hon. Gentlemen more careful now of anticipating similar disadvantages. He admitted that it was a matter of degree; but what was the opinion of the other side on that point? Was it that in 1832 our predecessors hit the very mark which "the eternal fitness of things" pointed out, and that with such accuracy that it is as fitting now as then? The measure then passed was a wise and prudent one; but it was impossible to conceive that our predecessors, in a great experiment which was intended to remedy all the evils of bad legislation, should hit at once a right and reasonable limit, which was not only suitable then, but would remain so after all the changes of four-and-thirty eventful years. But what after all was it that was now proposed? It was only a reduction of £3. The House was not asked even to affirm that that reduction of £3 was not too much, but merely to affirm the principle that there should be some reduction. The figures would be subject to revision in committee, when hon. Members could determine whether the franchise was to be fixed at £7, or at any other amount. The hon. and learned Member for Belfast warned them that, in the event of the franchise being reduced to £7, there would be an overwhelming influx of the lower classes into the representation, and that they would combine to enforce the repeal of the law of primogeniture, and to carry laws for the subdivision of land, and to alter the existing relations between the employer and the employed. Hon. Members had been surprised at finding that a large proportion of the working classes had possessed a share in the representation since 1832; yet it had never been suggested that those classes had, up to the present time, combined for purposes adverse to the public interest. Did the hon. and learned Member think that if the persons inhabiting £7 houses had been possessed of the suffrage in former years they would have combined for the purpose of keeping up restrictions upon trade, religious disabilities, high postage, and dear newspapers? There were, however, combinations for such purposes, but they were among persons of quite a different class from those now sought to be enfranchised. To him, then, it appeared that substantial and sufficient reason had been alleged to affirm the principle of the Bill. But then it was said that the Government, in introducing the Bill, had adopted an unreasonable and an unstatesmanlike course, because they had not coupled with it a Bill for the redistribution of seats. The noble Lord who seconded the Amendment (Lord Stanley) said that the conduct of Government implied distrust of the House; that it was artlessly artful; and that it was an attempt to gain the support of those Members who might be tempted to oppose the the double measure; and the noble Lord said that the introduction of the Franchise Bill by itself was a Parliamentary manœuvre and a trick. But was there no manœuvre, was there no trick on the other side? Was not the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester so framed as to catch the votes of those Members who might be opposed to the principle of the reduction of the franchise, although in favour of the redistribution of seats? The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn said the Government had introduced this fragmentary measure because they knew they could not carry a whole one. Therefore, according to the noble Lord's own argument, the Government had adopted the very course that could enable them to carry the Franchise Bill. The Government adopted the course because they wished to carry the Bill. If they had wanted, like hon. Members opposite and some on this side of the House, not to carry the measure, the Government would have taken that course. There might be a majority in favour of reduction, and there might be a majority in favour of redistribution; but there would be a minority in each case, and if the two things were put together in one Bill, the two minorities would become a majority and both measures would be defeated by this simple manœuvre. The Government had separated the two measures in order to prevent this, and now were accused of being artlessly artful for bringing forward the present Bill just because they hoped to carry it, and wished it to be discussed and decided upon its own intrinsic and proper merits. Hon. Members opposite said this Bill should not be passed without some guarantee being given that the same Parliament which dealt with the question of reducing the franchise should also deal with the question of the redistribution of seats. So far as the Government could give such a guarantee it had been given; but the Government could not insure its own life or that of Parliament? But even in the event of a dissolution before the question was settled, would not the existing constituencies return the new Parliament? He could see nothing dreadful or alarming in such a supposition; for it did not signify whether the new electors had been on the register six days or as many weeks or years. They could scarcely be objected to on the score of inexperience, because the new £10 householders who were constantly being added to the list of electors were quite as inexperienced as those who would be added by the present Bill. This was only one of the scarecrows held up to alarm and disturb the timorous. But the redistribution of seats, it was said, was so intimately connected with the extension of the suffrage, that the two were only to be dealt with simultaneously. But suppose they were both included in one Bill, the House would have to consider and deal with the one before it could touch the other. The proposition of the Government was this—that whether you are to redistribute the constituent body, or to leave the present arrangement alone, those whom this Bill proposed to enfranchise ought to be admitted into that body. It was only after they had estimated the number composing the constituent body of the country that they could alone proceed to the rearrangement and redistribution of seats. But the principle upon which the Government had dealt with this question was, that those to whom the franchise was extended ought in any case to be included in the electoral body. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn illustrated his view of the case by what he regarded as two analogies — one financial and the other architectural. The noble Lord said that the right hon. Gentleman the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER had always deprecated the proposal of any reduction or abolition of a particular tax until the whole financial scheme of the year had been laid before the House, and he contended that this proposal to deal with the extension of the franchise before considering the redistribution of seats was of a similar nature. But in the former case the House had a choice. There was a certain amount of money to be spared, and the question was, which of the taxes should be reduced? a matter which could not be determined without reviewing all of them; but in this case they had no such choice between the extension of the franchise and the redistribution of seats. The noble Lord in his second illustration said, that no one thought of building a new palace by a room at a time, and without having a plan of the whole building. But in this case the Government did not propose to build any new palace. They were simply going to enlarge their existing building, with a due reference to the demands of those who were to be accommodated. The very first thing, therefore, was to ascertain the number of those for whom the accommodation was required. They were not going to interfere with the existing building or with its present inmates. They were going to add to the family it was true, and were going to provide accommodation for that addition, and for that purpose they might require a re-arrangement of rooms; but in this case it was simply a matter of enlargement, and not of reconstruction. He would conclude his observations by referring for a moment or two to the remarks made by the hon. and learned Member for Belfast upon the letter written by an hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), in favour of or in condemnation of which it was not his intention to say a single word. The hon. and learned Gentleman in his remarks upon this subject said—

> "I think the greatest insult that can be offered to the working classes is offered by those who write and speak to them as if they were a class of people who ignored argument and did not appreciate moderation; as if they were persons to be driven and incited by words of the kind I have read."

Agreeing, as he did, with the opinion expressed by the hon. and learned Gentleman, he might add that those, for he objected to the use of the word "class" as foreign to our constitution, whom this Bill proposed to enfranchise were men who did not ignore arguments, who did appreciate moderation, and who were not to be driven or incited by words to the commission of what was wrong. It appeared to him to be a strong argument in favour of their fitness for electoral privileges when they bore in mind the fact that, in spite of all that had been said to them during the last fifteen years, in language oftentimes inflammatory and calculated to convey to them the impression that they were suffering from injustice and wrong, they had not responded to these statements, and had neither indulged in agitation or demonstration. They had, on the contrary, confined themselves to their ordinary pursuits, in which they had displayed an industry, an intelligence, and a sense of moderation such as they must always desire to see practised by those to whom they wished to extend the franchise.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE: I am sorry, Sir, that the hon. and learned Gentleman who last spoke has left the House, because I should have been glad to express in his presence the sense which I sincerely entertain of the obligation under which he has laid us all by the speech to which we have just listened. It was impossible to listen to that speech without a feeling of congratulation that the subject was in his hands. He has treated it in a manner worthy of its importance, and we have listened to a speech that was distinguished for reasoning, whether we agree with it or not. I may add, that it was no diminution of the satisfaction with which I listened to it that, while I willingly acknowledge the ability, the argumentative power, and the moderation with which he handled these topics, I was convinced that the case with which he had to deal was an extremely weak one; for I am sure that a Gentleman of his ability and power of reasoning, if he had a good cause, would have made a far more convincing statement than that which we have had the pleasure of listening to. The hon. and learned Gentleman addressed himself mainly to the task of answering various speakers. He began by answering the Chancellor of the Exchequer; then he attempted to answer my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast (Sir H. Cairns); and he concluded by an attempt to perform the difficult feat, from which most on his side have shrunk, of answering the argument of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn. With the first observation that fell from the hon. and learned Gentleman respecting the Amendment now before the House, I confess I was surprised. He remarked on the observation which has been made to the effect that the Amendment said one thing and meant another; and he explained what was really meant by the use of such an expression. He said that with regard to the Amendment itself nothing could be clearer than its meaning, and that he did not for a moment mean to say that the Amendment did not mean what it expressed. But his doubt was as to the meaning of those who supported the Amendment. He drew a distinction which had been drawn before the holidays between the Motion and the Mover; but he drew it in exactly an inverse sense from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer also drew a distinction between the Motion and the Mover. Of the Mover he spoke with the greatest respect; but with regard to the Motion he spoke of it with great contempt, as of a thing that said one thing while it meant another. I was happy to find the hon. and learned Gentleman opposed on that view of the subject to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I was still more gratified to find that the right hon. Gentleman cheered him when he made that explanation. We are all accustomed to sudden changes on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but I confess I was surprised when I found that the Chancellor, in such a marked way, cheered a distinction drawn by the hon. and learned Gentleman in a sense precisely the reverse of that previously made by the right hon. Gentleman himself. That, however, is a point of very little importance. We all know that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House have their differences among themselves, and now we find that those differences are not confined to those between the Treasury Bench and the other benches, but extend to the Treasury Bench itself. With these differences, however, we have little to do. I am more anxious to say a few words on the argument which the hon. and learned Gentleman addressed to what he conceived to be the views of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast. Now, though I have not referred to the report of that speech, I am certain, from my own recollection of that able and brilliant speech, and I am confirmed by the recollection of hon. Friends who also heard it, that the construction put upon it by the hon. and learned Solicitor-General for Scotland was entirely erroneous. What did he say as to the scope of that speech? He said my hon. and learned Friend announced that the Constitution fixed a point below which the suffrage could not fall, and another point beyond which it could not rise; and then the hon. and learned Gentleman created some merriment by asking where was that point? Now my hon. and learned friend did not say anything of the sort. What he said was that the Constitution was founded on the principle of giving to the people of this country such representation as would fairly represent all their opinions, and that, inasmuch as it was necessary, in order to provide for the fair and perfect representation of the people, that you should not have a superiority—an overwhelming superiority—of mere numbers, it was necessary that you should make some kind of arrangement which would enable you fairly to represent the whole interests. He went on to say that there were two ways in which it was conceivable that this might be done—either by giving to those who possessed a larger share of property a greater proportion of votes, or by so distributing the power of voting as to neutralise the superiority of mere numbers. Then my hon. and learned Friend proceeded to say, that if we had adopted the former principle it would have given a great preponderance to the upper classes, which the Constitution did not desire to do; and he argued that there should not be a line drawn so that those who were above it should have greater power; but, on the contrary, he adopted the other principle of distributing the voting power among the constituencies in such a manner as to provide for the fair representation of all classes; and my hon. and learned Friend went on to speak of the £10 line as being the line below which the suffrage was not to extend. I say, therefore, it is altogether a great fallacy, and a very unfair mode of argument, to put into the mouth of the hon. and learned Member for Belfast, language which he never uttered, and sentiments which I am certain were far from his mind, and then to found an argument upon an imaginary absurdity, such as that which the hon. and learned Gentleman attributed to him. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor-General for Scotland says, that my hon. and learned Friend ignored fitness as a principle in the Constitution; but that is not a fair representation of what he said. What my hon. and learned Friend said was, that in distributing the right of voting you did not go upon the principle of saying what men were fit for a vote—you do not give a vote to every man who is fit for it—or you would have to give the vote to a large number of people who are not now included in the franchise, and whom this Bill does not propose to include, but who are people of education and intelligence, as may be variously tested, and are doubtless perfectly fit to be included. But it is very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to ascertain the fitness of each separate person, and make that a test for voting; and what my hon. and learned Friend said was, that in your proposed arrangements you did not attempt to deal with the test upon which you were to proceed. But what did the Solicitor-General say with respect to his own principles? The Solicitor-General said he repudiated the various principles which he attributed to my hon. and learned Friend, and laid down what he considered to be the true constitutional principle, namely, the principle of self-government. He said the object of this Bill was to give the people self-government, not good government, for he expressly distinguished between the two. He said, "You don't suppose we bring forward this Bill because we want good government—or because we think the government which exists is not good. We have not a word to say upon that; but it is not good government at which the Bill aims, but self-government, and that is the principle of the Constitution." It occurred to me immediately to ask who is the "self" to be governed—who is it that is to govern himself? Is it the whole nation, or is it that portion of the people who are fit for it, and who are to govern themselves and those who are not fit? If the view is that the whole nation is to govern itself, and is to have the right of electing Members who are to sit in Parliament, then I say that such a Bill as this, or any similar measure, any measure but such as might be conceived by the most extreme section of the most extreme party, fails in giving effect to such a principle. Neither this nor any similar Bill would have such an effect. Bills like this are not Bills to enable the people to govern themselves, but to enable a majority to govern others; and if we are to readjust the Constitution upon the principle of placing the government in the hands of certain classes or certain people, then, I say, we are entitled to take into consideration what are the qualifications which those whom we make governors have for exercising their functions. If the government of the country is to be handed over to a numerical majority we must ask, critically, what are the qualifications which fit them for the delicate and arduous task we are going to throw upon them? We should not forget, when talking fluently of self-government in the British House of Commons, that there is a great deal which we are called upon to do as an important organ of government. There is a great deal for us to govern lying even beyond the four seas which surround these islands. Remember the extensive complication of interests within these islands, and the extreme delicacy and complication of our relations with foreign countries. Remember the great extent of our empire and the large portions of the world's surface, as well as the large fractions of the world's population over whom we in this country have to bear sway. We have to consider very seriously how far those to whom we entrust the responsible office of choosing the most important branch of our Legislature are capable of exercising the delicate functions we commit to them. The hon. and learned Gentleman, after enunciating this rather extreme principle of constitutional government, seemed to be a little alarmed at what he had said, and seeing, perhaps, some expressions of surprise on the part of his auditory, he qualified his statement by saying, "That is to say that everybody who is fit ought to have a vote, and to take part in the election of Members." There is the gist of the whole question. Who are the people who are fit, and who are the people who are to say they are fit? If you acknowledge that the ruling principle is to be that of self-government, and say to the people, "My friends, you who are fit are to govern yourselves and those who are not fit," then those who you say are not fit may turn round and say, "Who gave you authority to say we are not fit? You happened to have the power of initiating this matter, but what right have you on your own principle to say that we are not as fit as you are?" The argument which the £6 and £5 householders and the people who are not householders at all would have against the £7 householders, if that principle were admitted, appears to me to be unanswerable. They may say, "We deny altogether your right to pick and choose who are to be held fit to govern themselves and to govern us." If you talk of good government, that is a different question; but if you talk of self-government, and yet pick and choose those who are to exercise it, you are doing that which the hon. Member for Birmingham said was so very bad—you are pretending to give and at the same time you are withholding. The true principle upon which you should proceed in altering the representation of the people should be to get as good a representation of all classes and all interests as you possibly can. I should like to ask upon this point, whether there is no other mode in which the various classes which ought to be heard can obtain an influence over the Government of the country than by voting for Members of Parliament? I think there is. It was said by the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Leveson Gower), and said very truly, that in this country public opinion, if it did not actually govern, exercised a very considerable influence over the governing power. The wealth of the country has its power in producing an effect upon public opinion; the intelligence of this country has a still greater power in originating, producing, and modifying public opinion; and the working classes at this moment have by no means an insignificant effect upon the formation of public opinion. We hear comparisons made as to the relative proportions of the influence of the voice of the working classes in this country in the year 1832 and at the present time, and we are told that in 1832 they had 30 or 31 per cent of the representation, while they now have only 26, and therefore they have lost in proportion. I do not for one moment believe that. Even admitting the figures I deny altogether that the influence of the working classes has decreased since 1832. I say it has enormously advanced from causes quite independent of any alteration in your electoral system—because the working classes have themselves enormously advanced. All the advantages which they have obtained, and which I am bound to say they have made such good use of—the education provided for them, the newspapers circulated among them, the rapid communication by railway, the cheap postage, and all those other elements of advancement which you are so fond of talking about, and of the importance of which I am as sensible as any of you—all these advantages have elevated considerably the position and importance of the labouring class of this community, and have given them a much more important position than they held thirty years ago. If any proofs were wanted of this—if it were necessary to say one word about the absurdity of that phrase, "admitting them within the pale of the Constitution by this Bill," as if all who had not votes were excluded from the Constitution—if it were necessary to adduce any proof of this, I should call as a witness the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Layard), who I am sorry to see is not in his place, and who told us the other night how, when standing as a candidate for the representation of York, he owed his high place on the poll to the exertions of a committee composed of working men who did not possess the suffrage! They worked so well for him in the city of York that they very nearly returned him as their representative. If that is so, how can it be said that the working man who does not possess the suffrage is "out of the pale of the Constitution," and that he has no influence whatever with those who have to elect his representative? I have no doubt that those who know most of the circumstances and influence of the working classes, can multiply instances of this sort beyond measure. I came across a curious instance of this myself in reference to a working man. I was engaged on a canvass in the city of Exeter on behalf of a noble friend of mine, and was asked by a tradesman to speak to his foreman who had not a vote, who was rather dissatisfied with some expressions I had used with regard to church rates. I went and found a most intelligent man, who discussed the whole question with me extremely well, and made use of some remarkable expressions. He said, "I am not a voter. I have never cared to get a vote, although I might have done so if I had chosen; but for various reasons I do not care to take part in politics. I have, however, a great interest in this question; and if I am right in the inference I draw as to your opinions, I am not sure that I may not think it necessary to qualify myself and to put myself on the register so as to work against such views." He also said, "I am not anxious to qualify myself as a voter, because I believe that the workmen here who have votes are well treated, and no undue influence is brought to bear upon them. If I thought there was any undue influence brought to bear upon them, I should seek to obtain a vote in order that I might oppose it." I was struck with the fact that he seemed to care so little for the franchise, and I was also struck with the amount of influence which such men possessed, and which even extended in his case to his master, who had requested me to go and talk to him. I do not offer this as an argument against extending the franchise. I should be glad if any measure could be adopted to extend the franchise to men of that stamp, or to any large class of working men of real intelligence and fitness for the franchise. At the same time I think it is most important that the balance of power, if I may be permitted such a phrase, should be preserved. This balance of power I interpret as meaning that character of the Constitution which gives to the whole nation and to every interest in it, whether a majority or a minority, a fair opportunity of expressing its opinions. I am as anxious that the sentiments of the working man should be represented in this House as I am that the sentiments of every other class of the community should be represented; and I think the great problem we have to solve is, how we are to obtain that representation of the working classes, which you say is not at present full and satisfactory enough, without admitting them in such numbers as to swamp all other classes, and to give to mere numbers a power they ought not to have. It is because the Government measure gives no hint of a solution to this problem that it is necessary to continue discussing it. A Bill merely dealing with the franchise will not solve the problem. Arguments have been used in support of the measure that appear to me to be absolutely childish. Some hon. Gentlemen have asked—What has the question of the redistribution of seats to do with the extension of the franchise? The connexion is obvious. You have here a scheme founded upon elaborate returns: you are told that if you extend the franchise to a certain point you will get a certain number of Members who will directly represent the working classes. But it is manifest that, according as you redistribute the seats, you will create a greater or a lesser number of constituencies in which the working classes will predominate. I suppose there can be no doubt that if you were to have a redistribution of seats, you would give an additional number of Members to the larger constituencies, and diminish the number of those returned by the smaller constituencies. Now, I find in the Returns that there are fifteen of the present constituencies, each of which has upwards of 10,000 electors, and if you give an additional Member to each of them, you will dispose of fifteen seats. That is precisely the number of seats which it was proposed by the Bill of 1859 should be taken from the smaller boroughs. But in seven of those fifteen larger constituencies the working classes would constitute a majority of the electors; while out of those fifteen smaller boroughs there are only two in which the working classes constitute such a majority. It is obvious that you have here on a small scale an instance of the mode in which a redistribution of seats might affect the relative proportions of the numbers of different classes, and might lead to more extensive changes than now appear to be contemplated. We have been told by some of the supporters of the present measure, that if the Government were at once to disclose the whole of their scheme they would meet with such an amount of opposition that it would be impossible for them to make any kind of settlement of this question, and that is in itself an admission that we have not now the whole subject fairly before us. I now propose to refer to the argument of my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster (Mr. S. Mill) in reply to my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn. I believe that no attempt ever has been made to answer the main argument of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn, except that which has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster. The kernel of my noble Friend's argument is to be found in that sentence in which he stated that it is most important and necessary that the same Parliament which settles the question of the franchise should also settle the question of the redistribution of seats; and that it is impossible for the Government to afford us any guarantee that such a result will be attained if we pass the present Bill. The Solicitor-General for Scotland endeavoured to show that the Government, as far as promises were concerned, could guarantee that the present Parliament should be preserved to pass the entire measure: the hon. Member for Westminster, however, has given the only attempt at a real answer to the argument. The answer which my hon. Friend gave to the argument is this. He said, supposing it should turn out that it was impossible for this Parliament to settle both questions, and supposing we passed this Bill, which was good in itself, if we could trust the new constituencies which we are going to create to elect a House of Commons competent to deal with other matters, we could trust those constituencies to elect a House of Commons competent to legislate on the subject of redistribution. But I believe that the proposed new House would be peculiarly ill-qualified for that particular office. I should like to put this point to my hon. Friend:—Suppose we could trust such a House for other purposes, could we trust them when they would have been elected for this special purpose of a redistribution of seats, and none other? If the Franchise Bill should pass, and we should be unable to pass the Redistribution Bill, and a dissolution were to follow, I contend that in the Parliament elected for the purpose of dealing with the redistribution question you would not have a fair sample of an ordinary Parliament. If a Parliament were elected under ordinary circumstances to discuss such questions as might arise in the next seven years, very likely it might be a fair sample of a Parliament representing the country on general subjects. But under the first state of circumstances we should have an appeal made to the constituencies of a very special character. They would be told that they were called upon to elect a House of Commons for one purpose and only one—the redistribution of seats; because it must be obvious that the moment they had settled the redistribution they would be dissolved. And what would happen? We should have every constituency pledging Members up to their eyes—if I may use a vulgar expression—at all events, pledging them as deeply as possible to adopt a particular course with reference to the redistribution question. Small constituencies would elect men on the pledge that they would vote for the maintenance of such constituencies, and large towns probably would take the opposite course. What would be the case in the counties? They would be under the domination for the first time of a new element. Under the change which this Bill proposes, certain towns for the first time will have a right to vote in county divisions. And on what principle would those towns be likely to vote? Why, that Burnley or Accrington, or Torquay, or some other town, as the case might be, should get a Member. The votes would not be given to a candidate because he was of this party or that, or because he was an able financier or an able politician, but because he had pledged himself to vote for the preservation of Honiton or Thetford on the one hand, or for the largest distribution of seats for such towns as Burnley, Accrington, or Torquay on the other. You would thus get as bad a House of Commons as it is possible to imagine. I believe, on the other hand, that the present House is peculiarly well qualified to deal with this subject. If you were to cast about for a happy conjuncture of circumstances with a view to bring to a conclusion the Reform difficulty, I believe you could not discover any more favourable than that in which we now stand, or I should, perhaps, rather say, in which we stood before the Government began to meddle with this question. You had a Parliament elected under peculiarly auspicious circumstances. The question had been before the public for a considerable time, and the mind of the country was well informed with respect to it. The general election took place at a time of very considerable political tranquillity, although I admit not of political apathy. The country was really anxious for a settlement of the question, while it was not disposed to exact any inconvenient pledges with respect to it from its representatives. The country was interested in this question; it desired to see it settled, but it was not disposed to violent measures. Members were elected on the most vague and general promises, and several not on any question of Reform at all. I ought not to say anything in praise of ourselves, but it is generally admitted, that there is in the present Parliament a large body of moderate and intelligent Members, and if the Government had come forward with a statesmanlike measure, there would have been every disposition on the part of the House to take it into consideration. The Government, however, have thrown their opportunities away, and have prejudiced the question. We are told that this vote is to be a vote of confidence or no confidence; and an appeal is made to us not to drive an able Government from office. I say nothing as to the general ability of the Government; nothing as to their ability in finance or in foreign policy; but as to their ability in respect of the settlement of the question of Reform, I think we are prepared and have the right to come forward and say, that the course which the Government have pursued is not such as entitles them to the confidence of Parliament. They have not dealt with the question in a manner calculated to inspire the confidence of the House, because their course has not been a statesmanlike and consistent one. What has the Government done? They came forward and told us in the QUEEN's Speech, that they were preparing statistics connected with the subject of Reform, and intended to bring the conclusions at which they arrived under the notice of the House. But the moment those statistics were prepared, and before time had been given to hon. Members to examine them properly, the Government came forward with a portion of their measure. And in what condition have those statistics come before the House? It is very difficult to make them out. One has to perform a complicated process of arithmetic before he can solve them; and, what is more, they are full of actual errors—errors by no means unimportant. I will only trouble the House with one instance of their inaccuracy; but I believe it is but a sample of the errors which are to be found in those statistics. I have taken an opportunity of making inquiries in several boroughs, and I will state to the House the information I have received from the city of Exeter. I am glad to see my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge) in his place; and no doubt that hon. and learned Gentleman will be able to confirm what I am about to state as to the inaccuracy of the returns relating to the city which he so well represents. The Government returns state that there are 898 freemen in the city of Exeter. It so happens that the real number is 224. That is to say, they have multiplied the real number, not by the rule of three, but by some imaginary rule of four. The number in 1832 was only 586; and no one can suppose that the freemen in Exeter can have largely increased since that time. The returns give the number of electors in Exeter as 3,088; in reality it is only 2,791. They give the number of working men on the Parliamentary register as 512. I am informed, as the result of careful inquiries on the subject, that the actual number certainly is 660; and that, in addition to these, there are 137 other electors who to all intents and purposes are working men. If there was only the discrepancy as to the number of working men, it might perhaps have been accounted for by a difference of the mode in which the numbers had been estimated; but when we find such a monstrous error as regards the number of freemen, what are we to suppose as to the general accuracy of these returns? When one such error has crept in it is likely there are a great many more errors. Well, the Government having presented these statistics, brought forward their single measure, and they have first taken one course and then another with regard to that measure, destroying confidence by their evident vacillation and uncertainty. Again; the arguments which they have used in support of their plan have not been such as are calculated to inspire confidence. We have not heard a single argument to show that this Bill is calculated to meet any of the difficulties, or cure any of the evils which are acknowledged to exist in our electoral system. There is nothing in the measure to meet the great evil of corruption; nothing to remove the great difficulties under which minorities were placed; nothing in any respect to do away with the evil of making Members the mere delegates of constituencies. On the contrary, while no attempt is made to deal with those great evils, the Bill rather aggravates them. It will add to the number of electors in boroughs which are the most notoriously corrupt and open to objection. The argument which the Government has used to show that the Bill will improve our electoral system must go a great deal further than they carry it, or it proves nothing at all. Then there has been the argument which I may call the argument from pity, which we have heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the argument from terror, which we have heard from the hon. Member for Birmingham; arguments applicable, as the critics tell us, to the great works of the drama, but surely not to a great constitutional measure. Then there was that argument which has been so well disposed of by my hon. Friend the Member for Galway—"Be wise in time;" but when we call to mind the experience of the last fifteen years, we find that the House of Commons is not disposed to be induced by threats and pressure to take whatever may be offered to them, without seeing whether they cannot have something better in its place. I will not detain the House with further remarks on this unfortunate subject, but I hope the Government will fairly consider the position in which Gentlemen on this side of the House are placed with respect to this measure. The Government ought not to impute to Members sitting on this side of the House—it is unworthy of them to do so—that in voting upon the Amendment we are expressing any opinion upon questions which are not raised by the terms of the Amendment itself. We express no opinion upon the question of the suffrage. We do not consider that question to be involved in the Amendment. We express no opinion upon the general merits or demerits of the Government. We do not consider that question to be involved in the Amendment. My noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn has said, and it cannot too often be repeated, that what the supporters of the Amendment intend to express is the objection which they entertain to deal with the question of Reform unless they can deal with it as a whole. As for want of confidence, that which they intend to express by their vote is limited to the ability of the Government to pass a satisfactory measure of Reform upon the principles on which they are now proceeding. They do not intend, and I hope that many hon. Gentlemen upon the benches opposite, upon a matter of this kind, do not intend, to follow the Government blindfold into the lobby. It is all very well to say that the House ought to have confidence in the Government. But there are two kinds of confidence. Some probably feel, with the hon. Member for Westminster, confidence not so much in the Government as in their own principles, which they are not afraid to follow out to the full length. Others may entertain a genuine feeling of confidence in the Government, leading them to expect that the present Bill will be followed up by a wise and statesmanlike measure of redistribution. To the latter I have nothing whatever to say, save to congratulate them upon being able to entertain a conviction for which I must confess that the Bill, to me, does not seem to afford sufficient grounds. But there is, or there may be, a third class of Members who, by voting on the ground of confidence, will be placing themselves in a false position. Their confidence is, that having voted for the Bill upon the second reading, in order to save the Government, somehow or other they will be able to get rid of it by-and-by. Now, of all courses, the one most fatal to the honour of the House would be to trifle and play with this subject any longer. If, by passing this measure, Members believe that they will be really effecting a satisfactory settlement of the question, they are quite right to vote for it. But if, disliking and distrusting the Bill, they yet vote for the second reading because they have confidence that the Government will carry the matter no further, they commit treason against the House. Between the alternatives presented to them of inflicting a blow upon their party, by separating from leaders whom they believe to be wrong, or of inflicting a blow upon the character of the House, by making believe to pass a Bill which in their hearts they intend to oppose, they have no right to hesitate. Considering how long the question has been before the country, how much experience has been gained, what was the temper of the nation at the time when the dissolution took place, and how calm and patient its attitude still is, in spite of the apparent ebullitions of feeling got up during the Easter recess, I maintain that this is not a time to deal hastily with the matter, but one with which they ought to proceed deliberately, and in a statesmanlike manner. To the concluding sentence of the speech delivered by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "Be wise, and be wise in time," I will venture to oppose the well known Latin adage, *Sat cito si sat bene.*

MR. COLERIDGE: I, Sir, am very unwilling to intrude into this great debate, and I think I can undertake to promise the House that I will not intrude for very long. But I am desirous to say a few words to explain how it is that some of us Liberal Members, sitting upon these benches, at whose heads the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer-Lytton) was kind enough not to discharge the book which lay before him on the table, although we may feel strongly the force of many of the objections made to the course taken by the Government; and although, whatever we may feel about individual Members of the Government, we are, perhaps, not very passionately enamoured either of the Government itself or of the Bill which it has proposed, are yet determined to support the Bill and steadfastly to maintain the cause of the Government against the Amendment moved by the noble Earl (Earl Grosvenor). And it is the more important that we should do this, since the somewhat remarkable address made to this House last night by the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho). As far as the noble Lord was content in defending himself against accusations which, as far as I know anything about those with whom I am in the habit of acting, have been made against him neither in this House nor out of this House, he was perfectly entitled, if he thought those accusations had really been made, to defend himself against them. And it is no business of mine to interfere for a single moment with the serene moral content—a balance, I hope, to the political discontent the noble Lord spoke of—with which he surveyed his own conduct and his own character. Indeed, he seems to me to have improved on the old story of Diogenes, and, after going along these benches with his lantern in search of what it seems he could not find, he turned the full blaze of its light upon himself, and there he discovered his honest man. As far as he was defending himself it was all very well; but when the noble Lord proceeded from defence to attack, and when he ventured to turn on a set of men as upright, as honourable, as independent as himself, and presumed to say of them and the votes they were about to give, that they were going to do violence to their political convictions, and vote against what they knew to be right, I take the liberty of saying, at all events as to a portion of the party with whom he usually acts, that he has a great deal as to their disposition and character yet to learn. He has to learn that they can feel as keenly, and can resent as scornfully, imputations which were made upon them plainly enough in the face of the House, as he can feel and resent imputations which, but for my perfect conviction that he would not say anything which he did not believe, I should be inclined to treat as the coinage of his own over-heated and over-sensitive imagination.

I, therefore, shall vote against the Amendment of the noble Earl, very much upon the same ground which the Amendment itself takes up against the Bill of the Government—namely, that it is ill-timed, badly constructed, and, if carried, will not tend to a settlement of the great question of Reform, but rather to vexatious delays, and to the postponement of any real or practical dealing with it. I do not at all say that such is the object of the Amendment, but I do most certainly say that such will be its inevitable result; and disclaiming, as I am sure the noble Earl will believe me I do sincerely, anything approaching to personal imputations, which would be alike irrelevant and unbecoming, if I were to say that such was the object of the Amendment, I should hardly be exceeding the just limits of description. Because, as far as I know, the noble earl the Member for Chester has never said a word in this House or elsewhere in favour of the extension of the suffrage. On the contrary, as some one has already observed—the debate has gone on so long that I don't pretend to be able to say who—the noble Earl, either in this House or elsewhere, has never denied that he does not desire Reform. With his excellent good sense, he must also be aware that if this Amendment be carried, the whole question of Reform is once more at sea. He must be perfectly aware, that if the Government stand by the declaration they have made, as honourable men, and if the Amendment be carried against them, they must go out. He must know that the party with which he has been in the habit of acting must to a great extent be broken up. All these things are not mere speculative conjectures, but direct, certain, inevitable results of the Amendment which the noble Earl has proposed. If the noble Earl has seriously contemplated these results and is prepared to face them, I do not for an instant say that he has not a right to bring forward the Amendment and press it all he can. But he must not suppose that those results are simply improbable. Results such as I have indicated, or something like them, will certainly follow from his Amendment if carried; and I, for one, am not prepared to encounter them. I pass from the noble Earl to the seconder of his Motion. If the noble Earl had looked round the House for a seconder, he could not have found within its walls a better or more powerful supporter than the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley). The noble Lord will forgive me for saying in his presence what I have often said behind his back—that he is about the best judge that any counsel ever had the good fortune to practise before, and his speech upon this question was a noble specimen—if I may presume to say so—of the powers of his mind. The noble Lord indeed has pledged himself—and anything coming from the noble Lord must be taken in the fullest sense of an honourable understanding—to some measure of Reform. But that pledge related to some unknown measure, and some perfectly indefinite time. And giving full credit to the noble Lord, as I do, for entire sincerity in what he said, I cannot help applying to him the old Latin adage which says, that you are to know what a man means by looking at his companions. The noble Lord is surrounded and is constantly acting with certain hon. and right hon. Gentlemen of the highest honour and the greatest ability, but whose opinions on the subject of Reform are no secret, because, like men, they have proclaimed them in this House. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel), the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer-Lytton), the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley), and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns), are all Gentlemen with whom the noble Lord is in the habit of acting; and when he pledges himself to a measure of Reform, of course he must be understood to mean Reform somewhat in the sense these hon. and right hon. persons, who, being most likely in the same Government with him, would be consulted with regard to the form of the measure. The kind of Reform they would be likely to favour would be a raising of the qualification for the suffrage, and a curtailment of the limits within which it is exercised, rather than anything which we on this side of the House are accustomed to class with ideas of Reform. I do not say that the noble Lord, in the course he has pursued, has not been acting in a perfectly fair and straightforward manner. We must, however, look to the practical result, the persons by whom he is surrounded; and by the result, and by the persons who are carrying the result into effect, we must judge of what is the practical meaning of the declarations of the noble Lord. But we have to deal at the present moment with the Amendment of the noble Earl; and one or two Gentlemen have pointed out, that in a critical and accurate view of the phraseology of that Amendment, it does not distinctly pledge him to anything like an extension of the suffrage, or to anything like what we call Reform. That may be so, critically and accurately looked at; but I think, proposed as it has been and supported as it has been, it would not be becoming in me to doubt that the Amendment was put forward *bonâ fide*, that it means what an ordinary understanding would assume it to mean, and that the noble Earl and noble Lord mean by their Amendment that they are ready to entertain the question of Reform in the only sense in which the word Reform has been used for the last thirty years; and that when they say that they are ready to enquire into the extension of the suffrages, they do not mean to say that they are ready to inquire merely for the purpose of refusing to extend it. Well, now, are hon. Gentlemen opposite prepared to embark in that course? Are hon. Gentlemen whom I see on the opposite benches prepared to vote upon the Amendment in that sense? Are they really intending to deal with the question of Reform in the sense in which we understand it? I do not mean to say that every detail is to be the same; but are the principles of Reform with which they are to set about the matter the same principles which everybody has understood Reform to mean? As I said before, if they are not in earnest about it, then, of course, I perfectly understand why they vote for the Amendment of the noble Lord. I do not complain of their taking this course; but I think they ought to tell us plainly in what sense they vote for it. If they are in earnest, and if, being in earnest about it, they yet take upon themselves to reject the measure of the Government, I cannot help thinking that, by means of this Amendment, they are advancing in an unwise and a dangerous course. I say it is an unwise course, because I think that they themselves would find, if they consider it, that the question of Reform is not a question with which they would particularly like to deal, and that they could not probably deal with it successfully, nor in a sense in which they themselves would like to deal with it, in the face of a powerful Liberal Opposition. Further, I venture to think the course they are entering upon is a dangerous course, because it is in the nature of popular demands to rise upon rejection; and it is exceedingly unlikely that, if they refuse this moderate measure of £7 and £14, the next time they may be called upon to vote upon it, it will present itself in so moderate and conciliatory a shape.

Well, having said that, I do not mean to disguise at all the fact that there are certain positive objections to the course taken by the Government. [*Opposition Cheers.*] I should be ashamed to argue this question in the House of Commons unfairly; and I am rather surprised if those cheers were intended to be ironical. I say that there are certain positive objections to the Bill of the Government, and I believe that those objections could not be better summed up than they have been in the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley). He has collected with great industry, and arrayed with great skill, all the objections which arise to the mind of any reflecting man as soon as he learns that this question is not to be dealt with in a single measure. Therefore, when the noble Lord's speech is called unanswerable, though I cannot imitate his ability I can humbly endeavour to imitate his candour, and I say that in a certain sense it is unanswerable, seeing that those objections do, in point of fact, exist. The true answer, it seems to me, is, not that they do not exist, but that, under the peculiar condition under which the Government approach this question, it was a choice of difficulties with them. They have chosen that course which had the least amount of difficulty in it, and which under the circumstances, and having regard to all that had gone before, they had a right to believe upon good grounds was the best course open to them. What was the state of the case when the Government entered upon office? For the last fourteen or fifteen years we all know the question of Reform had been handled by successive Governments, and by both the great parties in the State. There have been successive Reform Bills, and it was an inevitable matter that there should be a Reform Bill proposed to the House of Commons, and some reduction of the franchise was an inevitable portion of any Reform Bill which could be presented. Now, it is quite true that for the last few years, owing to the altogether exceptional balance of parties, and which made him a political necessity, and the strange fascination—that is, strange to those who had not the honour of a seat in this House—exercised by Lord Palmerston, who cordially disliked the subject of Reform, upon almost every human being around him, the question has remained in abeyance. How, however, in the face of the declarations which Lord Palmerston had himself made from time to time at Tiverton, where he spoke in address after address of the necessity for lowering the franchise, and its being an essential feature in any measure of Reform, and after putting forward the want of that essential feature as the ground for rejecting the Bill of Lord Derby, he should have contrived to put the matter aside for four or five successive years, I am sure I do not know. Nor is it now in the least material to inquire, for everybody, I think, must have assumed that the successors in power to Lord Palmerston, not having his ability to put it aside, as gentlemen and as men of character, pledged over and over again to the country to bring in some measure of Reform, were bound to introduce some such measure. A measure of Reform, then, was inevitable; and it was impossible, as the Government thought—and I say they had good reason for thinking so, because it was never done before—to deal wholly with the question at once. What part of the question, then, should be dealt with first? Why, surely, that part which had always entered, in some degree, into every Reform Bill, and which was a common element in every Reform Bill which was ever talked about or introduced. Prior to the Amendment of the noble Earl, and prior to the division which has taken place on this side of the House, no man would have supposed that the reduction of the franchise would not be an essential feature in a Government Reform Bill. In 1859 and 1860 there were debates and divisions, not upon the redistribution of seats, not upon any other matter connected with the Reform Bill, but the question of the franchise solely. Lord Derby's great division was taken upon the question of the franchise. I think, therefore, that the Government were only acting as sensible men, when, on finding that it was impossible to deal with the question altogether and during one Session, they took that part to which there would be the least objection, and which everybody admitted must form part of a Reform Bill, and which they themselves thought would be a fair and practical mode of testing the principles of the House of Commons on the subject. That may be considered as the general defence which the Government might set up. But the course which the Government has proposed is now objected to, as far as I can make out, upon three broad grounds, with which, if the House will permit me, I will proceed to deal. First, it is said that it is important not to lower the franchise till you have ascertained what you are going to do about the redistribution of seats; because it is said, and with truth, that a redistribution of seats will have a certain effect upon the franchise. The answer to this objection seems to me to be twofold. First of all, the substantial answer is that, under any circumstances, £7 and £14 respectively are right and proper limits to reduce the franchise to. We think, as a matter of fact and common sense, that when you get to £7 in boroughs and to £14 in the counties you include all who ought to have a vote, entirely without reference to the groups in which you are afterwards to include voters. That is one broad answer; for, whatever you do with the redistribution of seats by-and-by, you must take £7 and £14 limits. It has been forgotten moreover, it seems to me, that if the redistribution of seats will affect the franchise, so will the franchise affect the redistribution of seats. Anybody who knows anything about revision—which did not exist in the time of the old Reform Bill—knows that under revision the number of voters may be most materially altered. Until, therefore, you have ascertained the size of the groups of electors under the new law of franchise, you will not have in your hands the proper materials for determining how the seats should be distributed. Now that, I think, is an answer quite as good as the objection. If the lowering of the franchise affects the distribution of seats, so, on the other hand, does the redistribution of seats affect the franchise. The second ground of objection is one which has been put in a variety of ways, but it may be shortly stated to be, that this is a Bill which is not the Bill of the Government, but that it is a measure which has been dictated by a powerful leader of the people, and that it ought therefore to be rejected by the House of Commons. Now, dealing with the House with perfect frankness, which I regard as being simply another way of dealing with it with proper respect, I may say that though this might be a good objection in the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite, it is not so to me individually. I do not pretend to agree with the hon. Member for Birmingham in everything which has fallen from his lips; indeed, this being a free country, I take the liberty of saying that I dislike and differ from many things which he has uttered, while I still more decidedly disapprove the tone in which he has occasionally expressed himself. I should have said that he is, in my opinion, at times unfair to the English aristocracy. But my noble Friend the Member for Stamford favoured us the other day with a statement which is somewhat humbling to the plebeian mind, for he told us that he never had any means of knowing what the feelings and opinions of the aristocracy were. If, however, a noble Lord, who is the heir to one of the great branches of the house of Cecil, and who is not altogether unknown to another great branch of that family which has, I suppose, something or other to do with

> "Burleigh-house by Stamford town,"

knows nothing of the views of the aristocracy, what can I know? It may very well be said, therefore, that I am not in a position to judge whether the hon. Member for Birmingham is or is not sometimes unfair towards the aristocracy; but if my noble Friend should in time to come succeed in arriving at any dim and imperfect knowledge of their opinions, and would be good enough, as a matter of private friendship, to communicate that knowledge to me, I should then be better able to form a judgment in the matter. This I may, however, say—that if the term "English aristocracy" is meant to indicate English gentlemen of noble birth, of ancient family, with large possessions, and great wealth, expressions have, I think, now and then fallen from the hon. Member for Birmingham which are not quite fair towards such persons. At the same time, Sir, we are a practical people, and we are accustomed to deal with practical matters. We are, in the present case, dealing with a matter which affects the feelings and interests of the people; and if, therefore, the Government went straight to the hon. Member for Birmingham, who is one of the greatest leaders of the people, to consult him on a question which has immediate relevancy to the people, I for one should imagine that they were only taking a course which they were, as sensible and honourable men, fully justified in adopting. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite may say "No;" but I would put it to them whether, if the Government were dealing with a great commercial question, they would not be quite right to consult with respect to it a great merchant; or whether, if an agricultural question was under their consideration, they would not do well to take the opinion upon it of some man of great estate who knew something of the subject? I for one am of opinion that that would be a wise course to pursue, and I therefore cannot see why, in dealing with a question affecting the desires and wants of the people, they should not consult an hon. Member against whose uprightness and honesty of purpose no human being can fairly say a word. The noble Marquis the Secretary for

War (Marquis of Hartington), indeed, took some pains the other evening to explain that the Government did not take the advice of the hon. Member for Birmingham on this subject at all; and if he be right, the objection of which I have been speaking of course fails in point of fact, while in any case it seems to me to be entirely unworthy of the attention it has received.

But be that as it may, the real objection entertained to the Bill by those who oppose it is, that the persons to whom it proposes to extend the franchise are unfitted for its exercise; that they are unfit in themselves, or because of the use which other persons might induce them to make of it. Now, the first form of objection derives its greatest importance from the now famous speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. For my own part, I cannot help thinking that a good deal of the enthusiasm which has been aroused on behalf of this Bill has been kindled by that speech. It is, indeed, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer will forgive me for saying so, the most powerful speech which has been made in favour of the Measure of the Government. It now seems we have all misunderstood him. If the right hon. Gentleman says so seriously, so of course it is. But it is really entirely his own fault. The right hon. Gentleman, in declaring against the expediency of lowering the franchise, introduced into his observations the most powerful description of the "ignorance, brutality, and corruption" of a large number of those by whom the franchise is now possessed. The right hon. Gentleman is not in the habit of making use of bad arguments or irrelevant statements; and if this description had any force or relevance, it must be apprehended by an ordinary understanding as intended to convey the impression that, inasmuch as those who at present have the franchise are stained with certain vices, there was every probability that those to whom it was about to be extended would be stained by the same vices; and that it was, therefore, inexpedient that any such extension should be made. It now appears, however, that this is not the true meaning of the words which fell from the right hon. Gentleman; and if it be not, all I can say is, that it is a thousand pities so great a master of language did not say so in so many words. If, as I now understand, the right hon. Gentleman thinks that under the corrupt, brutal, and ignorant stratum of which he spoke lies a layer of hard-working, energetic, self-denying, self-respecting men, who have affirmed by their lives their fitness to exercise the franchise in the opinion of every human being in this House, except, perhaps, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Belfast, he ought to say as much in plain terms, and furnish us at the same time with the most satisfactory proof that we have misunderstood him by voting for the second reading of this Bill. The chief ground therefore, as it now appears, on which this alleged unfitness of the working classes for the exercise of the franchise was supposed to stand, was laid down in a speech which, it is said, has been misunderstood; and the objection of fact founded upon that speech has been answered by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Westminster (Mr. J. S. Mill), who spoke with a knowledge in which I do not affect to share, and with an authority to which I can make no pretension.

Mr. Coleridge

It is, however, said, that it is possible the working man might make a bad use of the franchise; but what use he would make of it must be of course more or less a matter of conjecture; and the conjecture will vary in strength and soundness according to the character of the man who makes it. For my own part, I must say, judging only from what has been done by those who have been enfranchised since 1832, which is, after all, the only substantial ground to take, I conceive no sort of justification to exist for these gloomy anticipations. I am perfectly ready to give great credit and great glory, if you please, to the English aristocracy, who, in the early part of this century, to adopt the words of Pitt, saved England by their energy and Europe by their example. I maintain, nevertheless, that, taking the last thirty-four years, during which period the popular element in the constitution has greatly increased, and has exercised a much greater influence in public affairs, they furnish a history not one atom less creditable to the courage and the honour of this country, and much more creditable to its good sense than that which is furnished by any thirty-four years by which they have been preceded. Prophecies of evil are very easily made, but they cannot, from the nature of things, possibly be verified except by the result, which is future. And if hon. Gentlemen opposite would bear with me, I would say, because I deem it to be the truth, that the leaders of their party, although they have constantly indulged in political divinations, have not found that it has pleased Providence in its wisdom to favour them with the exclusive production of a race of true prophets. I do not myself believe that the slightest semblance of danger threatens the great Conservative party, or the great interests which they represent, from any change which we may introduce. I have said elsewhere—when it did me no particular good to say it—and I repeat the statement here, that a wiser or nobler aristocracy than ours never existed on the face of the earth. Their wealth, their education, their high honour, and strong sense of duty, constitute them when they please the true leaders of the people. Now and then, no doubt, they, I honestly believe through ignorance—I mean, of course, not general ignorance, but the want of acquaintance with special subjects, such as the feelings and interests of a class to which they do not belong—legislate somewhat unkindly, just as the working classes might err in the same way towards us if they had the power to legislate exclusively. But be that as it may, I hold the existence of anything in the shape of a dislike to the governing classes, or a desire to overthrow them on the part of the lower orders of the people, to be "the baseless fabric of a vision." It is an idle dream.

It has been said, and with some severity, "It is not so much the people that we are afraid of, as of those who lead the people." I cannot pretend to speak of persons with whom I have no acquaintance, but it appears to me that this apprehension is as groundless as the others. Do you think that we who sit on these benches cannot see the dignity and beauty of many forms of social life to which we are supposed to be hostile? Do you suppose that we have never read history? Have we no imagination? Have we no sentiment,—a very different thing from sentimentalism,—which always has counted, and which, whatever some cynical gentlemen in their sublime fiery wisdom may think or say, as long as the hearts and feelings of men remain the same, will continue to count, as a great power in human affairs? Do you think that we are blind to the claims of association, or deaf to the voice of tradition? I tell you we are not. I tell you we care for these things as much as you care for them, but we care for other things besides. We wish to preserve what you wish to preserve; but we think the best way to do so is by satisfying the just demands of the people, by showing confidence in them, by treating them as friends, and even by inviting them in large numbers to enter within the gates of the Constitution at which they are now knocking. Guard, if you please, the grace of freedom with the majesty of law. But you are the true revolutionaries and not we; you who reject these moderate demands of popular advance; you, who instead of deepening the channel and widening the banks as the stream grows broader and deeper, strive to hem it in and pond it back until at last the accumulated weight of waters bursts the puny barriers you have erected, and bears with it destruction instead of fertility. There is much more to be said, but I will not run the risk of turning into impatience that kind indulgence of the House on which I will make no farther inroad.

MR. HORSMAN: I have listened, in common with every Member of this House, to the speech we have just heard from the hon. and learned Gentleman, with attention, with interest, and with admiration. There has been throughout that speech an earnestness of tone and a clearness of reasoning, combined with a frankness and generosity of spirit, which must constrain even those who do not agree with the opinions of the hon. and learned Gentleman to acknowledge the ability and force with which he has expressed himself; but, at the same time, I must express my disappointment to perceive throughout the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman a condensation merely of the uniform argument which has marked the addresses of the supporters of the Government measure from the first day of the discussion until now. If, it is reiterated, you are not a supporter of the Government Bill, you are not a true Reformer. Now I protest against the particular Bill of any Government being put forward as a test of a man's sincerity on Reform. I thought we were living in an age and under an administration which was opposed to all arbitrary and intolerant tests; and I object to any Minister taking a Bill out of his box, and saying, "Here is my standard of liberality; every man who conforms to it I embrace as a brother and true believer, and every man who rejects it I excommunicate as a heretic and as an impostor." We know there was a day when a dominant Church condemned all who did not belong to it, and denied them the character of Christians. We know that historians tell us, Lord Macaulay being the last of them, that in the days of the Commonwealth, the Fifth Monarchy-men passed two resolutions: the first was—that the Saints should govern the earth; and the second was—"We are the Saints." Well, Sir, the arguments and the language we have heard in this debate afford another example of the tendency of history to repeat itself. The hon. and learned Gentleman's speech has not been marked by the illiberal tone and the intolerance which, if the occasion occurred, would amount to persecution, that has characterized much which has fallen from the opponents of the Amendment. The argument of the supporters of the Government has been to claim for themselves a monopoly of political wisdom and virtue, and to heap the most odious imputations on those who have formerly been associated with them; who have made the advancement of Liberal ideas the labour and love of their lives; who have gone through an ordeal of sacrifice for their principles, which many of those now professing Liberal opinions have not been called on to face; and who only ask for themselves that right of private judgment which I always understood to be the first and most sacred article of the Liberal party. I was pleased when I saw the hon. and learned Gentleman rise to address the House, for I was sure he would address himself to the measure of the Government and grapple with the Amendment of the noble Lord. Fairly and courageously he has adverted to both those subjects, and if he has not succeeded in entirely establishing his case, it has been from no lack of ability, but from the difficulties inherent in the task. My hon. and learned Friend in dealing with this question had a twofold task to perform. He had to show first that the suffrage of the Bill of the Government was in itself deserving of our support; and, secondly, he had to show that the Bill, as part of the policy of the Government, was also defensible, and was not open to the objections made to it by the Amendment. And how has he addressed himself to these two points? He began by stating that the noble Lord who moved the Amendment had urged three objections to the Bill. First, that it ought to be accompanied by a redistribution of seats; the second, that it had been suggested by the hon. Member for Birmingham; the third, that the working classes were unfit for the franchise. Of these, the two first objections are merely incidental to the question; and, as to the third, no such thing has ever been stated or hinted at by the noble Lord. Now, it is strange that, when there is one obvious and frequently urged objection — and one never answered yet — that the hon. and learned Gentleman should evade that, and should raise up, encounter, and demolish three other objections which were really never urged. What has been objected to is, the principle on which the reduction in the suffrage has been made. We say that that principle is the extension of the suffrage in a downward direction on the principle of government by numbers. That objection we have urged over and over again; and it has never been met, but has always been evaded. We say, also, that the same necessity now alleged to justify the lowering of the franchise from £10 to £7, would on the same pressure take it down from £7 to £4, or even to 4*s*. We tell you that there is no resting-place in the £7 franchise; and that therefore, on that principle, the Bill is really a measure which offers no ground of settlement until you arrive at universal suffrage. We urged the same objection last year to the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds. It has never been answered, and it cannot be answered. Our case is even stronger this year than it was last year. When we urged it against the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds, we were accused of ignorance; but since then we have had electoral statistics, which show the truth of our statements, that by that Bill the existing Constituencies would have been swamped. The Government indeed have practically admitted that such would have been the case, for they have actually taken a higher franchise than that contained in the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines). I must say, that when these electoral statistics came out, I expected from my Friend the Member for Leeds some confession that he had been misled in the statement he had made in the House last year. There has, however, been nothing of the kind. My hon. and learned Friend says, one of our objections to this Bill is, that the working classes are unfit for the franchise. Now, that is an objection which certainly I have never urged. I have always said precisely the contrary. I have had periodical meetings with the working classes for many years—meetings of electors, meetings of non-electors, and mixed meetings of electors and non-electors. I have often addressed them, but in no speech I ever made did I ever utter a word that by any amount of ingenuity can be construed into any disparagement of the class of working men. The grounds on which I object to the reduction of the franchise on the principle of this Bill are consistent with the opinions which I have ever entertained since I entered upon public life. I was told the other day by the hon. Member for Cork, that I was inconsistent in my opinions on this subject. Now it so happens that, thirty years ago, on the very first occasion that I stood on the hustings, I encountered obloquy, because on this subject I would not profess the opinions of the programme of the Liberals. On various subsequent occasions I encountered opposition, and in 1840, on the day of the declaration of the poll, a riot took place, when some of my friends were injured. It is a curious thing, as I happen to know, that, on two occasions during the last five years, parties have been sent down to Cumberland to grope through all the speeches which I have made for thirty years back, in order to fix the charge of inconsistency upon me; but the report they have taken back to those who employed them was that, having made the most diligent search, they could not find one single opinion I ever uttered about the House of Lords or Commons in the slightest degree at variance with the course I am now pursuing. One discovery they certainly did make, and a liberal use has been made of the circumstance in some of the organs that support the Government. They discovered that, after I had been seventeen years Member for Cockermouth and had lost my seat, the constituency presented me with a piece of plate; and they suggested that, as I was at that time a Liberal and had now ceased to be a Liberal, I should return that piece of plate. My answer was, that if they found out one single sentence in any speech I ever made which would convict me of inconsistency, I would return that piece of plate the next day to those who had presented it to me. There is one comfort, Sir, which my friends and myself have under all the charges which are brought against us. It has been the fate of greater men before us to be misunderstood. But I, for my own part, have one especial consolation. Ours has been the fate not only of great men before us, but of those whose reputation is at this moment of particular value; and I am going to give the House an instance which, I think, will be peculiarly significant. It so happens that the Constituency I have the honour to represent has been represented before I was connected with it by very eminent men; and one of these eminent men, of whom the Constituency had reason to be proud, was Lord John Russell; he represented Stroud for some years. Now it does so happen that the noble Lord is another evidence of the fickleness and injustice with which Reformers may be treated by those who call themselves their friends; and he can bear testimony to the fact, that with a section of the Reformers of his own Constituency he was occasionally in the hottest water. I was a Member of this House when Lord John Russell made that memorable speech which is popularly known as the "Finality" speech, and which led, at the time, to his being treated with an injustice and indignity of which the authors must look back to now with regret and shame. But it also happens that the Constituencies which were then most prominently before the public as connected with the Reform question are those also which have an unhappy prominence at this time. When Lord John Russell made that finality declaration I remember Mr. Charles Buller got up, and in almost unparliamentary language accused him of bad faith; Sir William Molesworth made it the subject of a long address to his constituents at Leeds, and through them to the Reformers of all England. Then, as now, Leeds and Birmingham were the two centres of the Reform agitation, and took a prominent part in endeavouring to excite popular opinion against the Member for Stroud. I want just to show the House what occurred on that occasion. The *Spectator* was at that time the organ of the advanced Liberal party, and in giving an account—I must say a very unfair account of the speech of Lord John Russell—it commented upon it in these words:—

"There are indications in various parts of the country that the Russell declaration will bring forth good fruit. The council of the Political Union of Birmingham, we understand, have addressed their brother Reformers of Stroud to require from him who misrepresents them in the People's House the resignation of his hitherto convenient seat. . . . Last Tuesday Lord John Russell declared that the intent of the Reform Bill was to give the 'Landed interest' the ascendency in the legislature of the country; and added, 'I still think that a preponderance in favour of that interest tends to the stability of the general institutions of the country.' The phrase 'general institutions' is not remarkable for elegant precision; but taking along with it the eulogistic word 'stability,' we learn that it was intended to express a preference for the political ascendency of the squire and farmer class. . . . If the South Devonshire squirearchy do not return Lord John at the next election they will be ungrateful; but what will the Reformers of Stroud say to their Member? . . . The Political Union of Stroud, having taken into consideration the address of the Birmingham Political Union relative to Lord John Russell's qualification as a representative of his present Constituents, passed a resolution declaring his Lordship an unfit person to represent the borough of Stroud in Parliament."

Why do I read these extracts? It is to ask Gentlemen on this side of the House, whether they do not now look back with regret and shame to the injustice with which they must think that Lord John Russell was then treated, and whether it ought not to teach them some charity to those who are now suffering similar imputations. Lord Russell has lived to rebuke and shame those by whom he was then assailed; and I have that faith in the justice and generosity of the English public, that I believe the noble Lord who has moved this Amendment and his Friends will equally have justice done to them, notwithstanding the imputations now so lavishly cast upon them. I will detain the House very shortly. My hon. and learned Friend has referred to the circumstances in which this Reform Bill was introduced. He declared that it was necessary, and that it was inevitable. Now, let us for a moment inquire, how far my hon. and learned Friend was justified in that statement? What are the circumstances to which my hon. and learned Friend referred? In the autumn of last year we have been told, by some Members of the Cabinet, that, at the very first Cabinet meeting held after Lord Palmerston's death, this question of Reform was considered. What are the circumstances under which it was considered? The Secretary of State for the Home Department told us the other night, that the Cabinet found that, at the election, the great majority of the Liberal candidates had pledged themselves to Reform on their election. My noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) indeed showed last night that that account was not quite accurate. But what was the character of those addresses? Some one has, I understand, been lately collecting all the addresses of the Liberal Members at the last election; but if they had collected those made at the General Election of 1859, and printed them in parallel columns, they would have presented a remarkable contrast. The dissolution of 1859 occurred in consequence of the resolution of the present First Minister of the Crown for the reduction of the borough franchise, and consequently the address of every Liberal candidate contained a specific pledge to the advocacy of a £6 franchise. But the dissolution of 1865 took place under very different circumstances. The Secretary of State for the Home Deparment (Sir G. Grey) speaking on this matter, on the eve of the election, told us distinctly that Government did not go to the country on the question of Reform. He said they referred that question to the country; and when the country responded, the Cabinet would be guided by circumstances. The Liberal Members took their cue from the speech of the right. hon. Baronet, and, instead of pledging themselves again to any specific reduction of the franchise, they spoke of Reform in very general terms, and left themselves open to deal with it according to circumstances. What were those circumstances? They knew very well, so long as Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister, they never would be asked to support a large and comprehensive Bill, because they knew he would consult the feelings and opinions of the public generally, and would not take counsel with the hon. Member for Birmingham. Thus, under these circumstances, the Government determined to undertake the question of Reform. They had before them a letter written by my noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire, who had given notice, in this House, to move for a Commission on the subject. They, however, determined to deal directly with Reform; and having taken that determination, they determined to institute a preliminary inquiry into the statistics of the question. And what was the result of this inquiry? They were so surprised that, if I am not misinformed, they sent back the statistics to be revised by the clerks; they really could not believe that they showed an accurate state of things. Am I misinformed on that point? I must say that we have heard, on very good authority, that the Government was so surprised at the effect of the returns that they could hardly believe them. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: they had been sent back for revision, many of the figures being evidently erroneous.] Mr. HORSMAN: But is it not the fact? Well, sir, the point is not a very material one; but I believe the Government will not deny that they were taken wholly by surprise at the nature of those Returns. Last year we were all told that some 5 or 6 per cent of the working classes would be admitted to the franchise by the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines); and it was found by these returns that the working classes number 25 or 26 per cent of the town constituencies already. Well, the Government determined on introducing a Bill dealing with the suffrage only, and a paragraph in the QUEEN's Speech showed that that was their intention; but when we came to the discussion upon the Address, my right hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie) objected to that part of their policy, and stated in very strong terms, that this side of the House of Commons would not be satisfied with merely dealing with the suffrage. The independent outbreaks of my right hon. Friend on that occasion rather astonished this side of the House; and it appears also to have terrified the Government. They instantly modified their policy. It has been supposed that the noble Lord who moved this Amendment (Earl Grosvenor, and those who support him were parties to the demand of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock for a more comprehensive Bill. Now, I am not aware that any one Member on this side who supports the Amendment of the noble Lord has at any time expressed a desire for a large and comprehensive measure of Reform. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered a speech to which, if it were an earlier hour in the evening, I should wish to refer; and in which he made a charge against me, a charge which Lord Russell, of course under a misapprehension, subsequently repeated, namely, that I was now against a fragmentary measure of Reform, although I had voted for it on former occasions, and that I now ask for a large and comprehensive measure. Now, will the Chancellor of the Exchequer have the goodness to tell me upon what occasion either I or any one who supports this Amendment have ever asked for a comprehensive measure of Reform? He cannot mention any such occasion, although more than once it has been asserted that we have done so. The right hon. Member for Kilmarnock, indeed, asked for it; but we never asked for anything of the kind. We watched with great curiosity the effect of what was going on, and we saw that the demand of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock was calculated very much to embarrass the Government. We know that it has embarassed them, but we were no parties to that embarrassment. It was then open to the Government to take one of two courses: either to adhere to their policy of bringing in a simple Franchise Bill, or to abandon that line and to introduce a Bill dealing both with the franchise and with the redistribution of seats. Either of those lines of action they might have adopted, and either would have been defensible, or at least intelligible; and, if defeated upon either, they might have been defeated without discredit. But they have chosen to pursue a third course. They say, "We will adopt a large scheme, of which we will only show you a part, and you must commit yourselves to that part before you have seen the whole." That was, of course, a transparent device, but it served for an opening for the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock and those who concurred with him, to come back and vote for the Government. Yet I think their return has been rather dearly bought, because, although their votes may save the Government from defeat, still they can only carry the division even with the aid of those votes by a narrower majority than any Government was ever satisfied with before. And, under such circumstances, their victory must be more damaging and more humiliating than any defeat could have been if they had taken a more direct and manly course. Sir, the Government changed their policy, and then it was that the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester came in. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer had adhered to the Suffrage Bill, he would have heard no objection from us on the ground that he did not also deal with the redistribution of seats. I beg to tell my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that I am only now stating what is consistent with the course which I have pursued on this question; and I will make that clear and intelligible in a moment. What we should have done would have been this: If the Government had introduced and adhered to their simple Suffrage Bill, we, the supporters of the noble Lord's Amendment, would have discussed that Bill upon its merits. We would have discussed it as we discussed the Bill of the hon Member for Leeds last year. It would have been so far a complete policy for the Government. Their scheme would have been small: it might have dealt with only a part of the question of Reform; but as far as their policy was concerned, it would have been in a sense perfect and complete; and, I repeat, we should have discussed it upon its merits. But when, without any objection or any demand on our part, they change their policy and say, "We intend also to deal with the redistribution of the seats," then we tell them, "As you are going to deal with that larger question without any demand from us, and as you have a larger scheme, we ask that you will at least allow us to see it." That, Sir, is the ground on which the noble Lord the Member for Chester moved his Amendment; and the simple ground on which we stand is that which was put in a very plain and homely way by the noble Lord (Lord Stanley), who seconded that Amendment, when he remarked,—

> "What would you say to the architect who proposed to build for you a single room of a house without letting you see the plan or estimate for the whole building? Your reply would of course be, 'But I must see both the plan and the estimate before you proceed.' And what would you think if the architect then turned round on you and said, 'You can't be sincere; you don't intend to build at all?"

But the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other right hon. Gentlemen near him say they cannot understand the meaning of this Amendment; but if any Gentleman will only give me his attention for a moment, I think I can make it perfectly clear to him. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) asked,

> "Why should you deal with Reform on a different principle from that on which you deal with finance? Why should you take a part of a scheme, and ask any one to agree to that without seeing the whole?"

Now, Sir, in treating these questions there is nothing like treating them upon great authorities. We know that in this House we are the slaves of authority; and that in great questions of this kind, if any one whom we respect as an authority has enunciated a particular doctrine, we are all inclined to respect and be guided by it in our discussion. Well, it has happened that upon a question of finance an appeal was recently made by a Member of this House to a great financier as to the repeal of a particular tax; and what was the answer then given by that eminent authority? His words are so apposite, so applicable to the present occasion, that I am sure the House, and especially those Gentlemen who sit around me, will listen to them with deference when they know whose language it is I am about to quote. Here is his language:—

> "These are attempts to commit the House to conclusions while the House has not in its possession the means of judgment; and their only effect can be to fetter the future action of the House, and create embarrassment and disappointment among those who may have fair claims on the public exchequer."

These, Sir, are very wise words. When were they uttered? On the 18th of April, 1866. And what was the occasion? Why, on the motion of the hon. and learned Member for Suffolk (Sir Fitzroy Kelly) for the reduction or repeal of the malt tax. And the great authority who spoke them was my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Then, I ask him, does he not now understand the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, seeing that it is based on the very sound doctrine laid down by himself in the passage which I have just cited? My hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Coleridge) addressed himself to another point with great force and effect, and I must say in a spirit of candour which we must all appreciate. He said: "This is a party question; remember what you are about; you will break up your party; you will bring in the Gentlemen on the other side of the House. That is a result which I myself cannot keep out of sight; and I will not take upon myself the responsibility of any such proceeding." Now we must recollect—my hon. and learned Friend may not know it as well as I do—that ever since the passing of the Reform Act the Liberal party has consisted of two distinct sections—the one moderate, and the other more advanced; and that, although the moderate section during the greater part of that time has outnumbered the extreme section in the proportion of three or four to one, yet it has never on any single occasion attempted to fetter the freedom of the more advanced Liberals, whose independent action has constantly brought them into collision with successive Liberal Administrations, and even led to the destruction of more than one Liberal Government. What, Sir, was it that overthrew the Government of Lord Aberdeen? Why, a Motion made by the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) from this side of the House, and which was supported by the Gentlemen opposite. Who voted for that Resolution? I will not mention the names now, but they are those of what might have been called the flower of the old Whig party. Again, Sir, three years afterwards, the Government of Lord Palmerston was outvoted upon the China question by a motion made by Mr. Cobden. That motion came from below the gangway, and was again supported by Gentlemen on the other side of the House; and who were Mr. Cobden's great supporters on that occasion? There were many distinguished names in that division, but the two most eminent and illustrious among the supporters of that motion were the noble Lord who is now the head of the Government in one House, and my right hon. Friend who is the leader of the present Government in the other. But my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Coleridge) says: "You must take care; mind what you are about; you ought not to bring on a motion upon which you may have the support of hon. Gentlemen opposite, because it may lead to a change of Government; and that is one of the consequences which you must deprecate." Now, Sir, it so happens that on the occasion when Lord Palmerston was outvoted upon Mr. Cobden's resolution, that resolution was seconded by the present President of the Board of Trade, who was supported by Lord Russell and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. The debate was a remarkable one, and the division and its result were equally remarkable; but perhaps the most remarkable thing of all was the speech delivered by no less a person than my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Milner Gibson). I must beg his particular attention to the answer which was given, as if in anticipation of the present occasion, by the right hon. Gentleman. He said on that occasion:—

"Another point which had been very strongly urged was this—that it might be very well to support the hon. Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden); their feelings and convictions might be that he was right; but then they must look to the state of parties, and to what might be the result of their vote. They were, in fact, invited to vote against the motion simply because hon. Gentlemen opposite were going to vote for it. He would make what might seem a peculiar remark, but nothing gave him so much confidence that it was right to support the present motion as the fact that the great body of the Conservative party were about to support it."

He went on to explain his reasons for that opinion, and, having done, said this, which more particularly applies to the position of the noble Lord the mover of the Amendment:—

"When the hon. Member for the West Riding brought forward a motion consistent with all the views which he had entertained and professed in his public life, was he to be deterred from asking the support of his friends because Members of the Conservative party, forsooth, would support it?"

I have no delicacy in reading what follows, because it describes what we know could not take place in these days; and therefore Gentlemen sitting behind the Treasury Bench will not mistake my motive in doing so; but I wish to show the manner in which independent Liberals in those days spoke of the supporters of the Government whom they were assailing:—

"He had been told that there had been a meeting of the Liberal party lately at the residence of the noble Lord. He had read the report in the public newspapers; for it seemed now to be the fashion to publish in the journals reports of these private political meetings. That meeting was remarkable more for the absence of certain distinguished men than for the presence of those who attended it. He read over the names, and he must say that it was the first time he ever recollected a meeting of the Liberal party being held without the name of Lord John Russell appearing among those who attended it. There were other distinguished names which were not to be found in the list of those present at that meeting. He should like to know what the noble Lord at the head of the Government said to his hon. Friends who attended the meeting? What pledges were given, what inducements were held out? When sufficient inducements were held out on such occasions, many a Member, for the purpose of saving a Ministry in danger, gave a vote that was not exactly according to his convictions. He felt at liberty to make these statements, for he could assure the House that the pressure—the disagreeable pressure—that was put upon hon. Gentlemen to induce them to change their votes upon this important question was of a character that could only be equalled by the pressure put upon voters at a small provincial contested election, in order to compel them to vote in this or that direction. Now, hon. Gentlemen were at liberty, with a due regard to the public interests, and without being in the least afraid of the deluge coming upon them, if the Government should experience some difficulty on this occasion, to pronounce their conscientious opinion upon the motion of the hon. Member for the West Riding."

Now, Sir, as I before observed, I am only reading this to show how Gentlemen who now deny to us freedom of speech and action, spoke and acted in those days, and by whom they were supported in the motions by which they assailed and ejected Liberal Administrations. But then it may be said that these Gentlemen were acting conscientiously; whereas we appeared dirty conspirators. But was not the charge of conspiracy brought against those Gentlemen on that occasion? Why, Sir, in the list of Members of the Liberal party who divided on that occasion against the Government were some of the most eminent Members of the party. Among them were Lord Robert Grosvenor and Sir Francis Baring, who have both been selected for elevation to the Peerage. Sir Francis Baring then repudiated, in the strongest terms, the charge of being a conspirator. He said:—

> "He was sorry to hear the cry which was always raised on occasions similar to this, that there had been a conspiracy. He would only say that he never came to a vote with more personal pain, or after more anxious and earnest inquiry; and he never gave a vote in that House with a clearer conscience. If the time had to come again, and it was to be the last vote which he was to give in that House, he would give it with the utmost cordiality."

The same thing occurred in the following year on the Conspiracy Bill. Another motion was brought forward from this side of the House, which was again supported by Gentlemen opposite, and on that occasion Lord Palmerston was ejected from office. I want to know, if on one occasion after another, three years in succession, the Ministry were left in a minority or ejected from office, and if liberty of action was allowed to Members on this side of the House without their being subjected to any unworthy imputations, why we are not to be allowed that same liberty of action when we are taking a course which is consistent with the opinions we have always hitherto expressed? I wish now to say one word upon the last question involved in this debate. We are told that the issue is changed; that it is not a question of Reform, but that the vote is to be taken as a vote of confidence in the Government. Now, Sir, there is no doubt that the Government have it in their power to convert any question they please into a vote of confidence; and, as the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) remarked the other night, they might, if they chose, make a motion for the adjournment of the House a vote of confidence. But as this, Sir, is an arbitrary power, it is a power which should be exercised under a sense of responsibility, and the Government are bound to show their supporters that the call they make upon them is one that the occasion renders both necessary and legitimate. I will ask the House, however,—and I think I may appeal to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer after the opportunity for consideration that he has had,—does that necessity apply to the Amendment of the noble Lord which we are now discussing? Why, Sir, we all remember what occurred on the day previous to the adjournment of the House for the Easter recess. We remember the conversation which took place between the noble Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and how the noble Lord showed that he was actuated by no unfriendly feeling to the Government, and had no desire to embarrass them; and how, with his wonted earnestness and sincerity, he stated that if the Government would make that concession in substance which they had already made in spirit, and allow us to see their whole scheme before we commit ourselves to a part, he would gladly withdraw from a position which was to him one both of novelty and pain, and into which he had been forced only by a sense of public duty. But how was the noble Lord answered by the right hon. Gentleman? His right hon. Friend was perfectly immoveable—nay, he was not only immoveable, he was defiant. He changed the question at once into a vote of confidence, and upon what basis? What was the difference between the Government and my noble Friend? Merely this,—whether a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats which they had prepared should be laid on the table of the House a day before or a day after the second reading of the Franchise Bill. Was there ever so narrow, so mean a basis for a vote of confidence? The right hon. Gentleman said in effect, though not in words, "We could indeed show you what you want, but we wont do it. We will first exact a vote of confidence; and when we have had from you that proof of submission to the course we dictate, we will then indulge you with a sight of the measure which we have prepared; but even then we will only let you have a sight of it, for no sooner have we produced it than we shall withdraw it and not proceed with it till next Session." Even then, however, the noble Lord was anxious to explain to the Government and the House that this construction of his Amendment into a vote of confidence was not what he intended or accepted. He expressed his sincere respect and reverence for the noble Lord at the head of the Government, whom it had been his pride to follow during the whole of his public life, and his general concurrence also in the principles and policy of the Government. And I must say for myself, that although I have felt very strongly the unexpected manner in which this question of Reform was revived on Lord Palmerston's death, and, as I believe, against the feelings and wishes of the country; and although I have expressed myself strongly as to the manner in which the Government have allied themselves to agitation on the subject, still, as to the general policy and proceedings of the Government since they came into office, I have seen many things to approve and commend and nothing to condemn. If, therefore, the Government had been assailed by a vote of want of confidence on their general policy and proceedings, they would have been supported with unanimity on this side of the House; and I do not believe there would have been a single defaulter from their ranks. I ask, then, was it wise to go out of their way, and raise a false issue on the only question on which there was a real difference of opinion among Members of the Liberal party, raising that false issue upon a vote of confidence on the one question on which they were suddenly reversing the policy of the most popular Minister of our time, and, reversing it in a Parliament which was elected to support that Minister, by deferring to the wishes of one section of their party and disregarding the feelings of the great majority of their supporters? But then, Sir, let me ask again—Is this question of Reform a particularly favourable one on which to take a vote of confidence? Is it not one upon which all the Members of the Liberal party are treading upon dangerous ground? We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, since it is now brought so home to us, that the question of Reform is practically in the hands of the same Government who during the last fourteen years have produced a series of Reform Bills, every one of them containing £5 or £6 franchises, and all based on the repeated and unqualified assertion that the working class were wholly excluded from the franchise. But the statistical returns recently presented to the House have shown that that assumption is entirely a mistake, and that 26 per cent of the existing constituencies are composed of the working class. Now, does not that exposure convict our Ministers of having been legislating carelessly, thoughtlessly, rashly, dangerously; and can it be maintained that such conduct on their part constitutes a claim to our confidence? Because they have been for many years past leaping in the dark, is it a reason that they should insist upon our leaping in the dark? But even when we have discovered our error, do we stand upon safer ground? The Cabinet admit that a £6 franchise would swamp the existing constituency, and therefore they have placed the qualification higher; they have added another pound; and it must be conceded, that the addition of that pound may postpone the swamping process perhaps for four or five years. But what says the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He can perceive no objection to swamping. He, speaking in his individual capacity, is prepared to accept it with all its consequences; and, although he does not recommend or press it now, still it is his sincere opinion that no practical inconvenience would arise from allowing the working class to be a majority of the whole constituency. From this, therefore, I gather, that if my right hon. Friend were out of office next year, and free to vote according to his convictions, the friends of household suffrage, and even of more extended suffrage, need not despair of his support. Such conduct may be very frank and very courageous, and it may be also very sound and wise, but those opinions do not happen to be the opinions of Parliament or of the country, and they do not establish any fresh and irresistible claims to confidence. But if I have no confidence in the measure,of the Government, I have still less confidence in the means resorted to in order to force it upon a reluctant Parliament. As to the means adopted by individual Members, I make no remark; but I must say I see with regret a Minister of the Crown joining in, assisting, and encouraging that agitation. I must say it is unprecedented, that when a Minister of the Crown has laid upon the table an important public measure, which stands for the first measure to be considered after the recess, and which is deserving of the calm and dispassionate consideration of Parliament—I say it is unprecedented in the history of Parliament that that Minister should go down to the provinces, and there endeavour to excite agitation in favour of his own Bill. I do not say this needlessly to hurt the feelings of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but I conceive it still more without Parliamentary precedent, that the Leader of the House of Commons should go down to the provinces and make a speech in disparagement of the House of which he is himself the leader. Such proceedings may excite temporary enthusiasm, but I am sure that such enthusiasm is dearly purchased by the loss of dignity and influence which must inevitably follow when the right hon. Gentleman resumes his place as the Leader of the House. I must say also that I think the right hon. Gentleman was rather unfortunate in the illustrations he employed when he described the position of the Government; for he said, "We have broken down our bridges, we have burnt our boats." Well, Sir, but these are the acts of desperate men, and they do not usually inspire confidence. Such words as these convey images of war, of aggression, of conflagration, and desperation; and are hardly calculated to increase our confidence in the Minister who used them. Why is the peaceful endeavour of the Government to carry a Reform Bill to be associated with such appalling images? How is it that, in a time of such profound tranquillity, when Ministers have succeeded to such a peaceful inheritance, when there is an absence of all party strife or political passion—who is it and what is it that has rendered the position of the Government so perilous and so critical, that Ministers go into the provinces as agitators and illustrious statesmen, and in the flights of their own excited imaginations describe themselves and their colleagues as political desperadoes. And all this as another claim to confidence! I can only say let those in whom it inspires that confidence, follow the Ministers whose beneficent and hopeful enterprise is described by broken bridges and burnt ships. I prefer, for my part, the guidance of those whose mission is more peaceful, and whose language is more assuring; who contemplate great constitutional changes with the calmness of statesmen, and win the confidence of the country by appeals to reason; and who, leaving to others the more exciting arts of menace and agitation, trust only for their success to the goodness of their cause, the purity of their motives, and the grateful sympathy and support of an approving country.

Mr. BRIGHT moved the Adjournment of the Debate. [*Loud Cries of* "Go on!"]

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: We have arrived so nearly at the hour of midnight, that I do not think we ought to press any one who wishes to address the House to speak to-night. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] It can only be practicable by the general consent and convenience of the House, if we endeavour to-night to arrive at some understanding as to the termination of this debate. [*A Cry of* "Go on!"] I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks is prepared to express any opinion upon this subject; but I think it desirable to come to an understanding, that either on Monday or Tuesday we should undertake to arrive at a decision upon the question before us. ["Hear, hear!"]

An Hon. Member: Friday! [*Laughter.*]

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, I am willing to use any influence I may be presumed to possess towards the regulation of a protracted debate like this upon an important subject. I have always sincerely desired to keep in view two objects: the one was, to secure, as far as I could for both sides of the House, a fair and free discussion; and the other was, when that discussion was obtained, to facilitate the progress of public business, even if I disapproved of the measures of the Government. Now, there is no doubt that the discussion upon the Amendment of the noble Lord has been protracted for a considerable period; but I am sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will admit that the subject is one of vast importance; and though not wishing to say anything the least discourteous to the right hon. Gentleman, I must remind him that there is in this debate a peculiarity which has given it this protracted character, and may probably be extended beyond that period which was at first anticipated. The House will recollect, and it is but fair to the noble Lord who moved the Amendment, as well as to those hon. Gentlemen who support it, to bear the fact in mind, that this debate was adjourned during the recess in a peculiar manner to another place. The consequence of that operation, upon which I wish at present to make no comment, in its effects on the debate in this House has been, that a great many speeches must be answered which were not made in the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will admit that, not contented with the usual speech of Ministers in introducing a measure, not contented with the ordinary expository speech in his place in Parliament, he took the opportunity of visiting the county palatine, where he made no less than six speeches on this subject. Under any circumstances I should not think myself entitled to make speeches to that amount. We on this side of the House are not in the position of the most favourable mortals before us; and as my name has been mentioned frequently in the course of this debate, it will not perhaps be thought unreasonable in me to expect that the House will allow me to make a few observations before it terminates. The debate will be opened on Monday by an orator of commanding powers, who, whatever may be our differences of opinion, seldom enters into a debate without adding some fuel to the fire. From communications which have been made to me, not only by Gentlemen who honour me with their confidence and friendship, but by some accounts from the benches opposite, I do not think that this debate will be concluded by Monday evening; but perhaps by that time we may be able to form some estimate as to the period of its conclusion. Under these circumstances the right hon. Gentleman will agree with me, that it will be necessary, in order to ensure the termination of the debate at some reasonable period, that we must all of us be prepared to make some sacrifices. All cannot expect on this Motion the opportunity which I am sure all would enjoy. But still I think that, on Monday evening, we shall be able to see how the debate is proceeding; and I should certainly hope that, before the end of the week, we may see its termination.

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

The Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that Mr. Speaker had been obliged, by the state of his health, to retire from the House for the remainder of the night:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

EXCHEQUER AND AUDIT DEPARTMENTS (*re-committed*) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers.*)

[BILL 79.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

MR. CRAUFURD called attention to that provision in the Bill which would prevent the members of the Audit Board sitting in that House. Those gentlemen were the Officers of the House of Commons, as against the Government of the day, and it would be most useful to have them in the House, in order to assist the House in exercising the necessary control over the Executive.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER could not agree with the hon. Gentleman that it was desirable that the Members of the Audit Board should have seats in the House of Commons. It would be an innovation on our present law, and not a useful one. He was always under the impression that it was through an oversight that the Controller of the Exchequer was not excluded from the House of Lords. The sitting of those gentlemen in the House would be only attended with confusion. It would be much the same in principle as if the permanent Under Secretary to the Treasury were admitted to a seat in the House; but the proposal of his hon. Friend was still more objectionable, because the members of the Audit Board had to proceed with judicial impartiality and entire independence, and nothing could be more detrimental to that character than to place those gentlemen in a position where a conscientious expression of their views might bring them into collision with the Government of the day or with partizans or opponents on either side.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER said, that irrespective of the question whether the members of the Board ought to be admitted to that House or not, at all events, the Audit Department ought to be considered not as a subordinate, but as a superior branch of administration; and until it was so considered it would never be effectual for the purpose for which it was intended. It appeared by the investigation before the Public Monies Committee that the Audit Board was always considered subordinate, and the present Bill, though it made some improvement in the status of the Board, did not go far enough. The jealousy of the Treasury was still seen in this Bill—it was the most powerful, jealous, and encroaching of all the Departments, and therefore it ought to be the most vigilantly watched by the House. The evening was so far advanced that he should not think of occupying the time of the House by moving an Amendment upon the Bill; but he could not allow it to pass without entering his protest against its principle, which in his opinion was contrary to the true principle of audit.

MR. AYRTON hoped that the Government would not sanction the admission of the Officer belonging to this Department into the House.

MR. HENLEY believed that the result of the Controller having a seat in the House would be an injury to the public business. The only way to render that Officer perfectly useless would be to give him a seat.

MR. CHILDERS said, that the power of the Audit Office had greatly increased of late years. He quite concurred in the opinion expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire that the object for which the Controller was appointed would be entirely frustrated by his having a seat in Parliament. He therefore proposed the insertion of words which would provide against such a contingency.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, as a Member of the Committee, had no objection to the insertion of the words proposed, although the question was not specifically brought under the notice of the Committee.

Words *inserted.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 2 and 3 *agreed to.*

Clause 4. (Salaries and Pensions of the Comptroller and Auditor General).

MR. CRAUFURD urged that pensions should be payable after shorter periods of service.

Sir George Bowyer

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, it was impracticable to make arrangements for paying pensions on retirement after five years' or one year's service; that if the pensions were in proportion to short periods of service they would be ridiculously small, and that there might be circumstances under which such pensions would offer a dangerous inducement to persons to pass through the office merely for the sake of the pensions.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 5, 6, and 7 *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Appointment of Officers and Clerks).

SIR GEORGE BOWYER moved the insertion of the word "Treasury," and the substitution of the words "Controller and Auditor General."

MR. THOMSON HANKEY said, that as all the clerks were to be paid by that House, it was desirable that some Member of the Government who had a seat in the House should be made responsible for the appointment.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER said, that if his Amendment were agreed to the Treasury would still have the power of settling the number and salaries of the *personnel,* while the Head of the Department would only have the selection of the most fitting persons.

MR. CHILDERS concurred with the hon. Member for Peterborough that some Minister ought to be responsible for the appointments made.

MR. CRAUFURD did not see why the Audit Board should not have the initiative in the appointments, even if such appointments were to be subject to the approval of the Treasury.

Amendment *withdrawn.*

Clause amended and *agreed to.*

Clause 9

SIR GEORGE BOWYER moved that the Chairman report Progress.

House *resumed.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

FORSYTH'S INDEMNITY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. LOWE, Bill to indemnify William Forsyth, esquire, one of Her Majesty's Counsel, from any penal consequences which he may have incurred by sitting or voting as a Member of the House of Commons while holding the Office of Standing Counsel to the Secretary of

State in Council of India, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Lowe and Mr. Scourfield.

Bill *presented*, and read the first and second time; *committed; considered* in Committee, and *reported*, without Amendment; read the third time, and *passed*.

House adjourned at Two o'clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, April 23, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Several Lords took the Oath.

Public Bills—*First Reading*—Forsyth's Indemnity* (78).

Report—East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer* (75).

Third Reading—Parliamentary Oaths Amendment* (76).

Royal Assent—County Courts; Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases.

THE CATTLE DISEASES ACT AND ORDER IN COUNCIL OF MARCH 24.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of **DERBY** desired to call the attention of the noble Earl the President of the Council (Earl Granville) to a point in the Order in Council of the 24th March which he could not help thinking had been somewhat misinterpreted, or, at all events, that an effect had been given to it which had hardly been contemplated by its framers. Among various very proper provisions which that Order contained was one providing that no dung, hay, straw, or other articles used on farms, either for the food of animals or for or about any infected beasts, should be removed from an infected place without a licence certifying that they had not been in contact with any diseased animal. No one knew better than the noble Earl the President of the Council that farmers in the immediate neighbourhood of London were absolutely dependent upon being able to send their produce into the London market; but under such an Order as this not only no hides, skins, or so forth might be removed, but no articles of food for animals could be removed, a matter entailing great hardship on these farmers. A case had recently happened to Colonel Talbot which had given rise to very great inconvenience. In that case application was made to a magistrate for the necessary licence; but the magistrate replied that though he would be very glad to do anything he could, yet he should not feel justified in taking the responsibility of certifying that the articles sought to be removed had not been in contact with any diseased animal. If it were necessary that the magistrate in each case should have to certify from his own knowledge, it would be absolutely impossible that any traffic could go on; the whole traffic of these farms would be absolutely and entirely put an end to. If the food required for the cattle could not be removed from one part of the farm to another, the cattle would be starved. Even milk necessary for consumption would be prevented from coming into the metropolis. He could not help thinking that this had been carried to an extent beyond what was anticipated by the Order in Council, and he believed some alteration would be necessary, or else the whole of the farms in the neighbourhood of the metropolis would be hermetically sealed. He thought it was necessary to give more enlarged powers to the local authorities, their present powers being insufficient.

Earl **GRANVILLE** said, it had not been the intention of the Council in making the Order to prevent milk from healthy animals from arriving at its destination. No doubt in all cases of this kind great individual hardship was occasioned for the general good; but he thought there was ground to believe that the magistrate to whom Colonel Talbot applied in this instance was unnecessarily timid. The very essence of the Order was to protect the farmer from the litter and other matters calculated to spread the disease, and the intention of the Privy Council was to allow competent witnesses, such as magistrates living on the spot, to come to a conclusion as to whether it was or was not perfectly safe to allow such things to be removed. After the statement of the noble Earl, he thought there would be no difficulty in Colonel Talbot's obtaining the licence to which he was entitled.

The Earl of **DERBY** asked, whether it would be necessary to make a separate application to the local authorities for each ton of hay or each load of mangold wurzel, even if it had not been in the neighbourhood of or about any infected animals? If that should be so the application would be a practical impediment to the farmer in carrying on his business.

Earl **GRANVILLE** said, it would clearly be almost impossible to take up the time of the magistrates with separate applications on account of every single ton of hay or load of produce that had to be removed; but, on the other hand, it would be extremely dangerous to give a licence that would apply to a whole farm.

ABYSSINIA—RELEASE OF BRITISH SUBJECTS IN ABYSSINIA—TELEGRAM FROM COLONEL MEREWETHER.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of CLARENDON: My Lords, as your Lordships take a deep interest in all that concerns the Abyssinian captives, I have no doubt you will allow me to read a dispatch received this day at the Foreign Office. It is from Colonel Merewether, C. B., our Political Resident at Aden, and is dated

"Aden, March 28, 1866.

"My Lord,—I have the honour to report for your Lordship's information that the *Victoria* has just returned from Massowah, bringing news from Mr. Rassam up to the 7th of February, dated from Ajan Muder, in South Western Abyssinia, and stating that the Emperor had given him a most magnificent reception. A regularly constituted Embassy from England could not have been treated with greater honour and attention. A few hours after his first interview with His Majesty, the latter ordered the release of all the European prisoners, including the missionaries and the Frenchmen, and directed that they should all be made over to Mr. Rassam, to take out with him from Abyssinia, which he hoped to leave about the end of March. The King sent his chamberlain to Magdala to unfetter the prisoners, and to bring them to meet Mr. Rassam at Debra Tabor, to which place the latter and his companions were proceeding from the Court, then in Godjam, and where he expected to receive the released captives about the end of February. The Emperor has written a most polite letter to the Queen, which Mr. Rassam felt sure would please Her Majesty and the British nation. The Emperor had also made Mr. Rassam handsome presents, and was preparing more to give to the mission before leaving the country. The above was received at Massowah on the 18th of March. We may, therefore, expect to hear of Mr. Rassam having actually met and received the released captives about the 10th or 12th proximo, when the *Victoria* will again visit Massowah. I have the honour to be, my Lord, Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

"W. L. Merewether,
"Lieutenant Colonel, Resident."

The Earl of DERBY said, that nothing could be more satisfactory than the despatch just read by the noble Earl. He was only sorry that his noble and learned Friend (Lord Chelmsford), who had taken such interest in this subject, was not in the House to share the gratification which he was sure their Lordships must feel at this early intelligence.

Earl Granville

PRIVATE BILLS.

On the Motion of The Chairman of Committees, it was *Ordered*—

"That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a Second Time after *Friday* the 29*th Day of June* next:

"That no Bill confirming any Provisional Order of the Board of Health, or authorizing any Inclosure of Lands under Special Report of the Inclosure Commissioners for England and Wales, or for confirming any Scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a Second Time after *Friday* the 29*th Day of June* next:

"That no Bill confirming any Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, shall be read a Second Time after *Friday* the 29*th Day of June* next:

"That when a Bill shall have passed this House with Amendments, these Orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended."

THE POOR LAW—STRAND UNION WORKHOUSE.—OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of CARNARVON said, he desired to call the attention of the noble Earl the President of the Council to a subject which had been brought under the notice of the House by a noble Marquess (the Marquess Townshend) a few evenings ago—he referred to the statement with regard to the Strand Union Workhouse. He would not now say anything as to the management of the workhouse, but it was admitted beyond question that the sick wards are small and crowded; and as if to aggravate the matter, a large carpet-beating establishment had been sanctioned under the windows of the sick wards, which was most injurious to the health of those who occupied them. In summer there was no alternative but either to close the windows and suffocate the patients, or to open the windows and to poison them with clouds of dust. His noble Friend, in answer to the noble Marquess, was reported to have said that no complaint of this discreditable state of things had been made by the doctors attached to the workhouse. Now he was informed that complaints had been made over and over again by the doctor who attended the workhouse to the Board of Guardians, and he believed that communications had passed on the subject between the guardians and the Poor Law Board. The late Mr. Wakley, on one occasion when holding an inquest there, was so struck by the bad construction of the buildings that he remonstrated on the subject. The President of the Council had also said that 300 feet of air was the allowance for each person; but he believed that the Poor Law Board required 300 cubic feet of air for each able-bodied person in the dormitories, and that for each person in the sick wards 500 cubic feet was the minimum. Now, he was of opinion that even 500 cubic feet was not sufficient for the necessities of the case. The Military Hospital Commission laid down that 1,200 feet of air was the least that should be allowed, and of course military hospitals were generally better situated than workhouse hospitals. The eminent doctors and surgeons who lately signed a memorandum, which the noble Earl might have seen, on the subject of workhouse infirmaries, had stated that in their opinion not less than 1,000 feet of air was necessary. If he recollected rightly, 900 feet of air was allowed to the convict in his cell. All that would go to show that the allowance of 500 feet was far below the mark, and yet he felt bound to say that in the vast majority of the London workhouses the space allowed was far below that minimum. He believed in the Strand Union there were only two wards which contained more, while the far greater number had even less.

EARL GRANVILLE thanked his noble Friend for having given him an opportunity of correcting an inaccuracy in connection with this matter. The doctors had never made any representation to the Poor Law Board on the subject in question, but the communication to which he had referred had come from the Board of Guardians. As to the number of cubic feet, his answer was given with regard to the casual wards, to which he understood the question applied, and not to the sick wards. The Poor Law Board required 300 cubic feet for the casual wards; and they added that they required more for the sick wards, without, however, specifying how much more. It would be satisfactory to the noble Earl to hear that a short time ago the Medical Inspector of the Poor Law Board and the architect were desired to make a round of the workhouses in order to make an inspection and report upon this subject.

House adjourned at a quarter before
Six o'clock, till To-morrow,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, April 23, 1866.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRIT ISSUED—*For* Helston, *v.* Adolphus William Young, esquire, void Election.

SELECT COMMITTEE—On East India Communications, Mr. Marsh and Mr. Brooks *adedd; on* Vaccination, Mr. Algernon Egerton *discharged,* Colonel Gilpin *added.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Representation of the People [68], adjourned debate *resumed,* and again *adjourned;* Convicts' Property* [105]; Harbour Loans* [112]; Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) * [117]; Divorce and Matrimonial Causes * [17].

Third Reading — Local Government Supplemental * [107]; Cattle Assurance * [90]; Customs Duties (Isle of Man) * [91], and *passed.*

MAIDSTONE ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That William Lee, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone.

That James Whatman, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

That the Committee are of opinion that Henry Chambers, in his evidence before them, was guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury.

That it was proved to the Committee that colourmen and bands of music were employed by both parties at the last Election.

That it was not proved that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last Election.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Ordered, That Mr. Attorney General be directed to prosecute Henry Chambers for wilful and corrupt perjury in giving his Evidence before the said Committee.

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee to be laid before this House.—(*Mr. Howard.*)

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The House being informed by Mr. Speaker, that he had received notice that the Commission originally appointed for Friday last is now ordered for this day, and that, being disabled from attending with the House in the House of Peers, he should be obliged, by permission of the House, to withdraw before the arrival of the Usher of the Black Rod:—

Resolved, That during the temporary absence of Mr. Speaker from the House this day, for the reason stated by him, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means do take the Chair as Deputy Speaker, and do attend with the House in the House of Peers, and do report to the House the Royal Assent to the said Acts.—(*Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen.*)

Whereupon Mr. Speaker withdrew from the House, and Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the said Resolution.

Message to attend the LORDS COMMISSIONERS:—

The House went; and being returned; — Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER *reported* the *Royal Assent* to,—

County Courts Bill.
Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases Bill.
Manchester Royal Exchange Bill.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER returned to the House, and resumed the Chair.

LANCASTER BOROUGH ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Edward Matthew Fenwick, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Lancaster.

That Henry William Schneider, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Lancaster.

That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

1. That Edward Matthew Fenwick, esquire, and Henry William Schneider, esquire, were, by their Agents, guilty of bribery at the last Election for the said Borough.

2. That it was proved to the Committee that Thomas Baxter was bribed by the payment of fifteen pounds: — William Armistead of ten pounds:—John Western of ten pounds:—Richard Armistead of ten pounds:—Thomas Edmondson of ten pounds:—Henry Casson of twelve pounds: —Daniel Edmondson (the son of Jonas) of ten or twelve pounds:— John Edmondson of fifteen pounds:—Thomas Bennison of ten pounds:—and William Sharples of ten pounds.

3. That there was no evidence to show that the said acts of bribery were committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Edward Matthew Fenwick, esquire, and Henry William Schneider, esquire.

4. That the Committee have reason to believe that corrupt practices extensively prevailed at the last Election.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee to be laid before this House.—(*Mr. Howes.*)

CONVENTION OF PARIS (1815-18).
QUESTION.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether any demand has been made within the last four months by the French Government on the British Government relative to the re-payment by the latter Government to the former of an alleged surplus of the monies provided by France, and paid to the English Government, in pursuance of the Convention of Paris (1815-18), to indemnify British subjects for their losses by confiscation during the Revolutionary Government; or whether any communications on the above subject have been passed between the Governments of the two countries; and, if so, whether there is any objection to lay such communications upon the table of the House?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he did not know of any case of application on the subject to the British Government by the French Government for a considerable time back. He thought that the last occasion on which an application was made was in 1856. Various representations with respect to these monies had been made by individuals, but not by either of the two Governments, sometimes to the effect that a sum of £1,000,000, or more, was due from England to the French Government, and other times to the effect that £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 were due to the English Government by the French Government; but upon the whole the Government did not attach much weight to these representations, and he thought that the transactions under the Convention had closed long ago, according to the intentions of the contracting parties. Therefore, to his knowledge, no communications answering the description given by the hon. Baronet had taken place within the time referred to, or for a long time before.

SCOTLAND — POOR LAW BOARD EDINBURGH.—QUESTION.

MR. H. BAILLIE said, he wished to ask the Lord Advocate, Whether he would be disposed to introduce a Bill to authorize the appointment of two legal assessors to the Poor Law Board in Edinburgh, to decide all cases relating to the administration of the Poor Law in Scotland, in order to save the large sums annually paid for legal expenses?

The LORD ADVOCATE, in reply, said, the subject of the appointment of two legal assessors to the Poor Law Board in Edinburgh, in order to save expense, was under consideration, but he believed the statements of the expenses had been much exaggerated.

DURATION OF THE COAL FIELDS.

QUESTION.

Mr. LIDDELL said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will lay upon the table of the House any information furnished to the Government by the Geological Survey Department on the supply of Coal in England?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that the Geological Survey Department had collected a large amount of information relative to the exhaustion of the coal-fields. If the papers were laid before Parliament in their present shape, he feared they would not be intelligible; but he would communicate with the Department, and with their assistance he thought there would be no difficulty in extracting a considerable amount of information connected with the subject, which he would lay on the table of the House.

FIRE INSURANCE DUTY.—QUESTION.

Mr. LOCKE said, he would beg to ask the hon. Member for Dudley, Whether it is his intention to bring on his Motion on the subject of Fire Insurances? He understood that the hon. Member for Greenwich would postpone his Motion, which stood first on the paper, in order that the debate on the Reform Bill might be proceeded with.

Mr. H. B. SHERIDAN replied, that if he postponed the Motion of which he had given notice, and which stood for to-morrow, he should have very little chance of bringing the subject forward before the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his Budget. Even if the Reform debate concluded on Thursday, he should have very little chance of bringing on his Motion on Friday, as an Amendment in Supply; for an important Amendment connected with Ireland had precedence. If, therefore, he did not persevere with his Motion to-morrow he should very much peril its success. He hoped he did no violence to the wishes of the House, or of those who were in the habit of acting with him, by declining to give way, although he certainly had no desire to stand in the way of the important debate on Reform. His Motion, however, need not last more than an hour, or an hour and a half; and, after all, he did not believe the Reform debate would end either on Thursday or Friday. The labours of a great many years he felt would be sacrificed if he did not persevere with his Motion to-morrow.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[Bill 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING.

DEBATE RESUMED. SIXTH NIGHT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was—

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed*.

Mr. BRIGHT: Mr. Speaker—Before I address myself to the question which is before the House there are two matters of a personal character which I wish to dispose of. The right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), on the first night of this debate, made a complaint that, in a speech out of this House, I had imputed to him, or quoted as from him, words which he had not uttered. The right hon. Gentleman was quite right to make that complaint if he thought it worth while to make it, because there is no doubt—and I am sorry it so happened—that some three or four words which he had not spoken in that connection were added to the passage which he had spoken. I regret the inaccuracy very much. I have the satisfaction, however, of knowing or believing that I did not do the right hon. Gentleman any substantial injustice. The other point refers to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley). He retorted on me a charge of conspiracy with reference to two divisions which took place some years ago in this House—one with regard to the division on the China War, and the other with regard to the division on the Conspiracy Bill. In neither of these cases did the mover of the resolution obtain a seconder from the opposite side of the House. But with regard to the first case, that of the China War, I was not in Parliament during that session. I was in bad health, out of the country; and the first thing I heard of it was from reading an account of what had taken place in this House in a public newsroom in the city of Rome. With regard to the other case, that of the Conspiracy Bill, Members who were then in the House will recollect that on the first division, on the first reading of the Bill, nearly one hundred Members—I think the exact number was ninety-nine—voted in the division against the introduction or first reading of the Bill, including Lord John Russell, the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gibson), myself, and many others. The noble Lord's friends warmly welcomed and supported that Bill. Before the second reading came on, my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade gave notice of a resolution, which was afterwards carried by the House; the noble Lord with his friends, departing altogether from their votes on the first reading, turned completely round upon their own policy, supported my right hon. Friend, went into the same lobby with him, and made a majority against the Government of Lord Palmerston. If there was any conspiracy then it was owing to the other side of the House; and if it was a dirty conspiracy, the dirt was imported into it by the noble Lord and his friends. Now, these are inaccuracies which may occur in debate, but I think it was necessary to make an apology to the right hon. Gentleman, and to explain the charge which the noble Lord had inadvertently brought against me. I come now to the question before the House, and the resolution which has been moved by the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor). Whatever are the words in which a resolution or design is wrapped up in this House, the true meaning of it generally comes out during the debate; but the noble Lord the Member for Chester did not in the slightest degree leave us in difficulty with respect to his view; and there can be nothing more clear than this—I do not in the slightest degree blame him for it—he has a perfect right to his opinion—that he stands as the principal opponent of this measure, on the ground either that he is opposed to all Reform, or to carrying the extension of the franchise to the degree to which the Government propose to carry it by this Bill; and I suppose, if the truth were known, and judging from his speech, that if the Government would lay on the table of the House the Seats Bill, which may be as extensive with respect to that part of the subject as this measure of the franchise is on another part, it would meet with the strenuous opposition of the noble Lord. Thus the Bill that is not before us is made an excuse and weapon for destroying the Bill that is before us. That, I think, as far as I can judge, is a fair statement of the position of the noble Lord; but when the Seats Bill is laid on the table of the House we shall have an opportunity of knowing what is the course which the noble Lord will take upon it. I come now to the speech made by the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), in seconding the Amendment. His speech was much more ingenious, and it was much less candid; it was much less straightforward, but it lands us in the same position: and the noble Lord during his speech, twice at least if not oftener, used the words the "balance of power" in reference to the representation of the people in the House. We have done now pretty much with the balance of power on the Continent of Europe. I hope the time will come when we shall have no such phrase as the balance of power in this House. Sir, I think that this House should be a fair representation of the people of this country; and though it may not be desirable, and even if desirable it may not be attainable, that all persons should vote, yet, far short of that, I am persuaded that the representation may be so arranged that every person of every class will feel that his interests are fairly represented, and will be fairly consulted by the House. But the noble Lord is afflicted with a species of terror, or perhaps I should rather call it a feeling of no confidence, such as I have hardly ever seen before in this House. He has no confidence in the Government. That I have very often seen, and I have seen him in a Government in which the majority of the House had no confidence; but he has no confidence in the House. First of all the Government, through the Prime Minister and through the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have given the most distinct promises with regard to the Bill for the rearrangement of seats; but the noble Lord has no confidence in those promises. The noble Lord has no confidence in the House, because, if this Franchise Bill should pass, he thinks the House would do something very unwise in the matter of the Seats Bill. He has no confidence in the people, because the object of this Bill is to admit them to the franchise; and he has a special terror of what might happen if the Franchise Bill should pass and the Seats Bill fail, and we should all be sent back to enlarged constituencies to be returned to a future Parliament. The noble Lord must know that whatever be the rearrangement of seats, it must lead to greater popular authority in the House—and whatever be the extension of the franchise, it must lead to greater power of the people in the House; and we all know that henceforth the Parliament which shall be elected on an extended franchise, or after a redistribution of seats, will be a Parliament of full authority in the country—that it will have power still further to extend the franchise, and still further to alter the distribution of seats—and to conduct all matters connected with the legislation of the empire. And therefore the noble Lord, who was in such extraordinary tremor and anxiety with regard to what may happen if this Bill pass or if the other fail, appears to me to present the most singular exhibition of political anxiety I have ever seen. I thought that when the noble Lord concluded his speech, everything in it that was true was unimportant, and everything that seemed to be in the least important was not true. But there is one thing important, and that is the opposition of the noble Lord to this Bill; and I hope that he and his colleague in proposing this resolution will forgive me if I say, that I think it is a painful, nay, more, that it is a perilous thing, when the heirs of two of the most ancient and the most wealthy and powerful of the houses of the English nobility oppose themselves to this moderate and just Bill; and have set themselves by a coalition in this House to drive Lord Russell from power—for this and this only offence, that he wields the authority of his great office to extend in what I believe to be a moderate and conservative degree the franchises of his countrymen. The noble Lord the Member for Chester blames the Government because it took advice from this end of this side of the House, and did not confine themselves to the advice of powerful persons of the Whig party. Well, I should think that a measure which was supported by the House of Bedford, by the House of Devonshire, that had among its supporters the Howards, the Sutherlands, the Duke of Somerset, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Clarendon, Lord Granville—and Lord Stanley, the Postmaster-General—and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department—I think a measure that is supported by the names of the peers I have mentioned cannot be said to be introduced to this House without some consultation with the Whig party. Now, if the noble Lord will allow me, in a perfectly friendly manner, to give him a little advice, I will do it in one sentence. The course that he is taking is a course which tends to drive away important persons of the Whig party from connexion with the Liberal and popular party in this House and in the country; and if he should succeed in dissevering the most intelligent of the Whig nobility from the great popular party in the country; and if he should transfer them to the other side and put all the Dukes and the Nobles on one side of Parliament, and the popular party on the other—if the noble Lord knows anything whatever of history, he will know this, that when the great popular party of a country are fighting by themselves against the nobles of a country, whatever their virtues and whatever their power—speaking of many of them—he may rely upon it that the popular party will win, and the nobles will go down. The noble Lord and many hon. Members of the House during this debate have referred to the influence I have had as to the mode in which this question has been brought before Parliament. Seven years ago, just about the time when the Government of Lord Derby was thrown out, in an accidental or incidental conversation with Lord Russell, I suggested to him, that whenever this question was brought again before Parliament, the proper course to take was to introduce the Franchise Bill by itself. From 1860 until this hour, I have only had one interview—a very short interview—and only one conversation of a political character, with Lord Russell; and until he mentioned the matter at the meeting of his supporters the other day in Downing Street, I must confess to the House that I was totally in ignorance of the fact, that the course of the Government in this matter had been in any degree influenced by anything I have said. Now it was at a meeting at Rochdale, in January, that I advised not only the Government to take this course, but that I advised all persons in favour of Reform, in the country, to consider the question and to support this course if it should be taken by the Government. I will tell the House with the most complete candour and fairness what were the reasons which led me to give this advice. I will assume that the House is in favour of Reform. I know what a stretch of imagination is necessary in order to come to that conclusion. But as I am speaking not only to Gentlemen in this House, but to some persons who are outside this House, I shall treat the question just as if we were all in favour of some measure of Reform, but differed a little as to the mode and extent. When I suggested to Earl Russell, six years ago, that he should bring in a Franchise Bill first, he replied that if he did so, the opponents of Reform would make use of that plan of action to oppose the Government altogether. They would submit a resolution to the House, in all probability, to the effect that they will not proceed with any measure to extend the franchise till they see before them everything that the Government has to propose on the subject of Reform. The noble Lord knows perfectly well the tactics of hon. Gentlemen opposite; and, notwithstanding that knowledge, he has thought it his duty to introduce the Franchise Bill first, and ask the House to take the question of the redistribution of seats at a later period. Now, let us consider why he should do that. If you will carry back your recollection to the year 1848, when a resolution was proposed by Mr. Hume, and come down step by step from that period until the occasion of the introduction of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds last year, you will see that the great question, so far as it is to be regarded as a great popular question, and as it was discussed at public meetings, has all along been much more a question of the franchise than of the seats. The pledges of Government and of Parliament have been not so much pledges to the middle classes, that their share of political power should be rendered more equal by a redistribution of seats, but more distinctly and fully they have been pledged to the working classes, which are now an excluded class, that they should at some early day be admitted in some fair numbers to the franchise. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), and I think all within the House will agree, that apart from any effect in respect to the choice of Members which you may hope to produce by any kind of measure for the extension of the franchise, it is a thing desirable in the highest degree that there should be an extension of the franchise so far that the working people might feel that they were not purposely excluded. What I want is to give the sense of justice to a great class now labouring under a sense of long-continued injustice. And that is essential to be done, although that might not change the seat of any Member in this House—and although the distribution of seats were as equal as it can be made, and there were no other reform necessary but on this single question of the franchise. The House will see that there is an essential difference between the two questions. The extension of the franchise affects a peculiar portion of the population; the redistribution of seats does not: it affects all—the higher, the middle, and the lower classes (as to a portion of them) alike. It is not a class question, and therefore is not pressed with the same force and resolution, as a great measure of justice, with which the question of the franchise has been urged. An hon. Gentleman who sits opposite to me is of opinion, that when you come to consider the redistribution of seats, you will find that a larger amount of power ought to be given to the counties. Well, no doubt the counties ought to receive more members—and so ought some of the largest boroughs, and some new boroughs ought to be created. All that is necessary for the fair representation of all classes, but not as a matter of justice to any special and peculiar class. The other matter comes before us with a claim far more pressing,—I will not say far more righteous, but certainly far more urgent. And then another reason why this course should be adopted is one which any Member of the Government would see at once; and, as a supporter of the Government, in this view I will take the liberty of stating it. It is very much more simple than if this measure were mixed up with another great question. We all know perfectly well whether, in our view, it is desirable to reduce the franchise or not, from £10 to £8 or to £7. We can form an opinion on that point; and it does not matter for that purpose whether there is any redistribution of seats or not. I could frame a measure, and so could the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), which would give a vote to every man in the kingdom, and yet the redistribution of seats could be so made that the representation should be infinitely worse than it is at present. When you have argued the question of the suffrage and settled it, you stand and will stand free to deal with the question of the redistribution of seats. And if you think to juggle the public by giving the suffrage with the one hand, and with the other preventing the fair representation of the people by an unjust redistribution of seats, you will not be reforming the constitution of this House, but you will be making the people more dissatisfied with Parliament than they have been in past times. Another reason why I think the Government were justified in the course which they have taken was, that they did not wish to combine the various classes of opponents to the different branches of Reform into an opposition to the extension of the franchise. They thought that a Bill which would get rid of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty seats would be a matter of great difficulty to those Members who represented seats that would be disfranchised by such a Bill. But yet they felt they might fairly ask the aid of the Members for the small boroughs to do justice to the excluded class, and open the franchise fully and fairly to the people. I have heard rumours that amongst those who are likely to vote for the Amendment of the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor), with only one exception, there may probably not be a single representative of any small borough which is likely to be disfranchised by the Bill which the Government have promised to lay upon the table. Therefore, the Members for the small boroughs, wherever they sit and whosoever they are, on this side of the House, have not shown any hostility to an extension of the franchise, whatever may be their course when the Distribution of Seats Bill makes its appearance on the table. Now, I shall have to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman opposite on a point to which I am going to address myself. I think that a Franchise Bill which does not adjust this question, for a period at least as long as the Bill of 1832 settled the question of Reform, is a Franchise Bill which it is not desirable for this House to consent to. I think, further, that a Distribution of Seats Bill which will not settle that question as long as the Franchise Bill will settle the question of franchise is not a desirable Bill for this House to pass. It seems to me, that after you have settled the franchise and come to discuss the question of seats, Parliament and the public directing their view to that one question, it would be much more likely that the question of seats could be settled so far that for thirty, and it may be for fifty, years no further change would be required. I believe that if Parliament were honestly disposed to amend the representation they could do it infinitely better, more solidly, more satisfactorily to the people, and with greater duration to our legislation, by taking the course proposed by the Government than by taking that proposed by the Amendment of the Member for Chester, or the course proposed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, which, I suppose, is to get rid of this Bill and the Government by the same vote. I believe that the argument which I have laid before the House—not so clearly as I could have wished—had the effect of inducing a great number of Reformers in the country to approve of the course which the Government has taken; and I believe now, that if I were addressing hon. Gentlemen opposite as friends of Reform, and if they were its friends, that argument would be conclusive. But if they are not friends of Reform, of course I must content myself with saying what I have to say, and leaving it to make a very small impression upon understandings not prepared, I fear, to receive the truth in this matter. Now, I said I must quote a right hon. Gentleman that I see opposite me. My own honest opinion is, that the course which has been pursued by the Government is one of true Conservatism. I think nothing can be more unconservative, if I may use such a term, than that Parliament should have these questions of representation, questions affecting the basis of power, discussed in this House during every Session—and discussed throughout the country during every Parliamentary recess. There were some striking things said in this House on the 1st of March in the year 1859, when two right hon. Gentlemen (Mr. Henley and Mr. Walpole), who sit opposite in the serene calm of the third bench, withdrew from the Government of Lord Derby and explained to the House the grounds of that withdrawal. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) made use of these observations:—

> "If one thing can be more destructive to our Constitution than another it will be to have a Reform Bill every few years; and that will be the case if you cannot settle your system upon such grounds that you can reasonably hope that it will stand, I do not say for a long time—finality is out of the question—but for a decent number of years. If you cannot do that, you will lay the foundation for revolution."

Well, the foundation for revolution in almost every country—unless history lies dreadfully—has been laid by those who pretended to be specially Conservative. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman. I say there never was a passage uttered in this House of more undoubted wisdom than that which the right hon. Gentleman spoke on that occasion. Now I should like to ask the House, why is it that we are now involved in this question of Reform? Yes, I will answer hon. Gentlemen immediately. The reason is this—because there is a feeling universal throughout the country, that the whole number of electors is much too small to afford a satisfactory representation of the people, and that the largest class in the country, that class which, most of all, makes the nation, is specially excluded. I shall show hon. Gentlemen opposite, that that is so by referring to a Bill of their own leaders and of their own Ministry. It was on the 28th of February, 1859, that the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) stood up at this table to propose a Reform Bill on behalf of the Conservative party, of which he is the leader in this House. He quoted on that occasion no less than three QUEEN's Speeches, and he told us that three Prime Ministers had stated distinctly it was necessary to do something on this question. And that there may be no mistake, for there is a peculiarity in the way that the right hon. Gentleman has put it, I will read to you the question he asked of the House. After describing the previous attempts, which every Minister thinks it necessary to do—after quoting three QUEEN's Speeches—he says:—

> "Were you to allow this question, which the Sovereign had three times announced, was one that ought to be dealt with, which three Prime Ministers, among the most skilful and authoritative of our statesmen, had declared it was their intention to deal with, to remain in abeyance."

The answer he would give, of course, is—No; we could not let it remain in abeyance. But since then there have been three other Royal Speeches in which the same thing has been said with increased emphasis, and three other Prime Ministers have declared their intention to deal with it. What is the subject to which the right hon. Gentleman refers when he puts in this form the inquiry, "Are you to allow this question to remain in abeyance?" I maintain that it is the question of the suffrage—the question of the franchise. What did the right hon. Gentleman deal with? He gave, according to his own statement, a Franchise Bill of the largest proportions—so largely proportioned that it dwarfs the measure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What did the right hon. Gentleman do with regard to the seats? He altered fifteen seats. It was no redistribution at all. It was a ludicrous attempt to touch the question of the redistribution of seats. Gentlemen opposite have forgotten these words of the right hon. Gentleman. They would be a great deal wiser if they remembered some other of the things which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) tells them. The right hon. Gentleman proposed that the county franchise should be reduced to £10, and he said it would extend the franchise in counties by not fewer than 200,000 electors. Well, 200,000 is the exact number which the Chancellor of the Exchequer expects to be added to the county electors by the Bill now before the House. What did the right hon. Gentlemen do with regard to the borough franchise? He proposed that everybody who had an income of £10 a year from the funds, from bank stock, or from East India stock, or bonds, should be enfranchised. It would be easy to show what a very foolish idea of enfranchisement that was; because it is capable of distinct proof that any man who chose to invest £5,000 or £6,000, for which he would receive a steady interest, might enfranchise all his family, from his grandfather to his youngest son, and even include all his uncles, nephews and first cousins. And those persons would be enfranchised by a fraud it would be impossible to detect. He proposed that every person who had invested £60 in a savings bank even for one year should have a vote. Thirdly, he proposed that pensioners in receipt of £20 should have a vote. Fourthly, he proposed that persons occupying part of a house—that is, lodgers paying a sum of £20—should have a vote. The right hon. Gentleman also proposed that graduates of universities, ministers of religion, members of the various branches of the legal profession, medical men, and schoolmasters having certificates should have votes. I will not discuss whether that was a proper extension of the suffrage. If you like I will admit that every person included there—barring cases of fraud—would be suitable persons; I am almost afraid of using the word suitable; the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) objects altogether to that; but I will admit that, according to my notion, and according to the notion of the majority of the House, all such persons, with the exception I have mentioned, would be proper persons to have votes. At what did the right hon. Gentleman estimate the number that would be added to the borough electors? At no less than 300,000. That is 50 per cent more than are proposed to be added to the borough electors by the Bill now on the table. Perhaps not exactly of the same class of persons. But whether you give the franchise to A. or to B., it is equally an extension of the franchise. And when the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire was asked, towards the close of the discussion on the first night, what he thought would be the total addition to the number of electors in England and Wales, he said the increase, no doubt, would be very considerable—exceeding half a million, he had no hesitation in saying. In answer to the Royal Speeches, in deference to what three Prime Minsters had said, and in answer to the inquiry, "Can the question any longer be left in abeyance," what did the Government of Lord Derby do? They introduced a Franchise Bill, which I do not undertake to approve or to condemn—that is not necessary for my argument—they introduced a Franchise Bill that would, as they maintained, increase the electoral body by not less than half a million—100,000 more than the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to admit by the Bill which he has laid on the table. Am I not, therefore, justified in saying that the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) was in fact a Franchise Bill? What did the right hon. Gentleman do with regard to the seats? He was very chary in telling the House what he was about to do with regard to the seats. Perhaps he did not wish to shock the Members who represented boroughs he was going to disfranchise. Or he knew it would be thought that what he proposed was trivial, and he was afraid the House would laugh at what he was going to propose; he did not disfranchise the borough of Calne. He did not even disfranchise the borough of Portarlington, for which, after a very exhaustive poll of forty-six voters, my right hon. Friend the Attorney-General for Ireland has been returned to this House. Nay, the right hon. Gentleman defended the borough of Arundel in several paragraphs of his speech. He said that the noble Lord who represents the borough of Arundel (Lord E. Howard) sits here as the representative of 900,000 Catholics in England and Wales. But the borough of Arundel is as much a nomination borough as any borough in Schedule A of the Reform Bill. The right hon. Gentleman touched the question of seats so gently, that he took only fifteen seats from small boroughs having now two seats each; and he distributed them in a way which I am willing to admit was a very fair and satisfactory distribution of them, because he gave four seats to the West Riding of Yorkshire, two seats to South Lancashire, two seats to Middlesex, and he proposed to create seven new boroughs from towns that have a population entitling them to representatives. Therefore I do not complain at all of the way in which he distributed the seats; but my argument goes to show that the Government of Lord Derby felt that the real question involved in their Reform measure was the question of the franchise; and accordingly Lord Derby's Government proposed by their Bill to admit 500,000 new electors, and to distribute fifteen seats. Well, I think that nothing could be more absurd than to say that that was not a great Franchise Bill—or that it was a Bill for the settlement of the distribution of seats. Now, if I were to ask the right hon. Gentleman why he touched the seats with so delicate a hand, and if he were to give me a candid and an honest answer, he would say that the difficulties attending the question of the distribution are very much greater than the difficulties attending the question of the franchise; and he would say, I am quite sure, that a Government having to deal with the question, than which none can be more important, and perhaps none can be more difficult, would be justified in taking that course which avoided difficulties as much as possible, and enabled Parliament to deal fairly and simply at once with one important branch of it. Now, I will ask hon. Gentlemen opposite and the House—I will ask those Gentlemen on this side of the House who are supposed, I hope untruly, to be about to vote for the Member for Chester—do they believe that if the right hon. Gentleman had passed his Bill admitting 500,000 electors, new voters, and distributing only fifteen seats, the question of the arrangement of seats would have been settled for twenty, or ten, or for five years? Is not every man in the House convinced, and is not the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) convinced, that in the very next Parliament elected after the passing of that Bill there would have been propositions submitted to the House, declaring that those small boroughs, which the right hon. Gentleman had not touched, were not proper boroughs to return Members to that House, and that a certain number of them should be extinguished, and their Members turned over to the populous counties and to the populous and great cities? We should have had exactly what the Member for Oxfordshire wants to avoid. We should have had every year a debate on a new Reform Bill, and a debate on the basis of power; and there would have been contentions between the landowners and the rest of the population who are represented, and probably the hon. Gentleman who sits on that bench and I, both wishing to do fairly to all parts of the country in this matter, might not have agreed whether Members should be given more to counties or more to boroughs. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to add to this Bill those fifteen seats of the Member for Buckinghamshire—that little clause of his and that very short schedule—do you think the House would agree to pass it? Will the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) and his colleague who seconded the Amendment (Lord Stanley) frankly tell the House that if the distribution clauses of Lord Derby's Bill were added to the Bill of Lord Russell, they would give that Bill their support? If they will undertake to do that, although it might ruin the Government if I said it, still I would give them a little advice, and I would counsel them to take it. You know perfectly well that all this clamour you have been making for the distribution of seats—I am afraid, Sir, there is not a Parliamentary term that will enable me to express what I mean with sufficient delicacy—but, at least, one thing you know, you do not impose upon us with that cry. I do not think I felt the slightest satisfaction when the Government proposed to lay upon the table of the House their Bill for the Distribution of Seats. If I had been a Minister, I think I should have recommended that the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) for example, and the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranbourne)—both of whom must know a good deal about the small boroughs—should have been requested to prepare clauses of disfranchisement for the fair consideration of the Government. Now, it is obvious that if the arguments on which you have opposed this Bill are your honest arguments, you would not support the Bill, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to propose to add to it the distribution clauses of the Bill of Lord Derby. And I think you would be wise in refusing it; because, although that distribution is, I believe, perfectly satisfactory and fair as far as it goes, yet it would not in any degree settle that question; and I am convinced that the greatest error the House can commit is to agree to something on the question of the franchise, and something on the question of the distribution of seats, by which neither the one question nor the other shall be settled. But, Sir, at this moment, the Government is assailed by a united party on the other side of the House, with a few recruits from this side. I tell hon. Gentlemen opposite that they are not in very good hands. The Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) and the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) are not, in my opinion, counsellors to be followed implicitly on this question of Reform; and, if anybody doubts it, I should call as witnesses the two right hon. Gentlemen to whom I have already referred. You have before you the Bill of Lord Russell's Government, and you know exactly what it is. You may think quite honestly that the reduction of the franchise is something more than is necessary, and you may even think it is something more than is safe, but you know exactly what it is. Well, you have listened with very small attention to the speakers on both sides of the House, if you do not, at least, know the worst of it. What was the Bill brought in by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire? and it had upon every clause of it the impress of his subtle understanding. I will tell you what was said of it by the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Walpole) on that night when he explained to us why he had withdrawn from the Government. He said that their scheme of suffrage was

> "A most dangerous innovation, by giving to temporary and fluctuating occupations a preponderating influence over property and intelligence, while it throws large masses into the constituencies who are almost exempt from direct taxation."

That is exactly what your friends have been saying of the Bill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. And, again, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University said, and this, I think, was in a letter which he wrote to Lord Derby, and which he read to the House:—

> "The measure which the Cabinet are prepared to recommend (and in which he did not, as you know, concur) is one which we should all of us have strongly opposed if either Lord Palmerston or Lord Russell had ventured to bring it forward."

The right hon. Gentleman knew exactly the character of his colleagues. It was prophetic of the course which they would take, and which they have taken now, in opposition to a Bill which only proposes to admit 400,000 electors, while their own Bill proposed to admit 500,000. Now, the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) on the same evening, with regard to the same question, used these remarkable words:—

> "I believe that identity of suffrage, which is the principle of the Government Bill, is fatal to the constitution of this country."

I do not think that anybody in the House during this discussion has gone so far as to say that the reduction of £3 in the borough franchise would be absolutely fatal to the Constitution of this country, seeing that five hundred years ago, and less, every freeman, being a householder, in every borough had a vote for Members to sit in this House. Well, but the two right hon. Gentlemen expressed these opinions of the Bill introduced by the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli); and I say, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues, especially the noble lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), are condemned out of the mouths of their own colleagues, and ought to be put out of court as advisers on this question. I shall now ask the attention of the House for a little time to the Bill itself. Hitherto I have been speaking as to the mode in which the Government have proposed to deal with this question. As to the Bill itself, almost everything that has been said has been said in connexion with the Borough Franchise. I omit altogether the sort of frenzy into which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley) worked himself the other night when discussing the question of the County Franchise. For aught that I know, a £14 rental franchise in counties may have a very fatal effect in North Staffordshire. I like to take the advice and the opinion of men of great experience and great moderation, and it is for this reason that I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) to step for one moment into the witness-box on this matter. He said in the speech to which I have referred:—

> "Ever since the Reform Act of 1832 the working people have been having a less and less share in the representation. They had considerable representation before 1832 through the scot and lot voters and the free men. They are gradually dying out."

And turning to those about him he said—

> "I ask my hon. Friends near me to consider if they draw a hard line, and leave the working people behind it, how long they think it will stand?"

That was a wise saying, a pertinent question in the year 1859, and it is not less wise and worth considering in the year 1866. But then the most part of it is exactly what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said. The right hon. Gentleman has told the House that the proportionate power of the working classes in the constituencies has been diminishing since 1832. I believe there can be no manner of doubt about it; and here I must tell the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that my opinion is—and I think every Member of the House who represents a borough, excepting the borough of Coventry and perhaps one or two others, must know—that the figures which have been laid before the House, by which the per centage of working men electors is put down at 25 or 26 per cent, are not in any degree to be relied upon, nor are they in any degree accurate.

Hon. Gentlemen have a perfect right, of course, in assailing the Government to fight them upon the figures which the Government have laid before them; and Government will find it very difficult, of course, to retreat from the position they have taken on those figures. But I am not one of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, and I am not one of the Government responsible for these figures; I am here, as an advocate, an honest advocate, of a moderate and just measure of Reform; and, therefore, I must deal with this question from my own point of view, and speak of it in language based on the convictions I hold. I will give the House only two cases. I have not sought for them in the Blue-book, nor have I written about the country for them. The first is to be found in a petition presented to this House by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent. That is a borough which consists of three or four neighbouring towns—one of them the town of Burslem. The Blue-book says that Burslem has a constituency of 680 electors; of these 197 are represented to be working men, so that they form 29 per cent of the whole number. But what does the petition say? It has been accurately prepared, and it gives an analysis for Burslem. It says that of the 197 which the Chancellor of the Exchequer's figures represent as working men one is a publican, and that there are 40 beersellers; that is, 40 to begin with. I would rather have 40 real hardworking, industrious artizans in any borough than 40 beersellers. But there are grocers and other shopkeepers to the number of 48; and there are persons who are put down as cart owners, cowkeepers, and tradesmen with assistants, earning profits from the capital in their trade, to the number of 33. Adding these together and deducting them from the 197, there remain in the town of Burslem but 75 working men on the register. You may bring, if you like, the whole staff of the Poor-law Board, but they cannot alter these figures. It shall not, however, be my fault, if the House discusses this question and decides it upon figures which are deceptive and delusive. I will take only one other town, the borough of Wakefield. The Blue-book says that there are 122 working men in the borough, or rather over 11 per cent on the register; but letting the terms of the Blue-book decide who is a working man, the number really is not more than 77. If you will deduct the various classes to which I have referred with regard to Burslem, you will bring the number 122 in Wakefield down to 35; so that, instead of 11 per cent of the constituency being working men, there are not more than 3 per cent. I was talking the other day to a Member on this side of the House, the hon. Member for Newark, who mentioned some figures to me in reference to that borough. I have not them in my recollection, but I hope he will take some opportunity of stating them to the House. The return for Newark was sent back twice, if not three times for correction. I think at least one county magistrate was put down among the working men. Now, I shall trouble the House with a very few figures. We have had the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and quite as many more from Gentlemen opposite; I shall therefore make mine as brief as possible. The Blue-book says that there are 126,000 working men on the register. I have given you cases which are but samples of the rest, and my exceptions bring the number down to one-third of it; but for the sake of being within the mark, I will call it one-half—that brings the 126,000 down to 63,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer calculated that by the repeal of the ratepaying clauses and of the system of compounding, 60,000 persons would be admitted; but he put the whole of that 60,000 down as working men. Surely there is not a man in England who will say that he believes that an accurate calculation. I have put them down at 20,000. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that the number of persons who would be admitted by a reduction of the franchise from £10 to £7 is 144,000, and he estimates all these as working men. But we all know perfectly well, that all these persons paying between £7 and £10 are not, and cannot be, and never have been, working men. I take it that if two-thirds of them are estimated as working men, it will be as fair a calculation as can be made. Now, look at the result. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says, that when this Bill is passed there will be 330,000 working men upon the register. I say there will be 179,000, or, say, 180,000, of whom 116,000 will be admitted by this Bill. What, then, will be the gross effect? The whole number of borough electors in England and Wales, if this Bill should pass, upon the calculation of the Blue-book, will be 691,000, of whom 180,000, or just about one-fourth, will be working men. Therefore, that portion of the people which forms at least three-fourths of the whole population would only have one-fourth of the electoral power in the boroughs, and have, of course, a power so small, as to be not worth reckoning in the whole constituency of the counties. I shall say no more about the statistics; but, having made my calculations, I thought they were as proper to place before the House as those of the Chancellor of the Exchequer or of any Gentleman opposite. But, after all, there will be more than four millions of men left out; and I think so much political cowardice, if I may use the word, has never been exhibited as was shown by the mover and seconder of the Amendment before the House. Sir, I am astonished at these alarmist speeches. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer Lytton), too, deals in alarmist speeches. He comes down once or twice in a session and makes a speech on this question, which gives great satisfaction to the House, if not the least attention is paid to what there is in it. I mean that the tone and the manner, the language and the imagery, all please us; but I grieve beyond measure when I think of the side to which he gives his great influence. Now, in 1860, he said the Bill which was introduced by Lord John Russell as a Member of Lord Palmerston's Government was a Bill to admit poverty and passion to the franchise. This is one of the passages which fell from his lips:—

> "Though we are willing to admit poverty and passion into the franchise, we are not willing to give poverty and passion the lion's share of political power over capital and knowledge."

That is very similar to what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University said of the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire. He did not use the words "poverty and passion," but said that elements fatal to the Constitution were likely to be introduced by that Bill. Now, the right Hon. Gentleman once held very different opinions. Many years ago he published a book called "England and the English"—a book which was not profound, but very amusing; and I should like to read to the House a sentence which the right hon. Gentleman put as a motto at the beginning of his book, and putting it so I presume he adopted it. He took it, I believe, from Ben Johnson, and it ran—

> "I am he
> Have measured all the shires of England over,
> For to these savages I was addicted
> To search their nature and make odd discoveries."

And the discovery which he made in 1860 was this, that if you introduce artizans and working men of between £10 and £6 rental, you will give the lion's share of the representation to the poverty and the passion of the country. But the right hon. Gentleman now assumes a different tone, for in his speech last week he did not treat the working people as though they were made up mostly of poverty and passion; but he said many generous things of them; and he told us how there was a tie, not of interest only, but of the strongest respect and affection between the rich and the employing class and the poor and the labourers. But what of these compliments? They may be perfectly sincere. Probably the right hon Gentleman never believed that the working men between £10 and £6 were represented by poverty and passion; and the language he used the other night far more accurately stated his real opinion of the great body of his countrymen. Still he would give them compliments and not votes; and it seems to me, that if the men have all these good qualities which he described, flattery of that kind would go down very ill with the great body of the people who are asking, that at least some of them should be given representation in this House. It reminded me very much of that couplet from Shenstone,—

> "He kicked them downstairs with such a sweet grace,
> They may think he was handing them up."

No one would have thought that, after a speech full of such noble and generous sympathy towards the working classes, the right hon. Gentleman would have concluded by throwing all the weight of his character and all the influence of his oratory into the side of the party which not only says little that is kind and generous—but which—well, then, of a party which does sometimes say something generous of the working class, but never shows the slightest disposition to confer upon them a particle of political rights. But I only ask the right hon. Gentleman's attention to one point upon which he touched. With great force and great beauty of language he spoke of some friends and neighbours of mine—the members of co-operative societies of Rochdale. I thought when I heard him that he was going back unconsciously to the year 1832, when he was a most enthusiastic supporter of the Reform Bill of that day—when he was a Member of the Parliamentary Candidate Society, with the learned Member for Sheffield and Jeremy Bentham, with Joseph Hume and Daniel O'Connell, with Francis Place, with Charles Buller, and many others. I thought he was going back to that time; but if not so far back as that, then to 1837 and 1848, in both of which years, if I am not mistaken, the right hon. Gentleman was in favour of a wide extension of the franchise. He said, and most of you must have heard him:—

> "The operatives of Rochdale having been left thus free to mature uncorrupted their self-guiding power, would now, I grant, be strong enough to resist such temptation. To artizans of that kind, whatever their political creed, I am willing to grant the franchise. Willing, do I say? That word is much too cold. I wish that, like some old commonwealth of Greece, we might admit them to the franchise by acclamation, too proud of such fellow-citizens to ask what rent they pay for their houses."

Well, Sir, I happen to live among those persons of whom the right hon. Gentleman has spoken in such enthusiastic language; and if the House will permit me I will state a little of their case, and I have no objection to rest my case upon theirs. In 1860, upon the discussion of the Bill of the Government, I read some facts connected with these co-operative societies. Those which I purpose now to bring before the House will be very brief, but they are very suggestive, and, I think, very gratifying. There are, in Rochdale, three bodies or companies, managed by three committees; one is called the Equitable Pioneers' Society, and chiefly concerns itself with the various shops and retail businesses. Lately, when I was at home, about a fortnight ago, some facts were sent to me by the secretary of the society. He says:—

> "The society now comprises 5,500 members, chiefly heads of families. It has a capital of £85,000, and is selling goods and receiving money at the rate of £230,000 per annum."

Now, let the House bear in mind that there is not one of these 5,500 ever gets one farthing of credit in dealing with these shops. The business is managed by a committee of 11, of whom two only have a borough vote; one of them is a bookkeeper and treasurer of the society, and therefore, in a certain sense, is not what we understand as a working man. He and another have borough votes, but the president and secretary of this great establishment have no votes. I come to the Rochdale District Corn Mill Society, which owns a very fine establishment. It has a capital of £60,000, and its turnover every year—the amount of goods sold and money received—is £164,000. This is also managed by a committee of 11. And let the House hear this. Neither the treasurer, president, nor secretary, nor any member of this committee, has a borough vote. One of the committee has a county vote, being, I dare say, the owner of a cottage in the neighbourhood. Then there is the Rochdale Co-operative Manufacturing Society. This has more than 1,500 members, a capital of £109,000, and has built two of the largest and handsomest mills in the neighbourhood. Among these eleven there are three borough voters and two county voters; but of these five voters only one is a working man in the usual sense. The votes are thus distributed; one manager, one manufacturer, one draper, one out of business, and only one a workman or mechanic. This is the summary: "Total capital of these societies, £227,246." The whole of that has been contributed, or nearly so, by the working men of Rochdale, of whom the right hon. Gentleman spoke the other night in such glowing language. The secretary goes on to say:

> "The writer has seen members of the Pioneer Society who had scarcely any work or income for their families during the cotton famine come for 5*s.* or 10*s.* from their investments of previous savings just to help them on with their small earnings. They did not ask or receive relief. This does not show improvidence or want of forethought. Now that the cotton famine is nearly over they are again saving money. In June 1865, their investments were, in the Pioneer Society, £59,000; in September 1865, £63,000; in December 1865, 69,000; and in March 1866, they reached £76,600."

I hope the right hon. Gentleman the member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) will forgive me for reading the next line. He says:—

> "This does not agree with the Lowe theory. What is taking place in the Rochdale societies is occurring in a greater or less degree in all the societies, of which there are five hundred or six hundred throughout the country."

Now, what is the answer that anybody is to give to these men? Will you give them the same answer as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Hertfordshire, Sir Bulwer Lytton? Will you receive them with open arms, and not inquire whether they pay £6 or £7 for their rental? To every Gentleman in favour of the reduction of the borough franchise —excluding the Member for Belfast altogether—I put this question: If you accept all these as worthy the description given by one of your own eminent leaders, will you allow these 5,500 to have the franchise in the borough of Rochdale? And I tell the right hon. Gentleman that it is a great mistake to suppose the men of Rochdale are better than the men of the various manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire. They would altogether scout the idea; and I, who know them as well as most men know them, and who also know a good deal both of the working men of Lancashire and Yorkshire—I would say, these men of Rochdale are a fair sample of the general run of the industrious, intelligent, and independent population among whom we live. The hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing) is terrified at the idea of the votes of these men. Northern breezes and long experience have done nothing for him. He described all the good things that have taken place in Parliament during the last twenty years, but he did not seem to be aware that there was not one of those good things that I know of that the working men of Lancashire and Yorkshire did not heartily support. But he might have known, that not half a dozen Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House gave any continuous support to those good things. The hon. Gentleman puts it to the credit of Parliament that it repealed the corn laws. Why, if he had asked my right hon. Friend the President of the Poor-law Board he would have told him that, until Sir R. Peel abandoned Protection, there never were 100 Members who gave a vote in favour of the repeal of the corn laws. The result was brought about, as everybody knows now, by agitation, at an enormous cost of money and labour, and by the occurrence of a famine which was disgraceful to our Government —not because potatoes decayed, but that when they did decay a whole population ran the risk of being destroyed. The same men who out of doors and in Parliament asked for those good measures are the very men who now ask for this Bill; and I venture to tell the House, that if they do not get this Bill they will get one very much like it. I shall not ask the attention of the House to more figures, nor shall I endeavour to expose the inconsistency of any Members on either side of the House; but I will ask them as calmly as I can do to consider the present position of this question. Look all over the country, and you will see that in one fortnight there were, I believe I am below the mark in saying there were, 100 meetings. Yes, there were many more than 100 public meetings held which were unanimously in favour of this Bill. Well, hon. Gentlemen opposite do not pursue the policy which enables them to hold public meetings. You have had many hundred petitions, with something over half a million of signatures, laid on the table of this House. If this Bill were so destructive, if it struck the same terror in the heart of the people that it has struck into the heart of the Member for King's Lynn, surely you would have had some visible result. I believe there was a petition from King's Lynn. I think I saw a paragraph in a newspaper saying that 100 of the noble Lord's constituents were sending up a petition in support of his Amendment. But if the people believed the Bill to be injurious, if they thought the Government had pursued a wrong course, if they imagined the middle classes were going to be swamped, and that all kinds of evil—

some of which one hardly dare look at—were to follow from the passing of this Bill, is it conceivable that public meetings would not have been held to protest and to petition the House against it. Look at the moderate and reasonable character of the meetings that have been held. And I appeal particularly to the two right hon. Gentlemen opposite, for I think they are not steeped in that unteachable opinion which seems general among their party,—the course which they took in 1859 shows that they have a real conviction, and are conscientiously desirous of acting on that conviction,—and I ask them to look at the moderate and reasonable character of all the resolutions that have been passed, at the whole conduct and attitude of the people at these public meetings. When Lord John Russell, previous to 1830, year after year, was bringing forward his measures for the Reform of Parliament, suppose some of these propositions had been adopted, that some of the old boroughs had been abolished, and Parliament to a certain extent reformed, do you not think the result would have been at least as favourable for those who were then so timid that they could not venture to take a step till they came to that terrible abyss which they dared not look into in the years 1831–2? You may always pass a measure with more honour to Parliament, with more good to the country, in a time of tranquillity, than you can in a time of force and compulsion. And yet a time of tranquillity is invariably, though not immediately, followed in matters of this kind by a time of force and compulsion. What is it that you propose to do? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) told you what must happen if you draw a hard line and put the working men behind it, and say, "That separates us from you." You have a million of electors now, and you have close on eight millions of grown men in the United Kingdom. Can the one million say to the six or seven millions, "Hither shall you come and no further." Is the thing possible? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) is looking this way—does he think that it is possible? No; he does not; he knows it to be impossible. He has the experience of a very eminent member of his own family, who thought it possible to maintain the principle of Protection; and finally, after doing everything that he could, after violating his own convictions, after fighting the battle of hon. Gentlemen opposite for years, he was compelled at last to surrender, and admit to the humblest man in the country—to the poorest weaver—that he, the great minister of state, had not comprehended this great question as the working men had comprehended it. I want to ask you whether you are resolved—for this question is put to us in discussing this Bill—whether you are resolved that a bolt shall be put on the door of the House of Commons, and that the people shall be kept for ever on the other side of it? The hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) told us the House of Commons was not to be a representation of persons, but a representation of classes. If the hon. and learned Gentleman gave in a court of law such opinions on law as he gives here on the Constitution, depend upon it he never would have occupied the eminent position which he does occupy in his profession. He knows perfectly well that there never was in the Constitution of this country such a thing as representation of classes in the Commons' House of Parliament. We should have been called the House of Classes, or something equally absurd, if anything so absurd as such a representation had taken place. He knows that in times previous to the usurpation of the Tudors and the Stuarts, every free man who had a house in a borough was represented here in this House; and he knows that the first parliament of Charles I. declared the franchise to be the right of every householder in every borough. And though the hon. and learned Gentleman attempted to show that the quotation I made from Lord Somers did not bear the interpretation I had put on it, if we come down to a much later period, and to the men who lived sixty, seventy, and eighty years ago, you will find that every leading man of the Liberal party at that time was in favour of extending the franchise far beyond that which is proposed by this Bill. If hon. Gentlemen opposite ever read anything of what is going on in the United States, they will see that there is a question there which is causing great difficulty, just as this question of Reform is here. It is proposed that to 4,000,000 of liberated negroes shall be given these rights:—That they shall no longer be bought and sold; that they may change their employment and their masters; that they may work for wages and save money; that they may be sued or sue in a court of law; and that they may give evidence in a court of justice. Beyond that, at present, their rights are not to go. They who were their masters not two years ago, and who bought and sold them, are not willing to grant these negroes the suffrage which hitherto, to all free men, has been almost universal in that country. The franchise never was universal in this country, and it is not necessary that it ever should be. But we have a representative Constitution here; and if the Crown be secured in its dignity, and the House of Lords in the enjoyment of its privileges, the House of Commons sits here, or ought as a matter of right to sit here, by the free election of the commonalty of the kingdom. I ask Gentlemen opposite whether they mean to stop the working men of this country exactly where the 4,000,000 of negroes in the United States are stopped. Well, that is a fair question. In England all those rights which the Bill just passed by the American Congress gives the negro are rights which are conferred for ever to the great body of our people; but the negroes ask for further rights—and though it has been resolved not to give them the right of voting, I don't think in the United States that position can be long sustained. I am quite sure in this country it cannot be sustained. If you are resisting millions of people behind those embankments which you have built up, how long will it be before the surging sea from the other side will wash over and destroy the embankments which you have raised? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire asked the question with which I commenced my speech—"Can this question be kept in abeyance?" That was the question he asked in 1859. I ask, can it be kept in abeyance in 1866? You may defeat this Bill. I am not learned in parliamentary computations. There are Gentlemen on both sides who, I dare say, profess to tell what majority there may be for the Bill, or what majority against it; but of these things I know nothing. I will admit, if you like, that you can reject this Bill—you can defeat the Government, you can drive Lord Russell from office. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, no doubt, has a parliamentary Bradshaw, and all his lines converge to Downing Street. I myself have contributed to bring him there before now, but we had shortly to expel him from his high position in official life. If the right hon. Gentleman goes to Downing Street again, is he prepared to say that we shall have no Reform Bill; or is he prepared to say that we shall have one, and to propose such a measure as he proposed in 1859, one which his own colleagues, two of the most experienced of his colleagues, declared to be fatal to the Constitution? Gentlemen opposite may find that the question will break up their party. If they come to deal with the question of Reform they will find a difficulty; and if they do not deal with it, their difficulty will not be less. There still remains the nation outside this House; and there will still remain the great question of Parliamentary Reform. I believe there never was a Bill submitted to this House by a Government connected with the Liberal party which it was more clearly the duty and interest of what is called the Conservative party to support. In 1832 the Tory party, who had opposed the Bill, went to their constituencies, and were almost destroyed for the time. If this Bill should pass, the enlarged constituencies will not probably look very favourably on the men who tried to prevent it from passing. When you see a man like Lord Russell, who was the chief spirit of the Bill of 1832, who promoted it years before it made its appearance, and who proposed it on the part of the Government—when you see him, knowing, as he does, as much of this question as, probably, any man in this House, so convinced of the necessity of doing something, and offering a Bill so reasonable as this—I cannot help saying that either hon. Gentlemen opposite are misled by their leaders, or have driven their leaders into a course which, I think, is pernicious to the true interests of their party. Perhaps there never was a Bill which more commended itself to the advancing intelligence of the people. There is not a whisper of dissatisfaction with it throughout the country. I speak of those persons who are in favour of any improvement in the representation of the people; and, so far as I am able to gather information on the subject, even many of those who are called Conservatives throughout the country are weary of the perpetual discussion of this question, and would be glad if it could be settled on the terms which the Government propose. Well, Sir, I did not rise with the expectation that I could convince hon. Gentlemen that they are wrong and that I am right. The most I can hope for is, that some fact or argument may find a lodgment in some mind, and may mitigate its hostility to a measure which, I think, the country requires, and which the country is anxious to receive. I have not spoken in favour of the Government. I have said that I think their figures are wrong, and that the case which they laid before the House is unnecessarily and untruly injurious to their own Bill and their own cause. Will the House believe for once that I am speaking to them from no party spirit—from no wish to do anything with the country but what they must wish themselves? In my view I am at least as honest as they can be in theirs. I have been misrepresented, condemned, and denounced by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and by not a few writers in their press; but my conscience tells me I have laboured honestly only to destroy what is evil and build up what is good. The political gains of the last twenty-five years, which were summed up the other night by the Member for Wick (Mr. Laing) are my political gains, if they can be called the gains in any degree of any living Englishman. If now, in all the great centres of our population—in Birmingham with its busy district, in Manchester with its belt of towns, in the populous West Riding of Yorkshire, in Glasgow and amid the industries of the West of Scotland, and in this great Babylon where we are assembled, and which our people have built—if, I say, at this moment, we do not find ourselves surrounded by hungry and exasperated multitudes—if now, more than at any time during the last hundred years, it may be said, to quote the beautiful words of Mr. Sheridan, that "Content sits basking on the cheek of toil"—and if this House and if its statesmen glory in the change, have not I, as much as any living man, some claim to partake of that glory? I know, every thoughtful man among you knows, and the Gentlemen who sit upon that bench, and who are leading you to this enterprise, know that the policy which I have urged upon the House and upon the country, as far as it has hitherto been accepted by Parliament, is a policy conservative of the public welfare, strengthening the just authority of Parliament, and adding from day to day fresh lustre and dignity to the Crown. And now, when I speak to you and ask you to pass this Bill; when I plead on behalf of those who are not allowed to speak for themselves in this House, if you could raise yourselves for this night, for this hour, above the region of party strife—if you could free yourselves from the pestilent atmosphere of passion and prejudice which so often surrounds us here, I feel confident that, at this moment, I should not plead in vain with the Imperial Parliament on behalf of the English Constitution and the English People.

MR. WHITESIDE: The hon. Gentleman has made an explanation to the House of a certain matter which affected him personally. Now, I think, Sir, there was another subject with which he might have graciously dealt. He might have explained, if indeed he could explain, the language which he has used towards this House, of which he has the honour of being a Member. I could have expected from one of his nice and critical taste, and of his sensitive feelings, that if inadvertently he had made use of language which his calm judgment might disapprove, affecting the character and dignity of this House, he would have seized the first opportunity which presented itself to explain and apologize to the House for that language. But he has not thought fit so to do, and there I let the matter rest. If I agreed with him that this Parliament was unfavourable to every good measure, and was composed of men who were deadly enemies of the cause of freedom, I would pursue the same course as the hon. Gentleman, and would endeavour to overturn the authority of an odious Assembly. But I believe that Assembly to be the very reverse of what the hon. Gentleman has represented it to be. I believe that it is an ancient, a noble, and a popular Assembly, which rarely passes a bad measure, and generally advocates good ones. For many years what measure had been passed that was deserving of the language of the hon. Member for Birmingham? I wonder, indeed, that the sentiment he expressed should have gained even the temporary approval of hon. Gentlemen opposite. The hon. Gentleman has indulged to-night in a peculiar style of oratory. Some orators speak to persuade, some to delight, and some to convince; others speak in order to abuse, terrify, and denounce. The hon. Gentleman commenced his oration this evening by calling the attention of the noble lord (Earl Grosvenor), who moved this Motion, to the painful and perilous position in which he stands. He addressed my noble Friend who sits near me (Lord Stanley) in the same language. Sir, that language is the language of the platform. It is the language of men who meet, not to argue or debate, but to vituperate and denounce. It is the language of men each of whom can only excel the other by the violence of his abuse levelled against better men than themselves. The hon. Gentleman seemed to imagine that he has provoked a great conflict in this country. Now, I believe that there is no conflict whatever existing between the nobles and the people, because I have too high an opinion of the good sense of the nation to believe the representations of the hon. Gentleman; and I think I may safely say—meaning him no discourtesy whatever—that those to whom he has addressed his threats despise those threats and defy his power. The hon. Gentleman then proceeded to inform us that he suggested to Lord Russell, in the year 1860, how this Bill should be drawn. He advised the noble Lord to confine the Bill to the enlargement of the franchise, and the fact that the noble Lord retained that advice in his memory is recorded in the Bill now upon the table. I think it is to be regretted that, instead of being adviser to Her Majesty's advisers, the hon. Gentleman has not formed a Cabinet himself, or been a Member of a Cabinet, because the responsibilities of office would teach him a moderation in his opinions and a caution in the conduct of discussions which we cannot expect from the irresponsible adviser of the advisers of the QUEEN. Well, the hon. Gentleman went on to inform us that Reform had always been held to consist more in the enlargement of the franchise than in the redistribution of seats. Now, I controvert and deny that; and when I deal with that part of the hon. Gentleman's speech, I will prove that no one has asserted the contrary more boldly and more frequently than the hon. Gentleman himself. The hon. Gentleman has said that, under the mask of redistributing the seats, matters might be made much worse than they are at present. Well, that only proves the necessity of settling the whole question at once. The observation of the hon. Gentleman answers itself. He informed us next that it was inconvenient to have a Reform Bill introduced every Session. There I agree with him; but he proceeded to ask the question, "Why are we engaged with Reform?" Well, no man can answer that question better than the hon. Gentleman himself. However, I myself will endeavour to give a reply when I touch upon the history of this great question. The hon. Gentleman proceeded to make some remarks upon the Bill of Lord Derby; and, as it appeared to me, the hon. Gentleman's faculties almost forsook him when he criticized that Bill, for he approved that Bill, which he said was excellent, and would have enlarged the franchise somewhat more than the measure proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. He expatiated upon the judgment and the policy which Lord Derby's Bill displayed; but he forgot to tell the House that the excellence of the Bill made no impression on his understanding and his conscience at the time it was introduced; and that, of that Bill, from the beginning to the end of the discussions which it caused in this House, he was the constant and formidable antagonist. At that time he saw no advantages in the Bill. He then found in it nothing that was beneficial to the public; but now, for the purpose of his present argument, he has discovered that the Bill was a good one. And then the hon. Gentleman said, not in the heat of his argument, perceiving the contradiction —"You Tories never make the smallest concession to the people; you never yield anything to popular rights." The hon. Gentleman actually said this after he had laboriously proved by the figures which he quoted, that the Bill which he had praised would have extended the franchise to half a million of people; while the Bill of the Government only extends it to some 300,000 or 400,000. After that the hon. Gentleman turned round and made a vigorous attack upon the Government measure. He said that the figures were all wrong. He proved the inaccuracy of the statistics in order to establish a case for the Bill. The hon. Gentleman forgot that HER MAJESTY said in her Speech from the Throne, that the Bill would be recommended on the faith of the statistics collected by the Government. Therefore, if their statistics are all wrong, the Bill rests upon an erroneous and flimsy foundation. The argument of the hon. Gentleman would be a good argument for an inquiry into the inaccuracy of the statistics; but it was an unfortunate argument to use for the purpose he had in view. The hon. Member referred to his favourite subject, the co-operative societies of Rochdale; and he described what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer mentioned on a former occasion as a grievance to be redressed—namely, that a number of respectable persons live outside the borough boundary, and, not being included within the borough, they cannot vote. [Mr. BRIGHT: "No, no!"] If this be so, the hon. Gentleman has missed his point. If a number of persons, deserving of the franchise, live outside the borough boundary, you ought to have that boundary enlarged, and therefore this fragmentary measure of Reform is not one worthy of the attention of the House. If the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer are wrong to the extent of the difference between 180,000 and 235,000, the hon. Gentleman, in attempting to support the Government, has given good reason why we ought not to act on the faith of these statistics. I think these were the points made by the hon. Member in the course of his somewhat discursive speech. He forgot the Amendment, he forgot the Bill, he forgot the question. He will forgive me for saying that, while I listened to him with pleasure, I failed to discover what his views were; I failed to discover the advantages of the Bill; I failed to discover what was his answer to the argument of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley). In the language of the platform the hon. Gentleman stated that the noble Lord said nothing of importance that was not untrue. I beg to say that such language is not quite Parliamentary. [Mr. BRIGHT: I did not say that.] I apprehend that the hon. Gentleman is in the habit of using such language elsewhere, but that he forgot for the moment where he was speaking. I dare say he did not intend to say what he said. If, instead of charging the noble Lord, the Member for King's Lynn, with a want of candour and a want of honesty, he had demolished some of his arguments, he would have done something more to the point; but, notwithstanding the hon. Member's oration, the arguments of the noble Lord remain untouched, and the Amendment is as strongly supported as it was before the hon. Member spoke. But the hon. Gentleman got upon his usual topic before he sat down—namely, America; I never heard him speak without introducing it. Whether his object be to warn or instruct us I do not know; but if there could be conceived an unhappy reference at present, it would be one to the constitution of America. For what purpose did he refer to it? He said that he wanted to ask a fair question—and I admit it was a fair question—and it was whether the House would treat the people of this country as in America they treated the negroes? I answer this fair question by saying, I think we shall not; and he may carry the answer to the town of Rochdale and make the most of it in addressing the respectable artizans of that place. The hon. Gentleman informed us that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton) delivered an indifferent speech. I know not whether he heard it—indeed, I doubt the fact—if he did, he has so much taste for true eloquence that he would have felt the argument, admired the eloquence, and relished the wit. Now that I have heard the hon. Gentleman and my right hon. Friend, I can assure him I am quite alive to the contrast. The hon. Gentleman, in the usual fashion of a man searching about for an argument, or for something to say, went back to I know not what particular period of his life to show that my right hon. Friend had concurred in what were termed liberal opinions, with certain eminent persons. But what does that prove? If even he had altered an opinion which was erroneously embraced, what does that prove but that he profits by age and experience. He does not resemble those obstinate, wrongheaded men, who blunder through their existence, becoming worse the longer they live. I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman included in his censure all those political men who have ever changed their opinions. If so, I wish he would take into consideration the political misconduct and inconsistencies of the right hon. Gentleman the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER. The hon. Gentleman has left the question of Parliamentary Reform much where he found it. Will he allow me to ask him,—What is Parliamentary Reform? I say it means the reconstitution of this House, the recasting of the political power of the country, and its transference to different places from those in which it is now deposited. If we were asked to punish Totnes and disfranchise it, I would do it on reasonable evidence with pleasure, just as I voted for the disfranchisement of St. Alban's. I thought we were always over scrupulous about proceeding by judicial conviction. If I were asked upon fair evidence to disfranchise a rotten borough and give the right of election to a more deserving place, I would do it instantly; and that would be the correction of an abuse. The enfranchisement of large numbers of persons may be an organic change in the Constitution. What led to the introduction of the first Reform Bill? Want of confidence on the part of the people, as I understood the argument, in the constitution and composition of this House. How did Earl Russell bring the subject before the House? Not merely by extending the franchise, but by redistributing seats. What was his analogy in explaining the necessity of the greater Reform? The well-known story that if a stranger visited England and asked how the guardians of our liberties were chosen, you would take the stranger to a rural district, point out three niches in a wall and say that they returned two Members to Parliament; you would take him to a broken mound and say it returned two Members; you would take him to a park where there were neither people nor dwellings, and you would say that that returned two Members; then you would take him to the great towns of England where there were magazines full of merchandise, and a busy population, and you would say that these great towns had no voice in the representation. Earl Russell, in the introductory speech, pointed out the small boroughs that ought to be disfranchised, and named the great towns to be enfranchised; and when he proposed to fix the franchise at £10 in cities and boroughs, he said he thought it was a reasonable figure, which would enable industrious artizans to obtain the franchise whenever they desired to do so. What was it Birmingham determined to do at that time? It formed a political union, and threatened to march upon London. I was present when Sir William Napier, the gallant Peninsular officer, appeared as a witness upon the trial of Mr. Smith O'Brien, and swore that a person, whom I will not name, asked him to march at the head of 100,000 men upon London to terrify the House of Lords into submission. He answered that he was not a traitor but a British soldier; and he added that he would repeat what had been said to him whenever the Government prosecuted any one for attempting to do that which was proposed, and would appear as a witness against the prosecution. When the hon. Gentleman talks of menace and intimidation, is he serving his own cause? Does he believe he is advancing the cause of Reform when he appeals to the people in the way in which he does? He describes them as a reasoning, thoughtful, and intelligent people. Are they so dull as to misunderstand the question before the House? What is it? The Government have produced what they call a Franchise Bill, and they announce that they have in contemplation other parts of a Reform scheme. What is the Amendment? It states simply that it is not expedient to proceed with this fragmentary scheme until the whole is before Parliament. That is the question, and the only question on which we have to vote. I entirely deny that we vote on the franchise question. I deny that I am asked to vote against Parliamentary Reform, because I supported the Bill of Lord Derby, which you yourselves (addressing those on the Ministerial Benches) admit was a much better measure than this. You gave a blind unreasoning opposition to that Bill, and yet you endeavour to fasten upon the party that sits here a determination to consider nothing, because they propose to consider everything. They ask for an entire Bill, which the leader of the House says is prepared: if it be so, why should we not, I would ask, be allowed to see it? If it be not prepared, why should we be called upon to legislate? The argument upon this point of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn has not been answered. A great many speakers on the other side of the House told us they would answer it, but they have never done so: the hon. Gentleman for Birmingham said something uncivil of the noble Lord, but then he left his argument untouched. Let me again put that argument before you. It is this: "You ask us to legislate on one part of a great subject. You admit you have by you a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats, which constitutes a main portion of that same subject, and that that measure is to be followed by a third Bill for the regulation of boundaries, also an important feature in the case. That being so, you call upon us to vote blindly on the first Bill before you show us the second and third, with which it is indissolubly connected; but to that request we decline to accede." Now, the history of this question furnishes very interesting ground for inquiry. Why is it, I should like to know, that the present measure assumes a shape unlike that shown by any other Reform Bill which has ever been laid on the table? Is not the course which in this instance the Government have adopted opposed to all the precedents on the question? Is it not opposed to the example set us on previous occasions by Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, and Lord Aberdeen? My theory in the matter is that the author of the Bill before us is the hon. Member for Birmingham, and that that is a just theory I think I shall be able satisfactorily to prove. The Bill has, I contend, been adopted by the Government on his advice, is framed in accordance with his speeches and professed opinions, and is so shaped as to lead to the accomplishment of the ulterior objects on this question which he has in view, and which we on this side of the House shall do all in our power to prevent or avert. The noble Lord the Member for Galway (Lord Dunkellin) made a short and sensible speech in which he alluded to the position in which Ireland is placed with respect to this question of the franchise, and the point is one which has a curious bearing on the general subject of Reform. On all former occasions on which a measure on the subject has been proposed, a Bill for Scotland, and one for Ireland, as well as for England, have been laid upon the table; and it is the fact that the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Baxter), who has favoured us with a speech in support of the present Bill—and whom I am sorry not to see in his place that I might ask him why it is that he does not advocate on this occasion the course which he formerly recommended—in 1859 was most indignant that the Reform Bill then laid upon the table, though a complete measure for England, did not include Scotland and Ireland also within its scope. But let the hon. Gentleman speak for himself. He said upon the occasion to which I refer:—

> "Another point to which he wished to call attention was that, up to the present time, the House had not had the slightest indication of the intention of the Government, and the inference he drew was, that no Reform Bill for those countries had been prepared."

He then called, after the manner of a gallant Scot, on every true Scotchman to join him in opposing a Bill which did not include Scotland, and concluded with a motion to the effect, that it was inexpedient to proceed with a partial Reform Bill. The argument of the hon. Member remains, though we have lost his support; he was at the time of which I am speaking a reasonable man. How so great a change has since come over him it is not for me to conjecture. But, be that as it may, there was great force in the question which was asked by the noble Lord the Member for Galway (Lord Dunkellin) with respect to the franchise in Ireland. The representation of that country must produce an effect on all your deliberations, but that is not the point on which I now desire to dwell. In Ireland four Reform Bills have been introduced; one at the time of the Union, and a second in the days of Catholic Emancipation, which proposed to abolish 40*s.* freeholders. In making that proposal Sir Robert Peel said:—

> "The comparative number of voters in counties in Ireland was much greater than in England. Comparing the amount of property, of education, and of intelligence in the counties of England and Ireland respectively with the number of voters which they contain, the disproportion is very striking."

He then goes on to quote Lord Bacon, and I am sorry the hon. Member for Birmingham is not in his place to listen to the quotation, for I am sure he never heard it before. It is as follows:—

> "When the multitude prevail the meaner sort are upon the upper hand, and those (generally ignorant) cannot judge of persons nor times, but being for the most part led by faction or affection, rather than by right understanding, and their elections, and thereby the general council of the nation, less generous and noble."

Sir R. Peel, on the occasion to which I am referring, recommended Parliament to abolish 200,000 40*s.* freeholders: Parliament took his advice, and created instead a £10 franchise. In 1832, that inveterate anti-Reformer, Lord Stanley—now the Earl of Derby—who was at the time Chief Secretary for Ireland, introduced a third Reform Bill for that country similar in substance to that which was passed for England. Again, in 1848, a Bill was introduced by Sir W. Somerville, which became law in 1850, and provided for the creation of an occupation franchise in counties; that was the measure in which the proposals of the hon. Member for East Surrey had their origin—the franchise established for Ireland having been a £12 rating franchise in counties, and a £10 rental or an £8 rating franchise in towns. That is the franchise at the present day in Ireland; and we have, I contend, a right to know from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is to be altered. It is no answer to me to say that a Bill on the subject will be laid on the table on a future day. The franchise is a sound franchise, and I am, in accordance with the argument of the hon. Member for Montrose to which I have adverted, entitled to see your proposals with respect to it before I give my support to the present Bill. That inveterate Reformer the President of the Board of Trade, it is true, with great presence of mind, bluntly told us the other night that we should hear all that the Government meant to do in this matter when it was convenient to them; but although that answer may suit a Minister, it will, I think, be regarded as hardly satisfactory by the House of Commons. Now I would, before I proceed further, call the attention of the House to the fact, that both the Members for the city of Dublin, who are large employers of labour, and both the Members for Liverpool, also great employers of labour, oppose this Bill, and oppose it upon a ground which neither the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), nor the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), although it goes to the root of his ingenious argument, has touched. I have a statement made to me by a gentleman who understands more about elections for the city of Dublin than any other I could name, and he informs me that no man could contest that city for a less sum than £10,000 if this Bill were to pass. The distinction between a £7 householder in such large towns and in a small borough were very clearly pointed out by the hon. Gentleman whom I have mentioned as being opposed to the Bill, and yet it is intended that its provisions should blindly and indiscriminately apply to all parts of the country. Allow me now to draw the attention of the House to the more modern history of this question of Parliamentary Reform, with which the name of the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King) is so intimately connected. In 1851 the hon. Gentleman made an ingenious speech in asking for leave to introduce a Bill to establish an occupation franchise in England. What was his argument on that occasion? He said to Ministers, "Do you mean to tell us that we in England are not as worthy of being trusted with this occupation franchise as the electors of Ireland? What was Lord Russell's answer? [The right hon. and learned Gentleman here quoted a passage from a speech delivered by Lord Russell, to the effect, that in Ireland it was true that the 40*s.* freehold franchise was abolished and an occupation franchise substituted; yet that if the 40*s.* freehold franchise were retained in England, the introduction of an occupation franchise as well would have the effect of swamping the former, and thus he could not recommend the 40*s.* freeholders and the £10 occupiers to be thrown together upon the counties.] Now, what should be said of a Reform Bill which, as regards the counties, not only preserves the 40*s.* freeholders, but gives the county franchise to £14 occupiers, and also to leaseholders in boroughs, by which incalculable effects will be produced in every county? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was mistaken in the history he gave of that transaction, and I wish to set him right. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to imagine the doctrine of Parliamentary pledges, and to state that we are engaged with Reform in consequence of the movement of the hon. Member for East Surrey. He said that the introduction of the Bill of the hon. Member for East Surrey was a great Parliamentary pledge at all times binding on the House. Why, the pledge is dead and forgotten, though now dug up by the right hon. Gentleman and revived; but when we refer to the origin of this transaction, we find it to be one of the most simple character that can well be imagined, and very different from the description given of it by the right hon. Gentleman. I understand that he meant to say that the Government of the day resigned in consequence of the defeat which Lord Russell unexpectedly received at the hands of Mr. Locke King on the introduction of that hon. Member's Bill. The point is that the Minister, finding Parliamentary Reform an uncomfortable thing on his shoulders, wishes to shift on Parliament the responsibility of dealing with it. This is the way in which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer described the matter:—

"It may be said with respect to the origin of this question, that it is emphatically the work of Parliament. Let me remind the House of what happened in the beginning of the year 1851; and I must say that the event which then occurred was of a nature to saddle the responsibility connected with the introduction of this question, in a high and peculiar sense, not on one or another Government, but upon the body of the House of Commons. It was an independent Member (my hon. Friend, the Member for East Surrey, Mr. L. King), who on the 20th of February, 1851, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to grant £10 occupation franchise to counties. The sole opponent of the motion was my noble Friend now at the head of the Government. There was no discussion, and every other authority in the House either approved or was silent on the occasion. The Government were beaten by a majority of 21. The minority consisted of 52 Members, and among those 52 there were not, I think, more than 12 or 15 who sat on the benches of the party opposite. So that it cannot, I think, be denied, that the first initiation of this subject in the form in which it now comes before us—having begun as a question of the county franchise only—but it being perfectly well known that a change in that must draw a change in the borough franchise along with it; the initiation of this subject, I say, was, in a peculiar sense, the work of the House of Commons."

The right hon. Gentleman was contradicted on this subject partially by the right hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman), and I have since looked into the Chancellor of the Exchequer's subsequent speech, in which he spoke more inaccurately than in the first. Twitted by the right hon. Member for Stroud he said:—

"What I omitted to state, which, at any rate, greatly strengthens the case, was this—that the House gave that vote and expressed that determination in favour of the introduction of the Bill even after my noble Friend then, as now, at the head of the Government, had stated that the Government would give their attention to the subject, and in the ensuing Session submit a measure to its consideration. And yet, in the very face and teeth of that pledge given by my noble Friend, the House of Commons took on itself the responsibility of forcing a vote in favour of the introduction of the Bill. But I am told that the Bill was subsequently thrown out. No doubt; and under what circumstances was it thrown out? The introduction of the Bill was followed by the resignation of the Ministers."

I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that the Ministry resigned in consequence of the acceptance by the House of Commons of Mr. Locke King's Bill, but how did Lord Russell explain the transaction at the time of its occurrence? Did the Ministry resign on account of the £10 occupation Bill? By no means. Lord Russell stated:—

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"But, on the 20th of February, a motion was made in reference to a certain question of Parliamentary Reform, and on that question, and in a thin House of little more than 150 Members, the Government was beaten by a majority of nearly two to one. Now, observe, that if that had occurred in ordinary circumstances, I might have thought it owing to the hour and to the thinness of the House, that those in favour of the motion should have attended, and that those who were not in favour of it were not present; but that, on the second reading of the Bill, which the House then gave leave to introduce, the latter would attend and make a majority, in accordance with the view taken by Government on this subject. But, in the actual circumstances in which we were placed, I did consider that, although hon. Members might have voted entirely with reference to that particular question which was before them, and not at all upon any general views of policy, I did not think, that although that might have been their intention, yet that, in effect, having the whole of the financial and other measures of the Government before us, and having a probability, which I was inclined to believe in, that on other measures and on other incidental questions, we might meet with similar defeats, I came to the conclusion that the Government was not in a position to conduct satisfactorily the business of the country in this House during the forthcoming Session. I thought it was for the public interest that, if this were the case, the House should not enter into discussions on financial measures, and be led to form opinions on those questions when it was not so probable that the Government should be able successfully to go through the Session. I thought, likewise, that it was a very dangerous, and that it was a very disadvantageous, thing for the country that the Government should continue liable to defeats from time to time, and, therefore, carrying on a kind of lingering existence during a great part of the Session."

That being Lord Russell's statement, what became of the Parliamentary pledge mentioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or of the statement that the House of Commons is responsible for the introduction of this question of Parliamentary Reform? Here is an account of the unhappy transaction I have just referred to from the *Annual Register*:—

"The resignation of the Whig Government was not attributed to any single or definite cause, though the recent defeat of the Government on the motion of Mr. Locke King, and, still more, the very unfavourable reception of the Budget, were surmised to have had much to do with it. But the chief cause was declared to be, in general terms, the loss of Parliamentary confidence, the exhibition in many quarters of a resolute hostility to the Government, and, on the part of its usual auxiliaries, an irresolute and distrustful support. With many delicate questions pressing on the attention of Parliament, and with a Cabinet which had been gradually becoming more feeble, and resting more and more on a narrow basis, it was felt on all hands that the strength of the Executive was inadequate to the exigencies of the times. Under these circumstances, the Premier, doubtless, judged wisely that it was neither for the honour of the Administration, nor for the well-being of the nation, that the existence of the Whig Cabinet should be prolonged."

Nothing can be more evident than that the right hon. Gentleman allowed himself to be carried away into making a statement to which the facts of the case are entirely opposed. Then there is Earl Derby's explanation of what passed between Her Majesty and himself. The noble Earl stated :—

> "Mr. Locke King's motion for an extensive alteration of the Parliamentary franchise was carried by above 100 votes to 54. Of these 54 votes, 17 were votes of what I will call, for shortness sake, the Protectionist party, and 27 more were votes of official men; and exclusively of those bound by official ties, the Ministry brought to their support 10 independent Members, and no more. I ventured to state these facts to Her Majesty; and I stated that, small as was the number of my Friends who voted on that measure, I believed their numbers would have been much greater but for an impression that prevailed, 'that your Majesty's Ministers were not honestly exercising their influence to defeat the measure.' I believe that; and my Friends and the House of Commons believed it; and although, if they had believed in the earnest determination of the Government to act upon their own principles, they would have given them a generous and disinterested support, they did not feel themselves bound to attend in large numbers for the purpose of enabling the Government to defeat the measure, while it permitted so many of its own supporters to be absent."

That affects the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and demolishes his imaginary case of a pledge binding Parliament to take up the subject of Parliamentary Reform whenever an unfortunate Minister happens to be in a difficulty, and can do nothing better than bring in a measure of Parliamentary Reform. It is true that we had a Reform Bill in 1852, which has been acutely criticized by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. S. Mill). Here is an opinion given by the hon. Member for Westminster of that Bill, and it shows the great advantage of having an abstract philosopher among busy politicians. He said, "It created greater anomalies than it proposed to remove." That is generally the case with Reform Bills unless when they are honestly brought in. Then the critic went on to say :—

> "The Bill would have had the effect of spotting the country with little boroughs to be tied together—a system which, if it had been adopted, would have been so capricious that the very idea of district boroughs would have been brought into contempt, without mitigating and rather increasing the existing causes of complaint."

But, Sir, when we look at that Bill we find some information bearing on the matter now before us. Lord Russell explained what his views were about Reform. He said: "He was revolving, planning, and maturing a measure, for the extension of the suffrage." Now, if he had been revolving, planning, and maturing such a measure, then it ought certainly to be forthcoming by this time. I think it fair to ask for that measure. He then declared that for years of his life he had been pondering over Reform Bills. He says—and I draw the attention of every Reformer in this House to the advice given by what has been called the father of Reform Bills :—

> "I think, however, the greatest caution should be used by Parliament with regard to any measure to be adopted upon the subject. I think the genuine distribution of the Reform Bill has produced a fair representation of the intelligence, wishes, and interests of the people, and I should regret any change in the representation which deprived the House of Commons of those Conservative elements which ought to belong to it. I cannot conceive that a House of Commons merely representing numbers would act in harmony with a monarchy, the hereditary House of Lords, and an Established Church."

How can a Parliamentary Reform Bill resting on numbers be reconciled with those three institutions? The grand blunder the hon. Member for Birmingham makes on Parliamentary Reform is this—he thinks the only question is, whether a Bill will add numbers to the electoral body, forgetful that this is a mixed constitution, and that we have to consider the effect of a measure on the other House of Parliament, and also on the Monarchy; and that if it should disturb the balance, according to the excellent advice of the noble Lord, it would be our duty to oppose and resist it. I heard it said the other night by the hon. Member for Glasgow, that you ought to give your confidence to a Ministry on the question of Reform; but not so says Lord Russell. He says :—

> "Every Member of this House is bound to watch carefully, and to judge cautiously with respect to any measure that may be produced."

That Bill failed. In fact, we never had the opportunity of discussing it, because Lord Palmerston shot Lord Russell between wind and water. Lord Russell fell ingloriously on a clause of a Militia Bill.

He went out of the Government, and what was called the Parliamentary pledge was never discussed at all. Parliament did not care a fig about that Bill of 1852, and the people cared less. And when it is said that it is an unwarrantable thing for a portion of the Whig party to exercise their judgment on this occasion, I find, on looking over the debates, that they have done so resolutely before. The late Earl Fitzwilliam gave this parting advice to his noble Friend:—

> "He thought these further reforms in Parliament most dangerous. He believed that if this question were to be agitated every ten or twenty years, the quiet and sensible part of the people would imbibe a great indifference to the popular franchise. He believed that if these changes were to be introduced, a very large section of the community would be of opinion that it would be much better to live under a mild and tranquil despotism. Well, he did not say all of the people, but a very considerable portion of them, would prefer living under a mild and tranquil despotism, than to have these incessant discussions upon constitutional rights and the constant change of those rights."

So ends the Bill of 1852; and what became of the pledge with regard to the introduction of that Bill? I find Lord John Russell admonishing those who were to succeed him how they meddled with the subject in future. I also find that Sir James Graham, who was a party to the original Reform Bill, when he heard that Lord Russell had been planning a Reform Bill, took alarm, as he naturally would, and expressed himself in these words:—

> "I agree with the noble Lord that so much having been conceded, and so large an extension of popular privilege and democratic influence introduced into the Constitution, it is necessary, in order that the balance of the Constitution may be preserved and the existing form of Government upheld, that there should be a great caution in the next advance."

"To the principle of the extension of the franchise he said he had no insuperable objection, but he had not seen Lord John's outline and was not bound to it." So ends the second stage of the history of the question of Parliamentary Reform. The next period we come to is the year 1854, and I venture to say that of all the assertions that could be made by a public man to a body of gentlemen acquainted with political affairs, none could be offered more directly contrary to truth than the assertion that Parliament ever approved or sanctioned the Bill in 1854. It is scarcely credible, but such is the fact, that we had a Reform Bill just as we drifted into a war with Russia—a war which the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs declared was owing to the imbecility of Lord Aberdeen's Government. Having got us into war, the next thing, one would have supposed, would have been to get us out of it as respectably as possible; but, instead of that, Lord Russell proposed to reform Parliament; and brought in the Bill of 1854. We all recollect the dreadful sufferings we endured, not merely as regards our troops, but in our own heart and feelings. Lord Russell, however, began with an historical dissertation to prove that, when on the brink of war, we should prepare to reform Parliament. He said, quite coolly, as if he was a Miltiades or a Scipio:—

> "But, Sir, much as I abhor war, much as I deprecate the evils given, I confess I do not view a war with Russia with that apprehension with which some Gentlemen seem to regard it."

He spoke like Chatham, who in one hand "wielded the fierce democracy of England, and with the other smote the Bourbon." He cited Lord Somers. I always tremble when Lord Russell quotes Lord Somers. He introduced Reform when there was war on the Continent. Then he told us what Lord Godolphin did when Marlborough was gaining Blenheim, and, therefore, he should be allowed to have his little Bill, though we should be at war with Russia. But the noble Lord himself—I am shattering to atoms this case of the Parliamentary pledge—the noble Lord himself withdrew that Bill. The party here did not compel him to do so. He was glad to get out of it. The Parliamentary pledge never was discussed at all. He said he was obliged to withdraw it, and for two reasons, either of which was quite sufficient: he withdrew it first on account of the cold and languid support it received in the House; and, secondly, owing to the apathy of the public out of doors. So much for the time and circumstances in which the noble Lord introduced that Bill. But don't let it be said I unfairly criticize his speech. It was a very able and instructive speech, and I shall refer to it with the view of refuting the rash observations of the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). The noble Lord, as on the great occasion of 1832, commenced with the distribution of seats. The first thing to be done, he said, was to ascertain the depositaries of political power.

Then he did that which, I venture to say, it is the object of this Bill not to do—he provided that forty-six additional Members should be given to the counties of England, and a very few additional Members to the boroughs. There were certain other arrangements proposed. Of course there was a considerable disfranchisement of small boroughs, and I confess I agree with the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. S. Mill) in his criticism as to tying together a number of small places instead of giving the franchise to places worthy of receiving it. Well, in the hon. Member for Birmingham's opinions, as expressed on that Bill in 1854, I think we shall find the key to the measure now on the table. That hon. Member, for certain reasons of his own, ridiculed Lord J. Russell's Bill, characterizing it as full of "mystifications and conundrums," because it provided for the representation of minorities. The hon. Member asked the noble Lord what was to be done if a minority man died, and whether his successor was to be elected by a majority or a minority. I would refer that or any other equally abstruse problem to the solution of the hon. Member for Westminster. The hon. Member for Birmingham opposed that Bill on those small grounds; but his real and main reason for doing so was discovered on the night on which Lord J. Russell withdrew the measure. On that occasion the hon. Gentleman said:—

> "Such a Bill, intended to touch many seats, could not be carried unless there existed such a feeling out of doors as would act like steam upon a locomotive, and force the House to do something it would not otherwise do."

The hon. Member added:—

> "It was a conundrum and mystification, and the people of this country did not like conundrums and mystifications."

Thus the hon. Member disapproved the Bill that was brought in and withdrawn during the Russian war, because it provided for the counties an honest system of representation. He said, "Give me a Bill enfranchising a large mass of the people, and then I will tell you what I desire to have done in the matter of distributing the seats." He further said—and this is the key to his policy—that the parts of the Bill dealing with the franchise and the provision repealing the ratepaying clauses of the Act of 1832 might have been passed, while the other clauses extinguishing sixty-two seats and redistributing them among other constituencies might have been left over to some other Session, when there would be a better opportunity of entertaining and discussing them, and that "too little was given to the boroughs and too much to the counties, which were already over-represented." Therefore the hon. Member then suggested that nothing but a Franchise Bill should be brought in; and such a Bill we have now before us, and I suppose we are to be asked to leave it to him to determine hereafter what places are to be disfranchised, and how the seats should be redistributed. As far, then, as I have gone, I do not see any proof that Parliament is implicated in any pledge whatever on the subject of Reform. And here I would remark that Lord Russell himself gave us a description of the working classes which, if it had emanated from the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), or the right hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman), would probably have led to indignation meetings on the part of their constituents, calling them to account for censuring or almost calumniating those classes. Lord Russell said that he was quite willing under conditions to see the working classes enfranchised, but that they were liable to delusions, that they would be ready to persecute other persons for their opinions, and that they were liable to take up very erroneous notions on the subject of trades unions. We next come to the Reform Bill introduced by the Government of Lord Derby; and in what happened then there is a great deal which merits our attention. Sir, I charge it upon Lord Russell—and I do so with a perfect belief that I am now only stating what is strictly true—I charge it upon Lord Russell that he resolved to defeat that measure by an abstract resolution which trenched on the very verge of Parliamentary precedent, and which I hold to have been as unconstitutional as it was unfair. That abstract resolution asserted, that unless a certain figure—which he did not even name, but which was something lower than the particular franchise fixed by the Bill—was introduced into the measure, the House would not tolerate the further prosecution of that Bill. I say that the hon. Member for Birmingham and the noble Lord, then the Member for London, planned and concocted that resolution for the very purpose of destroying the prospects of a settlement of this question. One eminent authority after another stated, that if the measure brought in by Lord Derby's Government passed, the subject of Reform would have been set at rest for a very considerable period; that the question raised by that abstract resolution might have been entertained and disposed of in committee; and that in committee it might have been conveniently decided whether the borough franchise should be fixed at £10 or at £8. The noble Lord who has written a book on the Constitution, drew up a resolution which was intended not to promote but to stifle discussion—not to advance but to retard the cause of Reform. Some distinguished Members warned the House of the consequences of such a proceeding, and among those Gentlemen who spoke the language of reason and truth were the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) and the right hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman). Whoever reads the statesmanlike speech of the latter right hon. Gentleman will perceive how unjust it is to charge him with being an anti-Reformer, for he not only spoke and voted against that abstract resolution, but he pointed out the mischievous results that would ensue from the future agitation on the subject of Reform, which might have been avoided by a satisfactory and judicious settlement of the question then. But these arguments and warnings were of no avail at the time. A fixed determination had been come to to destroy the Ministry then in existence; and the noble Marquis now the Secretary of State for War, in making his first speech in this House, moved a resolution amounting to a vote of want of confidence in the Government after the dissolution, observing that he could not understand why the carrying of that resolution should overthrow the Ministry. I wonder whether he has addressed similar language on this occasion to his right hon. colleague the Chancellor of the Exchequer? The resolution was carried, and its authors accomplished their object; but, before that result took place, Lord Grey addressed a letter to the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) in which he said:—

> "I think Lord John's resolution highly objectionable. If a settlement of the question is the object they have in view, I cannot understand how the party opposed to the Government can doubt that they ought to agree to the second eading of the Bill that has been introduced."

After stating that there were some parts

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of the Bill which he disapproved, Lord Grey continued:—

> "But it contains provisions for creating new rights of voting, for partially disfranchising some places that now return Members to Parliament, and for enfranchising others. These principles, applied more or less extensively, are those on which any possible Reform Bill must be founded."

Therefore as no Reform Bill could be founded on any other principles, Lord Grey objects strongly to Lord J. Russell's proceedings, and asks:—

> "Suppose that a majority in favour of this resolution led to Lord John being himself raised to the office of Prime Minister, either before or after a new Parliamentary election, is there the slightest chance that he would be more fortunate than his predecessors in finding a concurrence of opinion in favour of his own views?"

He says there are few instances of such a thing succeeding, and he anticipated exactly what occurred, for his remarks produced no impression whatever upon the minds of those to whom they were addressed. I now come to the observations of Lord Russell upon the policy of admitting the working classes to the suffrage. They were made on the 21st of March, 1859, and are as follows:—

> "I contend, with respect to a great portion of the working people, though many are well fitted to take part in the political questions of the day, they are liable to be misled by delusions; and if they should be totally indifferent, that circumstance would give rise to a great venality in our elections; not that these men have any bad intentions; but there are men among them who would consider it not of much importance to themselves whether there existed protection or free trade, religious liberty or persecution, and they would give their votes according to their own immediate interests."—[3 *Hansard*, clviii. 397.

An observation of that kind shows the necessity of considering well what we are doing before we admit a vast number of persons indiscriminately to the franchise. Next, we have the hon. Member for Birmingham explaining his views on the 19th of March, 1860:—

> "I am one of those who for many years have held the opinion that it would be much better to have this question of Reform approached by successive steps. . . . I took the liberty of recommending the noble Lord, I suppose, one year and a half ago, and have done it since repeatedly and publicly, that the Reform Bill that should be introduced should be a Bill that should only settle the question of the suffrage, and that it should do it simply and generously. . . . I regard the Bill simply as it is—a Bill for the extension of the suffrage in boroughs and counties. It does not touch more than just the outside of the question of disfranchisement. . . . I have considered the question of a transfer of

Members or of seats from the little boroughs to large constituencies of counties and boroughs; I consider that to be the very pith and marrow of the question of Parliamentary Reform."—[3 *Hansard*, clvii. 895-6.]

The hon. Member's opinion at that time was in direct contradiction with what he said to-night, for he then regarded the transference of seats as the very pith and marrow of the question of Parliamentary Reform. Well, Lord Derby was turned out and Lord Palmerston came in, and another Reform Bill was introduced, but the result was that it was talked to death. But by whom was that done? The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary spoke the other night with such unusual warmth, that a person unacquainted with the facts would have supposed that he had always been an ardent Reformer, whereas he had been for years tranquilly filling his present office and dealing with cemeteries and corporations. The right hon. Gentleman said the Bill was talked to death by us, but was it not condemned by Mr. Massey, by Mr. Black; and did not every second speaker rise on that side of the House? Lord Palmerston then showed a composure which was a model of the manner in which a Prime Minister should conduct the affairs of this House, for he slept as much as he could, he listened as little as he could, and he tranquilly saw Parliamentary Reform dying the death which it deserved. Many hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House candidly expressed their regret that Lord Derby's Bill was set aside, and was followed by a very indifferent measure, among them being Viscount Enfield, who, with creditable frankness, admitted that the former scheme contained, in his judgment, the elements of a solution that would have been more practical, and perhaps more satisfactory, than the measure proposed by the Government of Lord Palmerston, which, he said, found as little favour and courtesy from its professed adherents as from its declared enemies. The noble Lord added that the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Massey) had exposed all its hollowness in one of the most powerful speeches he had ever heard; and that, after the delivery of that speech, the fate of the Bill was sealed. Lord Palmerston's Bill being disposed of, what happened? I was, of course, not present; but it was understood that the noble Lord, addressing his colleagues, advised the Chancellor of the Exchequer to read his *Homer*, and frame his Budgets, and Lord Russell to attend to his foreign affairs, for that, as to Parliamentary Reform, he would have no more to do with it; and, looking round upon the fiery spirits of the Liberal party, the noble Lord found how Southwark might speedily be soothed, Halifax made happy, although Bradford was not yet comforted. The President of the Board of Trade, the chosen friend and companion of those champions of Reform, the hon. Member for Birmingham and the then Member for Rochdale (Mr. Cobden), acted in a manner becoming the colleague of a wise Minister. Calm and courteous, prudent and philosophical, he remained in office for a series of years, never renewing the subject of Reform, but placid, leaving England to peace, tranquillity, and Palmerston. I must say that the hon. and learned Member for Exeter, (Mr. Coleridge), in his graceful but sentimental speech the other night, reflected with his usual suavity of manner, but with rather too much severity, upon Lord Palmerston. Why did he bestow his censures upon the dead while he spared the living? If Lord Palmerston was wrong in abandoning the subject for the last five years of his life, what is to be said of the Reformers who joined with him, preferring their places to their convictions, but who now declare it necessary to revive the subject? If, after the fashion of the hon. and learned Member, you are to distinguish between the noble Lord, who never was a zealous Reformer, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade, I say that, in the light of morality and political consistency, they are infinitely more censurable than the noble Lord, whose opinions they right well knew and assented to during the whole period of his administration. The observations of those right hon. Gentlemen on this question are not entitled to the least attention; they were silent then because they saw the people happy, prosperous, and contented, and therefore they said nothing about Parliamentary Reform. But we now come to a date of great consequence. The hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King) appears upon the field with his £10 county franchise, and I venture to say that, in Parliamentary history, more extraordinary transactions than those which occurred in April and May, 1864, are not on record. The nation had forgiven Lord Palmerston if he had committed any offence. They said, "You are an excellent Minister and you are not going to reform Parliament; then we will rest and be thankful." So it was happily arranged in a manner most agreeable to all parties. But at the period I have just mentioned the hon. Member for East Surrey reintroduced his Bill, and a speech was then delivered by Lord Palmerston, from which I will presently quote. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was sitting beside him at the time, and, as I contend, was bound by it; for if a gentleman chooses to belong to a Ministry the head of which utters certain sentiments, he is not at liberty afterwards to say that he had a private notion of his own, and intended, when it suited his purpose, to start his theory, with high-sounding words of political morality. The noble Lord then said:—

> "I am anxious before the House comes to a division to state, in a very few words, the reasons for the vote which I intend to give. I cannot vote against the Bill of my hon. Friend, because that might warrant the supposition that I am indisposed to any change in the county franchise. Undoubtedly, I am of opinion that there might be some change effected. At the same time it is but fair and candid to my hon. Friend and to the House to say, that I cannot vote for the £10 franchise proposed by the Bill. It appears to me that the object we ought all to have in view is to form a legislative machine in which all interests in the country shall be fairly represented. The two leading interests of this country are, on the one hand, the trading and the commercial interests, and, on the other, the agricultural interest; and any alteration of our system which tends to introduce too largely the trading and commercial, or the town, element into the agricultural, or county element, would, I think, injuriously disturb the balance which it is essential for the interests of the country that we should maintain. That is the view which I take of the measure of my hon. Friend, and therefore, if it should go into committee, I shall not be prepared to vote for the particular franchise which he proposes to introduce."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxiv. 952.]

Now, I may remark here, that we might pass a safe and moderate Reform Bill, but we are not prepared to say that the middle class is to be dethroned from political power. We believe that the middle class are the safest and best class to hold the balance of power; and we say, that before we take this irreversible step, we must be satisfied that it is in the right direction. The noble Lord went on to say:—

> "I venture to differ from my hon. Friend as to the expediency of the course which he has determined to pursue. It is quite natural that, having fixed his mind upon his particular measure, he should take every fair opportunity of bringing it under the consideration of the House. But I think it would have been better if he had abstained from mooting the question. It is plain to every man, I think, who attends at all to the indications of public opinion in this House and in the country, that there does not exist at the present moment in this House, or out of it, the same interest in such changes as existed some time since. The fact is, that organic changes have been looked to not as a mere end so much as a means to an end. They were looked to as a means of effecting great alterations and improvements in our internal system, our commercial system, our laws, procedure, and other matters. Many of those improvements have been made. Commerce has been freed from its shackles, the industry of the country has been encouraged by liberty, and many of those alterations and improvements which were to be the result of organic changes have been accomplished by the Legislature as it stands; and therefore there is a less ardent desire for change than existed before those improvements were made."—[*Ibid.*]

And then the noble Lord touched upon foreign affairs. He said:—

> "There are also other considerations connected with external affairs which have tended to allay the desire for organic changes; I mean considerations arising from the events which have occurred in other countries, and which are attributable, in a great measure, to the influence of organic arrangements in those countries. Those examples seem to indicate danger from interfering with the organic system of the country, and have rendered us less anxious for changes that might possibly approximate to such a state of things as now exists abroad."—[*Ibid.*]

The House then divided, and the numbers were, for Mr. Locke King's motion 227; against it 254. Now, that was the state of opinion of Lord Palmerston and of the Ministry as they were represented to the public on that day, and the same opinion was affirmed by a vote of that House. How can any man say with truth, that the Parliament which gave that vote bound or pledged itself to any question of Parliamentary Reform. The Members of the House of Commons were, no doubt, bound to consider every question of importance that was submitted to them, but that speech of Lord Palmerston showed that Parliament was absolved and released from any promise contained in the speeches of individual Members, and was free to act as its wisdom might suggest. That debate was on the 12th of April. Three weeks afterwards another hon. Gentleman, who has taken a considerable part in this business of setting up Parliamentary Reform—the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines)—

brought forward his proposal for reducing the borough franchise from £10 to £6. The second reading was fixed for Wednesday, a day on which Her Majesty had commanded the attendance of her Ministers elsewhere. I came down to the House to see what would happen. That was on the 10th or 12th of May. I saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer looking oratorical and excited. After the hon. Gentleman had moved the second reading, the right hon. Gentleman rose, and, to my indescribable surprise, we had an explosion on the subject of Parliamentary Reform of an exactly opposite description to that of Lord Palmerston. It was on that occasion the right hon. Gentleman broached his extraordinary theories of Parliamentary Reform. If he had taken me into his confidence, and informed me of what he was about to do, I should have buckled on my armour; but, as it was, I was obliged to say what I could on the moment. The Chancellor of the Exchequer then declared that the *onus probandi* lay upon us to show why every man should not have a vote. The right hon. Gentleman gave his friends around him unmistakable hints that his inclinations were with them, but that he was a Member of a Government that would not take up this question. Still he wished to lodge this secret in their hearts, that when he was free to act as he pleased he would do something for them in regard to their £6 crotchet. And those are what are called Parliamentary pledges. Parliament having on both these occasions shown these Gentlemen that organic changes were not such slight matters as they supposed, and that there was more common sense in Parliament than Ministers or Members imagine. What followed that political escapade of the right hon. Gentleman? His speech became the subject of general comment, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer published it with a Palmerstonian preface, in order to mitigate the character of the speech, and to gloss over opinions which were not, I suspect, satisfactory to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. And so ends the history of Parliamentary Reform and Parliamentary pledges. The hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) the other night made a temperate, conciliatory, and judicious speech, of which I have a faithful recollection. If the working classes of Bradford are not already well represented, how can they be so apprehensive I should be unwilling to change the constituency? I might change the representative. While I admit that, upon ordinary occasions, Government are not called upon to express their opinions upon inconvenient questions, yet upon the approach of a dissolution they are bound to speak out in order that the public may understand on what policy and upon what principle they elect their representatives. Well, what was said by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir George Grey) upon the near approach of a dissolution which was to take place under the name and ægis of Lord Palmerston, with a view of electing a Parliament which was not to be bound by Reform? The Secretary for the Home Department made a speech, which has been already referred to, in which he stated the views upon which Ministers would go to the country on the question of Parliamentary Reform. The right hon. Gentleman said:—"With regard to the question of Parliamentary Reform generally we do not go to the country pledged to any particular measure." Nothing could be more distinct than that statement by Sir George Grey. The hon. Gentleman now the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. W. E. Forster) was not then in office. One can imagine the indignation of a patriotic Reformer on hearing the statement of the Home Secretary. He started up instantly and said:—

> "I ask, is there any Gentleman on either side of the House who, having heard that speech, has any idea what that policy is to be—except a policy which I never expected to hear from any Treasury Bench, and still less from the present one—namely, that the policy would be regulated by their interest in the Government?"

Several appeals were made to the consciences of hon. Members, but there was no response. Dean Swift said:—"Conscience is no manner of use to its possessor, unless it stretches for the occasion." Lord Palmerston dies, and let me say, in answer to the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge), who made a graceful, although not very profound, speech on the Reform Bill, that I think the name and memory of the noble Lord will live. He was the last of an illustrious race. They were scholars and statesmen; the companions of kings; and they governed or influenced the country with ability and wisdom. Well, the Chancellor of the Exchequer afterwards appeared in different parts of the country, and thought it his duty there to raise the question of Parliamentary Reform, which had been disposed of in the manner I have described. An agitation was got up, and the result was that petitions were no doubt presented in favour of the Bill. My hon. and learned Friend (Sir Hugh Cairns) proved on the admission of the hon. Member for Leeds, that the abolition of the ratepaying clauses was worth 10*s.* a year on the rent, and that the additional numbers enfranchised under the Government Bill would make the working classes preponderate in all the boroughs in the country. I wish hon. Members would look to the summary given by Mr. Baxter in his pamphlet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of the income of the working classes, and Mr. Baxter says:—

> "For instance, Oldham will have an estimated number of working class electors of 3,091, so that their total rental is £30,910, while the total rental of the borough is £450,407, so that one-fifteenth part of the total rental will govern the remaining fourteen-fifteenths. Coventry gives £36,660 rental to the working class electors out of £139,134, so that in that borough one-fourth of the rental will govern the remaining three-fourths. The total of the 57 boroughs in which the working classes have a majority is as follows:—Working-class electors' rental, £1,446,642,—total borough rental, £11,958,125; so that one-eighth of the rental will govern the remaining seven-eighths. We may carry the inquiry one step further. When they reach 400,000 votes, the working classes will have a considerable majority of the whole borough constituency. The rental of these voters will be represented by £4,000,000, while the gross estimated rental of all the boroughs of England and Wales is £41,000,000. So that rental paying poor-rate on an assessment of £41,000,000 will be governed and taxed by rental paying only on 4,000,000, or less than one-tenth of its amount."

According to the figures laid upon the table of the House, it must happen that in a very short time the working classes must be the predominating power in the boroughs of the country. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) smiles, and I daresay he has an answer ready for me. I can assure him I shall listen to it with a pleasure equal to that I felt in reading this pamphlet. It was said by an hon. Gentleman opposite, that the hon. and learned Member for Belfast (Sir Hugh Cairns) said, that in considering the question of the reduction of the franchise no regard should be paid to the fitness of a person to receive a vote. But that was not the statement of my hon. and learned friend. The argument he made use of, and which has not been answered, was this: Did you find fitness when you brought in a £5 limit? Did you find fitness when you brought in a £6 limit? And have you found fitness in the £7 limit; and what test do you apply to find it? I should like to know from those lawyers where it is shown in the books that, according to our Constitution, the suffrage is given to fitness. Supposing a working man were to stop me on the bridge outside, and were to say, "I am intelligent and industrious. I wrote three articles for a newspaper last week; will you give me a right to vote?" I should reply, I will not, because the right to vote is based upon property, and not upon fitness. Have we forgotten that the right to vote was always based upon property? that the 40*s.* freehold was originally worth, when created, what would now be equivalent to £30 per annum? It is with alarm that I find the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. S. Mill) saying, that upon all the grounds upon which to rest the franchise, property seemed to him to be about the worst. [Mr. MILL: Hear, hear!] Well, we have, at all events, found out what the hon. Member for Westminster means. I have a sincere respect and admiration for him; and I trust that, from the serene heights of his philosophy, he will look down with pity upon us who are groping amid the mists and shadows of the valley, and enlighten us upon points upon which we are ignorant; but I must venture to tell the hon. Member, that the principle enunciated in the sentence I have referred to is simply revolutionary. This is the principle that is avowed by one of the most intelligent men of the Liberal party, and if acted upon it must lead either to political or to social revolution. I am of opinion that if you are going to set about improving the country you should take care to do so in accordance with its laws, its Constitution, and its history. The mere fact that a speculative philosopher, sitting in his study, has drawn up a Constitution different from anything ever known in the country before, does not in the least recommend his theories to a practical man, but rather suggests to him that it would be very dangerous to allow it to be supposed for a moment that those visionary theories were about to be carried out. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Westminster, in grappling with the Amendment moved by the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl

Grosvenor), said all who would be admitted to the franchise would be admitted beneficially and advantageously, no matter where or how they were admitted. That, however, was not a question of political economy, or of political principle; it was simply an assertion of the hon. Member. By the terms of his proposition he is bound to make out that the addition to the franchise to be made in the Tower Hamlets and at Totnes by the present Bill are equally advantageous; but I scarcely think, that adding slightly to the venal few at Totnes will do much towards purifying Parliament. The assertion of the hon. Gentleman is practically contradicted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who admits that we ought to be informed as to what we are going to do. We are next told by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. S. Mill), that those who want information ought to seek it from those who can give it. Well, I admit that there is something in that. And I suppose, because we don't exactly know the opinions of the working classes we ought to admit them to instruct and inform us upon questions of great difficulty and importance. I should like to know what those subjects are. I implore the hon. Member to explain the secrets of trades unions and strikes: he has a golden opportunity, and will thereby make a reputation for himself which will never die. Does the hon. Member mean to tell us, that the working men are to come into the House and instruct us upon these subjects? Why, there would be a strike for wages immediately. Does the hon. Member mean to say, that no man in the middle class could give us such a clear insight into the nature of strikes as a working carpenter could? The employment of a working man might be respectable and useful, but all employments could not be said to be equally honourable. It was said in a very old book and a very good book,—

> "The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure, and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder. So every carpenter and workmaster that laboureth night and day, and they that cut and grave seals and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work. The smith, also, sitting by the anvil, and considering the iron-work, the vapour, and the fire, wasteth his flesh, and he fighteth with the heat of the furnace, the noise of the hammer, and the anvil is ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh. He setteth his mind to finish his work, and watcheth to polish it perfectly. So doth a potter sitting at his work and turning the wheel about with his feet, who is alway carefully set at his work and maketh all his work by machine. He fasteneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet. He applieth himself to lead it over, and he is diligent to make clean the furnace. All these trust to their hands, and every one is wise in his work. Without these cannot a city be inhabited, and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down. They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation. They shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment. They cannot declare justice and judgment, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken."

Now, in some sense, I believe that that passage points to the respective duties that all persons have to perform in life, and I am of opinion that nothing can be more absurd than to say, that the constitution of the Parliament of this country must be changed in order—not to do the thing which is best or reasonable or moderate towards the working classes, but to bring them into this House to discuss questions of finance, policy, the causes of poverty, of ignorance, and, perchance, the hon. Gentleman stopped short of the causes of death. One thing in favour of these opinions was, that they never could be carried into effect. Turning to the speeches of the two Members for Lambeth (Mr. Doulton and Mr. Hughes), I was as much pleased with the eloquence and manliness of the one as I was pained with the other. The latter hon. Gentleman denied that Mr. Smiles in his excellent publications represented the ordinary working man, and entirely forgot that the 400,000 or 500,000 persons to be enfranchised by the Bill before us were 200,000 more than had been enfranchised in 1832. In order to show what is intended by the system proposed to be adopted, and what persons are to have power over us in future, I have looked into that repository of wisdom—the speeches of the hon. Member for Birmingham. The House has heard his speech to-night, and has listened to his views, and in reply I will read one or two passages from his former speeches. He said to-night that the true question of Parliamentary Reform was the enfranchisement of numbers of the people. But the hon. Gentleman in one of his published speeches says:—

> "Whenever a Reform Bill is brought into the House of Commons by any Government, be as watchful as you like on the subject of the franchise, but never take your eyes for one moment from the distribution of the Members; for, if you do, you will have to fight your battle over again the day after it passes."

But the hon. Gentleman told us to-night to avert our eyes from the distribution of seats. Now, I have pursued this subject through every speech made by the hon. Gentleman, and reprinted in this book, and I find the same idea repeated over and over again in the most remarkable manner, both with respect to the redistribution of seats and to the ballot. He distinctly says three or four times, that if he were offered a Bill for the enfranchisement of the working classes without the ballot he would refuse it. He says distinctly they would be injured without the protection of the Ballot. And then it might be gratifying to the House to hear his description of the Foreign Office—the analogy which he draws is very clever but painful to read. He says: "I have often compared in my own mind the people of England with the people of Egypt." Now I object to all such comparisons. I think there is nothing more unworthy of an Englishman than to make comparisons of this kind:—

> "And the Foreign Office of this country to the temples of the Egyptians. We are told by those who pass up and down the Nile, that you perceive on its banks temples, with stately statues and massive and lofty columns, statues each one of which would appear to have exhausted a quarry in its production. You have further vast chambers and gloomy passages; and some innermost recess, some holy of holies, in which, when you arrive at it, you find some loathsome reptile which a nation reverenced and revered and bowed itself down to worship."

That is the way in which the hon. Member speaks of what he calls "the mystery" which presides at the Foreign Office. I need not give his description of the county Members. Lord Macaulay called them "ponderous fox-hunters." Well, there are, I am happy to say, many "ponderous fox-hunters" on the other side as well as on this of the House; but my opinion of the "ponderous fox-hunters" is, that they are the balance of the Constitution; that they can hunt down a fallacy with as much courage and skill as they can a fox; and now I tell them, that their heads will be as heavy as their horses if they permit the hon. Member for Birmingham to get what he has called "the great lever," to obtain such a redistribution of seats as he desires. The hon. Gentleman has made his calculation seat by seat, and he says there are 90 seats which should be given to the great boroughs, 6 more to Lambeth—that is enough to take one's breath away. I don't know how many he gives to Manchester, but out of the 120 seats he would bestow 15 upon the counties; and in doing so he shows frankly and candidly the affectionate regard which he has for the landed interest; for he says he would give these 15 seats to particular counties, because the people of those counties have the least to do with the land. Fifteen seats for the county members! Why, 46 were offered by Lord John Russell in 1854. That is the Bill that the hon. Member for Birmingham means to carry as soon as the Franchise Bill *simpliciter* has been passed through a credulous House of Commons. As for the House of Peers, the hon. Gentleman thinks it a very silly institution. On the question of the distribution of seats he says:—

> "Well, then, you observe that there is not very much discussion at this moment on the question of the franchise; the discussion now turns upon the mode in which I have endeavoured to arrange the distribution of Members after having disfranchised a certain number of boroughs, and obtained a certain number of seats."

Well, that was written, revised, and published by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. S. Mill), who stated to-night that the true question was the enfranchisement of voters; whereas here he says that the real question is the redistribution of seats, which he has arranged in the manner which I have described. If you look through the speeches published by the hon. Gentleman you will arrive at the conclusion, which is as clear as daylight, that this Bill is framed to carry out those opinions which I fear I have stated at too great length with the view of establishing my theory that this Bill is the Bill not of Her Majesty's Government but of the hon. Member for Birmingham. The hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge) complained of the manner in which the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) commented on the conduct of those Gentlemen on the other side of the House, who were supposed to have changed their opinions on this subject. I have only to say for the noble Lord that he spoke and acted according to his nature—that is, he made a dashing and brilliant charge on the enemies of the Constitution, just as he would at the head of his patriotic forces on the enemies of his country. He spread confusion into the camp of the adversary, and he is now waiting for the trumpet of victory. But, with regard to the story of Diogenes, I would remind the hon. and learned Member for Exeter, that we heard it here before; it has obtained Parliamentary sanction, and, therefore, might have been spared on a late occasion. But if Diogenes came here he would have found in the noble Lord a very genial and kindly gentleman, who might have had an opportunity of converting to his opinion Diogenes, who was perhaps an unsentimental Radical. Now, the arguments advanced by the hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Forster) do not require an answer. He appeared to me, like the Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Young), to be willing to take anything he might get. Both those hon. Gentlemen had said in committee we might deal with the Bill as we thought fit—they would be satisfied with £8, £7, or perhaps £9. Well, that showed me they had very little settled convictions as to their own measure, and very little strength of purpose to carry it through the House. I intended, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer were here, to put a question as to a passage which occurs in his speech at Liverpool. He is reported to have spoken words to this effect, and as I quote from *The Times* I have no doubt they are correct:—

> "I stated in the House of Commons, as a kind of challenge, what I hoped would be repelled with eagerness and indignation. I said to some Gentlemen who were discussing this subject, 'You seem to treat the working men who are to be admitted to the Constitution as an invading army.' To my great astonishment, to my great pain, that imputation, which I had hoped would be indignantly repelled, was warmly accepted as a perfectly true description of the view taken by them."

I have spoken a little to-night of the letter of the hon. Member for Birmingham, but in my opinion that part of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if spoken by him, requires still more than the letter of the hon. Member for Birmingham to be justified, to be withdrawn, or to be apologized for in this House. For in referring to the report of the matter, as it appeared in the columns of *The Times*, I find that the words are his words, the idea is his idea. A question was asked the right hon. Gentleman, and in answering it he made these observations. Nobody assented, nobody made any remark, and I must say that I do not believe that there is any hon. Gentleman on this side of the House who would regard the working classes as an invading army. Was it worthy, then, of the leader of the House, or of his high position in the councils of Her Majesty, when he found himself at Liverpool, to have made these observations, which reflected almost as severely on the character of the House of Commons as the letter of the hon. Member for Birmingham himself. I should have thought he would have been the very first man to have stood up in defence of the character of this House, and that he would have thought it his duty proudly to repel any imputations which might have been cast upon Gentlemen who sit here as representatives of the people. I am very sorry the right hon. Gentleman is not here, and, therefore, I shall not say at present what I intended. Now, the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. S. Mill) stated that the aristocracy of this country ought to be thankful, because they were not treated like privileged classes in other countries. I listened to that sentiment with very great pain, because I did not believe that the aristocracy of England, including in it the great body of the gentry, deserved that character. If we refer to the past history of England, we shall find that on all occasions the gentry and aristocracy have identified themselves with the people, and that this patrician senate has not been the worse for their presence, their abilities, their eloquence, and their fortunes. I cannot help thinking that it will be an unhappy time when those opinions take root, and when the great body of the people of this country cease to honour those who are worthy of honour, and to respect those who merit respect. [Mr. Stuart Mill was understood to say that the right hon. Gentleman had misquoted his words.] He would quote the words used by the hon. Gentleman, who in his speech said:

> "Their reward was that, by doing no harm, they were not hated as other privileged classes sometimes had been. But was that all the Legislature of this country could offer to the people? Were they to be content with only undoing the mischief which they and their predecessors had done in former times?"

This, I venture to think, coming from a man of intellect—a man from whose writings I, in common with others, have derived instruction—is an opinion which I cannot help regarding as painful, and as one which is contradicted by the whole history of the country; one too which, in my opinion, is not consistent with that generosity, with those feelings of benevolence, which should always characterise a man of high mark and intellect such as the hon. Gentleman. But the truth is that, throughout the whole of the debate, and throughout the whole of the speeches of the hon. Member for Birmingham, it is quite plain that this measure of Parliamentary Reform is levelled against the just influence or power of the aristocracy defined by the laws and apportioned by the very nature of our Constitution. It will be an unfortunate day for the country when this policy prevails; and because I entertain that opinion, and because I believe that our Constitution, not easily erected, may be speedily destroyed; because I believe the Constitution is not the hasty product of a day, but the well-ripened fruit of wise delay, I ask the House not to read the Bill a second time, but to support the Amendment, logically drawn out and logically argued, and supported by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), and by the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor).

MR. M'CULLAGH TORRENS said, he could assure the House that, warned by example, he would endeavour to be brief; and that if he had occasion to make any citations out of "*Hansard*," or any other authority, he should take care to do it with more accuracy than his hon. and learned Friend who had just sat down. He did not think that, in that stage of this long debate, shreds and scraps of old discussions ought to govern their judgment, or influence their conclusions. He believed in the perfect capacity of the House to decide for itself, though "*Hansard*" were committed to the flames. But he thought that, before the debate closed, some of them who had the honour of sitting for large constituencies, composed mainly of the middle classes, but in some degree also of the working classes, were called upon to repudiate the objections which had been insinuated, rather than alleged, against the latter; and to repudiate also, as he did as a middle class man, that worst and gravest of all insinuations, that the middle classes were opposed to the enfranchisement of their working fellow-countrymen. He would put that question to a test, which every thoughtful man believed to be the most infallible of all tests, the test of the coming division. The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Whiteside) laid great stress on the fact, that the representatives of two large towns were going to vote against the Bill; but arrayed on the other side would be found the representatives of all the other great towns of the United Kingdom. Of two things one: either all the men who represented large boroughs were, as the hon. and learned Gentleman had described them, men without opinions of their own—men obeying abjectly the bidding of their constituents—or they were independent men with convictions of their own. If they were only delegates, did hon. Gentlemen opposite think they would go into the lobby against the Amendment if they thought that, by doing so, their seats would be in danger? If Gentlemen who sat below the gangway on that side were independent and high-minded men, who throughout their lives had advocated the enfranchisement of those who lived by labour, it was hard to be told that they were insincere on this question, and that they shaped their course for fear they should be discarded by their constituencies. He had listened with anxiety to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) when he supported the special demurrer of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, with an ability about which there could be no second opinion. He remembered the first speech made in that House by the noble Lord sixteen years ago, when, regardless of the traditions of his party upon the great question of popular education, and taking a course of his own, he gave reason to hope that he would influence the House by eloquent argument and profound thought—a hope that had since been so well realized. When he contrasted that first speech with the one the noble Lord delivered the other night, for the first time he found the noble Lord to lack that characteristic quality which had hitherto distinguished him—that was, candour towards the House and frankness in the disclosure of his opinions. The noble Lord was very ingenious in evading the question before the House—very ingenious in giving reasons why they should not entertain the Bill, the main reason being that the Bill did not provide for the redistribution of seats. But the noble Lord was one of those who voted again and again with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks, and other leaders of his party for the Bill introduced in 1850—to do what? to change in a vertical direction the elective franchise for the counties and boroughs in England. From beginning to end of that much-contested Bill the objection was never raised that it was not coupled with a redistribution of seats. The Bill went up to the House of Lords, where a £12 franchise was adopted, which this House accepted as a compromise; but neither in the one House nor the other was the question of the redistribution of seats raised as a necessary adjunct to the measure. Now, constitutional principles were not political vegetables — sometimes out of season and sometimes in—what was right then was right now, and what was wrong then was wrong now. During the progress of that Bill it was hoped, on a critical division, to raise the county franchise from £8 to £15. The late Sir Robert Peel was not at the moment in the House; but on a subsequent stage he took the unusual course of saying, that if he had been in the House, and from the peculiar knowledge he had of Ireland and of the wants of that country, that if he had been present he would have voted for the £8 franchise. Now, this Bill, which his right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Dublin denounced as revolutionary, proposed to go down only so far as £14 with regard to the counties. What did the argument of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn amount to? To this, stripped of the careful verbiage in which it was so well put to the House—If you pass this Bill, what guarantee can you give that another Parliament may not have to deal with the question of redistribution? He humbly submitted that that was an unconstitutional question to put to the House. It was based on the supposition of a solution of the continuity of Parliamentary authority; and it took it for granted that Parliament, in any Session, was not at perfect liberty to deal, as it might think fit, with the legislation adopted in a preceding Session. The noble Lord asked, what security could they have that this Parliament would deal with the other part of the Reform question, or that the same Ministers would deal with it, or that circumstances might not occur which would change the character and temper of the House, and prevent the question being discussed in the same spirit as now? The noble Lord further argued that there would be a disadvantage in again appealing to the people before the whole question of Parliamentary Reform should be settled. But, even if that should be so, it would furnish no sufficient argument against the present Bill; for although they were told on the highest authority that they should not do evil in order that good might come of it, they were nowhere told that they should not do so because it might be accompanied with some evil. The Leader of the Opposition had stated, that if this measure were to pass, the character of the House would be lowered, because it would infuse a greater portion of the working classes into the constituencies, and that would inevitably cut off the close boroughs, and thus the Crown would be crippled in the choice of the Executive. The right hon. gentleman, with that felicity of illustration of which he was so great a master, told the House to refresh their memories with a recollection of the eminent men who, within the last hundred years, had sat for close boroughs. But he (Mr. Torrens) could not help thinking that a very erroneous impression prevailed extensively upon that point; and he would cite a few facts which led him to an opposite conclusion. Mr. Fox, it was true, got into that House before he was of age, and it was true that he held place while he sat for a rotten borough; but Mr. Fox was never thought of for the Cabinet until he had fought and won the city of Westminster. Though a most indolent man, he never shrank from the drudgery of contests for twenty-seven years. He stood the racket of Covent Garden and the ribaldry of Palace Yard, and continued to represent the great constituency of Westminster, in office and out of office, without interruption, to the end of his life. Again, Sir Charles Grey entered that House, not for a rotten borough, but for the county of Northumberland. No man was more inclined to resist dictation from any quarter, and yet Mr. Grey, afterwards Prime Minister of this country, so long as he sat in that House, sat for the county of Northumberland. Mr. Windham, the third of that great galaxy of talent, never sat for a rotten borough, but through his whole Parliamentary life he represented either the city of Norwich or the county of Norfolk. So much for the Whigs; now for the Tories. They were told that Mr. Pitt was a man made by borough-mongering. It was true that in his impatience to enter Parliament he took the borough of Appleby; but in three years he left it to become the representative of the great constituency of the University of Cambridge, and whether in office or in opposition he continued to sit for that University. Lord Castlereagh sat for the county of Down for thirty years; never for a close borough. Mr. Canning, it was true, had been the representative of Newport, but he had also been the representative of Liverpool. He would not weary the House with other illustrations. We found that men who had held office with the greatest power and with the greatest credit since the beginning of the century were representatives of great constituencies; for instance, Mr. Spring-Rice, Mr. Poulett Thomson, and, above all, Lord Russell, who for twenty-three years thought it worth while to contest the representation of the city of London. And Lord Derby, as we all knew, entered the House for Preston, and afterwards sat for South Lancashire. It was said that great constituencies would not gratefully accept the suffrage now proposed — that if the House looked to such constituencies as Marylebone and Lambeth, they would find that a great portion of those who enjoyed the franchise did not think it worth while to record their votes at the hustings. Now, he believed that no small amount of misapprehension prevailed on that point also. A statement had been published to the effect, that only one-half of the electors on the register had voted at the last election in the borough of Finsbury, which he represented; but he found that two-thirds of those electors had voted upon that occasion. And, further, he should observe that the mere fact of abstaining from voting did not prove the existence of a feeling of indifference with respect to questions of public policy. What had happened in the case of the divisions in that House, and how had hon. Members used their right of voting? Consider what had happened in the last five years. In the year 1861 there were 187 divisions, and out of that number there were only fifteen, in which one-half of the House voted, and only six in which two-thirds of the House voted. In the year 1862 there were 222 divisions, and out of that number there were only six, in which one-half of the House voted, and only two in which two-thirds of the House voted. In the year 1863 there were 188 divisions, in eight of which only one-half of the House voted, and in one of which only two-thirds of the House voted. The proportions had been much the same during the last two years; but those facts did not prove that they were indifferent about questions of freedom of trade, or of freedom of conscience, or of taxation, or of foreign policy. Many members of that House appeared to have been scared by the threat of the evils which would follow from admitting any considerable portion of the working classes to the franchise; and it had been stated that the trades unions would in that case be used for purposes of political combination. He did not share that apprehension. He regarded the trades unions themselves as a striking proof of the growing intelligence of the working classes, and of their readiness to depend upon moral and social influences rather than upon violence and crime; and he did not believe that they would ever be employed for mere political purposes. Hon. Gentlemen who had talked so rashly on that subject knew nothing of the character and temper of those classes. He believed that the great employers of labour throughout the country would, like the hon. Member for the West Riding (Sir Francis Crossley) bear testimony that the working classes were animated by a feeling of loyalty to our institutions; and he deeply regretted that there had been used by the Members of that House language depreciatory of the character of the great mass of their fellow-countrymen. ["No, no!"] He was glad to hear that cry of "No;" but it could not efface the memory of such language as that which had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. The right hon. Member for Hertfordshire, as well as other Gentlemen opposite, did not deny that the working classes were fit for the exercise of the franchise; why, he would ask, should they refuse to extend to them that privilege? He contended that the present House was bound to fulfil the pledges given by its predecessors on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. Making every allowance for exaggeration, he maintained that this was a middle class Bill, but more a working class Bill. It completed the complement of the middle class enfranchisement, but he should be perfectly dumb before any assembly of working classes, if it were to be intended that this was a sufficient payment of the debt due to the working classes. If equals were added to unequals the disproportion remained. The present Bill would add about equally to the number of the middle and of the working classes enjoying the franchise, leaving the former the same preponderance as they now had; and he could not understand how hon. Gentlemen could get up and say that it would swamp the middle classes. The Government statistics were in many respects very inaccurate, and in no respect were they more so than in the conjectural figures given to denote the proportion of working men who now possessed the franchise. No one who was practically acquainted with the elements of which the large constituencies consisted would, he believed, endorse statements contained in these returns. There was nothing like 20 per cent of waged men in the existing constituencies. He believed the calculations of the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) were nearest the mark; but let them put it as they liked, no calculation could be attempted with the statistics on the table for groundwork which could at all support the assertion that the effect would be to swamp the middle classes. At present the working men had about one-fourth of the borough constituency. It was proposed to increase the borough constituency by one-half and the county constituency by about as much—the whole addition being about 400,000. He did not see how they would convince either the borough or county constituencies that the effect would be to swamp the middle classes. He was not there to defend the Government, nor to be the apologist of the working classes, who, he believed, would not thank any man to defend them against vague imputations. They had, for a long while, thought it useless to petition the House, believing that Parliament had made up its mind not to do anything in the matter of Reform; but since this Bill had been brought in, no less than 778 petitions had been sent in, signed by fully half a million of people. If in all the cases where petitions were adopted by large public meetings and signed by the chairmen on their behalf, as, for instance, was the case at a meeting of more than 3,000, at which he was present, the numbers were added, the total would be, he would not say double, but certainly very largely increased. There were hardly any petitions worth naming in comparison against the Bill. But they were asked to let the question go off on the technical and temporary question raised by the resolution of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, and supported by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, in order that their overdue promises might not be paid till next year. His opinion was that they ought not to do so, but to pass this Bill, by which they would restore the good feeling of the people and give them confidence in the justice and wisdom of the House.

MR. WALPOLE: Sir, in rising, as I do, under a sense of deep anxiety, to address the House, the calm and serene spirit which the hon. Member for Birmingham says that my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) and myself have exhibited in connexion with this very question of Parliamentary Reform will, at all events, be some guarantee of sincerity in the statement I am about to offer. The question which has been discussed now for six nights has ranged over such a variety of topics that I will endeavour, if I can, to bring myself, at least, if not the House, back to the short though prominent and important issue raised in this debate. That issue, raised by the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester to the second reading of the Bill moved by the Government, is, whether, admitting the necessity of Parliamentary Reform, you ought to settle that question on a full review of the whole subject, or, according to the proposition contained in the Bill, you are to look at a part of the subject in the first instance, and decide that part before you are in possession of the other portion. Now, Sir, notwithstanding the observations made by the hon. Member for Birmingham to-night, notwithstanding the efforts which both he and the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Torrens M'Cullagh) have made to refute and confute the calm, and I must add the candid and honest, observations of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn, that argument of my noble Friend was so cogent, so clear, so complete, and so concise, that, if the debate had not been continued for six consecutive nights, I should have thought there would have been absolutely an end of the question on the first evening that the issue was raised.

But since the matter has been argued I have endeavoured to gather from all the speeches that have been made, and to condense shortly, the reasons urged against the Amendment. These reasons may all, I believe, be summed up as follows:—The Parliamentary pledge of which we have heard so much down to the very last speech that has been spoken; the importance of giving or securing to the working classes—or what are called the working classes — a substantial voice in our representative system; the intrinsic merits of the Bill, which the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs tells us ought, irrespective of other considerations, to commend the measure to the House; lastly, and what I think the most important question of all, the question which was raised last night with a suavity of manner and with an agreeable address, both in style and language, which could not fail to win the attention of the House, as it has always won the affection of all the friends of the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge). Now, with regard to the Parliamentary pledge: if there be any pledge of the nature that is alleged, there is an end of the discussion. I agree that such a pledge ought to be kept, and I am sure that the House would not flinch from doing so. But how does the matter of this pledge stand? Can anybody contend that, because Parliament pledged itself upon the recommendation of the Ministers of the Crown to consider the question of Parliamentary Reform, Parliament is therefore bound to accept any measure of Reform however imperfect, merely because it happens to be so recommended? Or can you think that this House would be guilty—I was going to say of the absurdity—of admitting that upon a question of this great importance, involving not only the reconstruction of this House, but the redistribution of political power, the House could be bound to a determination of that question until the Government have furnished us with all the materials and with all the propositions which we are entitled to have before us? Nor is that all. There are circumstances connected with this pledge that ought not to be forgotten. When first it was made, it was made by the noble Lord the present head of the Government—not so much, I must say, for the purpose of satisfying a just demand made by the people, as of satisfying the exigencies of a tottering Administration. And when Government after Government have followed in the same wake, and endeavoured to submit to this House measures which this House might approve, they have been so varied, so contradictory, that Parliament cannot be pledged to anyone of them until it exercises a judgment as to which it shall choose. Why, Sir, we can none of us forget what took place in the year 1860. We have virtually the same Government now that we had then, save that it has lost its distinguished leader. In that year a Bill was brought forward and withdrawn, not so much through opposition on this side of the House as on the other. But if Parliament was pledged to go on with that Bill, I ask the Government, why did they allow five Sessions to succeed each other—they, the same Ministers of the Sovereign whose recommendations were communicated to us in 1860, occupying their places all the while—why did they not, in any of those intervening Sessions, bring forward a measure of Parliamentary Reform? If the pledge was good, it was as good in 1861, in 1862, in 1863, in 1864, in 1865, as it is in the year 1866. And the matter does not even end there; for last year, when the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) brought forward his Bill, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, then the organ of the Government during the temporary absence of Lord Palmerston, said, from his place on that bench, that they, the Ministers, considered their pledge had been redeemed; that they did not intend to recommend the Crown to dissolve Parliament and go to the country on any question except that of confidence in Lord Palmerston. Under those circumstances, if the Government postponed the fulfilment of their pledge for their own convenience, I ask whether the House is not entitled to ask for a postponement of the pledge on their part till they have before them full means of dealing with the question?

I now come to the question of the desirability of securing to the working classes a substantial voice in our representative system. And here let me remind the House, that when the question of Reform was first re-opened, it was re-opened under the impression that the number of voters in the boroughs and counties had not kept pace with the wealth and intelligence of the people; and, secondly, it was intimated by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer two years ago, that the working classes were only represented in an infinitesimal proportion on the roll of electors. He believed that the working men were not one-twentieth—certainly not one-tenth of the electors. But when the House saw the returns—that statistical information which is of immense value to bring fuller information on the subject than ever we had before—it appeared that the number of voters had kept pace with the wealth and intelligence of the people in the same ratio, at all events with the numbers of the people who represented that wealth and intelligence. It also appears that the working classes, instead of being one-twentieth or one-tenth, are one-fourth of the constituencies. The hon. Member for Birmingham denies the accuracy of those returns. But I ask him, and those Gentlemen who agree with him in that view, what has this House to depend on but the returns furnished by the Government? Even if those returns are inaccurate—as grossly inaccurate as the hon. Member supposes—what is the proper inference to draw from that fact? Why, that legislation ought to be postponed till we obtain accurate information. That is the legitimate inference. But supposing it appears from those returns that the number of electors of the working class on the register is not sufficient and that you ought to add to them, the problem to be solved is not only the additional number you ought to provide, but how they will be placed—and how can you determine that until you know what these constituencies are to be? I cannot leave this part of the question without referring to some observations made by the hon. Member for Birmingham, and to an argument used by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill) in one of those philosophic speeches which always delight the House. The Member for Birmingham alluded to meetings and petitions on the subject of this Bill. He knows more of those meetings than I can pretend to do, as I only acquire my information with reference to them from what appears in the papers; but, from what I have gathered in this way, it seems to me that those meetings are always attended largely by political partizans and agitators, and not so largely by working men. The question is, how far these demonstrations represent the opinions of the working men? It appears to me that they were attended more by political partizans than by those who may be considered as the fair representatives of the working men. And when I look to the petitions presented to this House—I did look through all those which had been presented on the subject up to Saturday—I find that they represent the opinions of mayors, corporations, and influential persons, inhabitants of towns; but almost all are drawn in a form which stamps them as not coming from working men, though they state that the working men are fully determined to have the franchise extended. As far as I could make out, up to this evening, when the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Clay) presented petitions, there was only one which came from a working man. And did this petition ask for a second reading of this Bill? No; it was a petition presented, not in favour of this Bill, but in favour of the Bill of the hon. Member for Hull; and it stated a very good reason on the part of the petitioners—namely, that the hon. Member's Bill would encourage men to raise themselves higher in the scale of intelligence. Will the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) now permit me to venture to question his argument? In his very philosophic speech on this Bill, he started with an assumption that begged the greater part of the question; and he arrived at a conclusion which I think was diametrically opposed to his own written opinions, and which, as it seems to me, is based on constitutional error. His argument began in this way: This Bill is a good one in itself, and being a good one in itself I think we ought to vote for it and against the Amendment. But the hon. Gentleman will at once see, that though the hon. Member for Birmingham and others who agree with him in thinking the Bill a good one in itself, his concluding observation was a good recommendation for those who think the Bill a bad one; that observation was one which ought to have very little weight. The hon. Member addressed another argument to the House which he thought ought to have weight with those who hold Conservative opinions. He said all classes ought to be represented; but the working classes were either not represented or represented inefficiently, and that it would be for the interest of the House themselves—in which opinion I very much agree—if they could hear some intelligent artizans express their opinions and discuss questions in which they are interested, though these might be such as persons in other states of life did not agree in. Now, the argument of the hon. Member with respect to class representation was based on the constitutional error, that in England the principle of representation is not by communities, but by classes. But the principle of representation in England is representation by communities, not by classes; and if you once tried to get a representation by classes, you would involve yourself in this dilemma:—The working class is not a single class standing by itself, but an aggregate of many classes, and either they must all be represented by separate representatives, or they must be represented by one man. In the former case you must reform your Constitution; in the latter you would give no satisfaction to the men whom you want to have represented. But the hon. Member concluded in a manner which, I think, was at variance with his own recorded opinions. This Bill is not one for a lateral extension of the franchise, but a measure for the reduction of the franchise in counties and boroughs. Well, in the hon. Member's work on *Parliamentary Reform,* he demolishes the proposition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that every man has a right to a vote unless specially disqualified. The hon. Member lays down that, if the representative were returned merely to govern the elector himself, that proposition would be true; but if he is elected to govern other persons, you must measure the value of the man's vote. And with regard to county constituencies, no one has pointed out so ably, so forcibly, and so well as the hon. Member, that which once or twice I endeavoured to suggest to this House, which is, that you ought not to throw on the counties all the urban constituencies, inasmuch as, naturally, they would destroy the representation of the agricultural or rural interests; but that you ought to collect them into constituencies by themselves. If that is the opinion of the hon. Member for Westminster, I ask him to vote for the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester. Again, in his *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform,* the hon. Member for Westminster supposes not only the possibility, but almost the certainty, that the two questions of the extension of the franchise and the redistribution of seats, or, as he calls it, "the grouping of boroughs," could be treated together; but in such case he says we ought to treat that which is the more crying of the two evils, or, as he calls it, the more "peccant part of the Constitution;" and he says that this is not the franchise, but the state of the boroughs: he says, if you are to treat the franchise first, you leave the other question to chance; you may drive it here or there, or leave it nowhere. Yet the hon. Member is now prepared to vote for this Bill for the extension of the franchise, and to leave the Bill for the redistribution of seats to chance. I think the hon. Member's speech is not in accordance with his writings; but I beg leave to subscribe to his printed opinions, as preferable to words which he has spoken in this House.

Now, let us turn to the next point. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that this was a good Bill in itself, and that, therefore, we ought to press it forward. He gave five reasons why we should do so, but I am not going into them. I wish the House, however, to consider this. We have had several Bills on Parliamentary Reform recommended in different Parliaments, but of all the Bills we have yet had, I will venture to say, that if we get into Committee upon it the present Bill will be found to be the least defensible and the most defective. All the other Bills avowedly endeavoured to deal with the whole subject; this, as avowedly, deals only with a part. The authors of all the other Bills professed themselves to be governed by the principles of the Constitution. I look into this Bill, and I assure you I can see no principle in it, except the principle that it unsettles everything and settles nothing. All the other Bills kept up the connexion between representation and taxation; this Bill destroys that connexion altogether. And if you go on reducing the franchise merely, instead of extending it to other persons besides those to whom you intend to give it by a reduction, depend upon it you will arrive at a point where the famous antithesis will be realized—that those who govern will not be those who pay, and that those who pay will not be allowed to govern. All the other Bills proceeded upon the notion that you ought to have a variety of franchises;

for the noble Lord at the head of the Government, the great author of the first Reform Bill, has said that a great mistake was made in confining the franchise to one species of voters only—namely, the £10 householders, and that you ought to have a variety of franchises in order to make the constituencies sufficiently comprehensive. That was the opinion which the noble Lord expressed in this House not many years ago. Now, with the exception of the lodger franchise and the savings bank franchise, you have literally no species of franchise here except a franchise which proceeds in a downward direction, and necessarily therefore—I say this without any reproach to those who might get the franchise under the Bill—it goes to people of less independence and less intelligence, as a body, than those who are living in £10 houses. I, therefore, think that, if you look at all the other Bills and compare them with this, you will find that the present Bill has really more defects than any which has been presented to the House.

I am afraid that I am forced here to allude very briefly, and I must add, with very deep regret, to a matter which is personal to myself. The hon. Member for Birmingham said that I left Her Majesty's Government on the ground that I was in favour of a reduction of the borough franchise to £8; and he went on to remark that the difference between that franchise and the one at present proposed was only £1. And to-night the hon. Gentleman made some further remarks with regard to my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) and myself. I assure him and I assure the House, that if it were not that I believe the explanation I am going to make is material to the present Bill, I would maintain silence. The matter, however, has been mentioned and my opinion quoted; and if my opinion is worth anything at all, it ought to be quoted correctly. Now, Sir, it is perfectly true that my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire and myself had to undergo the most painful trial which any public man can have to go through—a temporary separation from his political friends. But I can assure the hon. Member for Birmingham and the House, both in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire and in my own, that we thought we were at least proceeding on plain intelligible constitutional principles. Let me explain. We did not resign our places in Her Majesty's Government on the ground of the reduction of the franchise. What we did say was, that we thought we saw in the Constitution that the county and borough franchises were distinctly placed upon different bases—the county franchise resting on property and tenure, and the borough franchise on occupation and residence, both, however, being connected with taxation. We were afraid that any proposition to reduce the county franchise to a common level with the borough franchise would do away with that distinction. We thought there was danger in any reduction of the franchise either in the boroughs or the counties; that if you took an arbitrary line, from whatever point you might take it, you would always be in danger of being dragged down to some lower level, until at last it would end in universal suffrage. We thought—and we may perhaps have been wrong—that we could find a resting-place on which to set the suffrage, by fixing the county occupation franchise at £20, and the borough occupation franchise at £8. Our reasons were, that a county franchise of £20 would bring it into immediate connexion with the direct taxation of the country in the shape of the house-tax, and that £20 householders had the requisite qualification for serving upon juries. Then we thought that if the borough franchise were reduced to £8—or rather to something above a £6 rating, which would be equivalent to an £8 rental—we could keep up the connexion between representation and taxation; because at that figure the landlord could not ordinarily compound for the tenant's rates at a lower sum than the other householders of the town had to pay; but below that sum the landlord might compound for one-third, and in some cases for one-half of the value, and the consequence would be, first of all, that you would have a class of voters paying less in the shape of rates; secondly, what I think will be found absolutely fatal to this Bill if it passes, the landlord who compounds with his tenants would have those occupiers under his control and corrupting influence — and there is nothing which I know of so dangerous as to have that going on from year to year and through every year. That is the truth of the case. I repeat that I should not have made this explanation if I had not deemed it material to the present discussion. Now, what are the Government doing? They have created two new arbitrary lines, fixing the county franchise at £14, and the borough franchise at £7. There is no taxation whatever, on which either of these lines is based. I do not know why we are to take a £14 franchise for counties except that it is twice £7; and, in like manner, I do not know why the borough franchise should be fixed at £7, except that that sum is the half of £14. For my part I can see no principle whatever in this; and unless you intend to maintain the connexion between representation and taxation, I distinctly and deliberately say that, if we get into Committee on the Bill, I shall never consent to those two portions of it.

I turn now to the next point—the point which the hon. Member for Birmingham said was the most important of all—and I entirely agree with him. This is the point which the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge), and the hon. Member for Birmingham addressed you so wisely and so forcibly—the importance, the immense importance, of our endeavouring to settle this question. Nothing can be more mischievous than leaving a great question like this unsettled, and allowing it to be the subject of political agitation out of doors, and the shuttlecock of parties within. If you are to settle it you are bound to settle it finally, and I think you can do that much more easily by voting for the Amendment of the noble Earl than by voting in favour of the Bill. The hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge) put it in the fairest way possible. He said, "I vote against the Amendment of the noble Earl the Member for Chester, because in the first place it is ill-timed, in the second place it is ill-constructed, and in the third place it will not settle the question, but will tend to postpone the settlement of it." Ill-timed! That will be best decided by the approaching division. Ill-constructed! People may have their own opinions about this; but when I read it I thought it much resembled the character of the noble Lord. I thought it was clear, intelligent, straightforward, single-minded, honest, and honourable. I thought at the same time of the pang the noble Lord must have in being forced by circumstances to go against his own party, and it is for this reason that I look upon it as honest, honourable, and single minded. There are only two ways, ordinarily speaking, in which a question of this kind can be settled within these walls—namely, either by comprehending the whole subject in one Bill, or by comprehending it in two or more distinct Bills, taking care that you proceed *pari passu* with them all. Now, the Government have rendered it impracticable for us to take the first of these courses, because they do not give us a single comprehensive Bill. The second course is much more difficult, and you will find that the introduction of two or more Bills in such a manner that the entire subject cannot be discussed according to the rules of the House must tend to delay and end in disappointment. You must at least have two second readings, two Committees, and two third readings, with discussions at each of those stages. Do you think that will not cause delay? You will hardly be able to settle the question by having your Bill so divided, for the consequence will be that this House will insist, and in my opinion rightly insist, that the Government should take no step with regard to either Bill, unless the other Bills should keep up exactly with it, taking care that one Bill shall not go on unless it be accompanied by the other. The noble Earl the Member for Chester threw out a suggestion to the Government, and my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) threw out another. No observation has yet been made upon the last of these suggestions, but I think it may yet be found worthy of consideration. The noble Member for Chester suggested the adoption of the recommendation of Lord Grey, that you should refer the matter to the Privy Council; but the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary showed at once the fatal objection to that course, that it would only be handing over the difficulty to certain Privy Councillors, from whom it would have to come back again to this House. I own I have another objection, and a rather stronger one, to the adoption of that course. I object, in the strongest possible manner, to this House ever delegating to any other body whatever any matter connected with its own rights or privileges, and still more with its reconstruction. The suggestion of my noble Friend the Member for King's Lynn was to postpone the matter to another Session. Well, I think you will be forced to do that. But, if I may, I will add a suggestion of my own, which I offer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Whether you carry the second reading of the Bill or not, whether you go on with this Bill during the present year, or whether you are forced to postpone it to another, I think we have got into such an entanglement upon this question, that you cannot have recourse to the ordinary mode of procedure if you want to succeed. The House will remember that, when you got into a similar difficulty with regard to the Government of India, a suggestion was made by the noble Earl now at the head of the Ministry, that you should go into Committee of the Whole House, and consider the question, laying down certain propositions and principles, taking the assent of the House to those principles, and then embodying them in a Bill. I am solely responsible for this suggestion now, and I believe if it were followed it would be the best mode of ascertaining the deliberate opinions of the House. If you adopt it, I think you will have a chance of success. In offering this suggestion to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I do it in the most perfect good faith.

Now, Sir, if all these reasons against the Amendment fail, let me ask the House just for a few moments to consider, whether the argument of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has really been answered. I will not weaken the argument by adverting to it further; but if the noble Lord were now present in the House I would borrow from it one illustration which I think would come home to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said, and said truly, that in questions of finance the Chancellor of the Exchequer rightly tells the Members of this House that they ought not to come to any Resolution before the whole Budget is before them. But what he rightly urges upon the House as the right course to pursue in that case, the House may rightly urge upon the Government as the right course to pursue in this. Consider for a moment what took place when the Succession Duty was proposed thirteen years ago. It was accompanied by two conditions, one recommending that the tax should be applied to individuals only, and that the question of taxing the property of corporations in a similar manner to that in which you taxed the property of individuals should be postponed for another year. This recommendation was followed, and the consequence was, that you never heard of the question again. That came of settling the question imperfectly. But when the duty was imposed there was another condition, that the income tax should cease in a certain year: but when the year arrived, the income tax was doubled. Is not this a proof how unsatisfactory such a mode of settling a question is? The Chancellor of the Exchequer may, perhaps, tell me truly with regard to that matter, that circumstances occurred over which he had no control, and that he could not foresee everything which would happen. But may not circumstances happen with regard to the reconstruction of this House over which he will have no control? What guarantee have we that the other Bill will ever be forthcoming—that it will ever be proposed? This is a most serious and important question; and if on a question of finance you properly require to have the whole subject before you, important as that question may be, it sinks into insignificance as compared with the great question of the reconstruction of the House of Commons. The House of Commons is a most important body in our midst; it is not only the controlling power of the State, but it is almost the motive power of the State. In matters of finance it is nearly supreme; in all matters of legislation, Bills which are passed into law originate here; in the supervision of our public officers and the servants of the Crown, it is the only body which can interfere; even our foreign policy is naturally tinctured with the tone matters take in this House and the character they assume. But really this is not all. The House of Commons, important as it is, forms only one part of our form of Government, and before you can properly reconstruct this House you are bound to ascertain in that reconstruction how it will harmonise with the rest of the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has had two great political leaders and exemplars in William Pitt and Sir Robert Peel, and I will tell the House what these two men said upon this branch of the subject. Lord Stanhope records, that when Pitt was asked by an abbé in France with respect to the English Constitution, "Since all human things are perishable, what would be the first part to decay?" Mr. Pitt paused awhile to consider, and then said, "The first parts which will perish are the prerogatives of the Crown and the authority of the Houses of Parliament." Sir Robert Peel said, as we all remember, after the Reform Bill had passed, and he had become the Minister of the Crown, that the "greatest difficulty he had to experience in carrying on the Government of the country was to reconcile an ancient monarchy and a proud aristocracy with a reformed House of Commons." I do not say that the evils apprehended by Mr. Pitt, or the difficulties experienced by Sir Robert Peel, will be aggravated by any Reform Bill if you wisely and effectually settle the question; but in order that you may avoid those evils, in order that you may not increase those difficulties, I say you ought to have perfect and complete legislation on the subject.

These are the reasons which induce me to vote for the Amendment. I vote for it, not because I am opposed to Reform, but because I think that Reform ought to be complete and entire. I vote for the Amendment, not because I would not willingly secure for the working classes a substantial voice in the electoral system, but because I think it is as important they should not have a preponderating influence. Lastly, I vote for the Amendment, not because I am unwilling to redeem the Parliamentary pledge which has been given — I recognnize that pledge—but because I think there is no other way in which that pledge can be redeemed except by taking care that no part of the question is left untouched, unexplained, undetermined for any number of years. A pledge so given is given by the Government as well as by this House: if the Government redeem their part of the pledge by submitting to Parliament, without reserve, a full, complete, and wise measure, be assured of this, the House of Commons will not be slow to redeem as fully its part of the pledge; and, in doing so, it will not merely act according to the dictates or expectations of a Ministry, but according to that which it believes to be best and most conducive to the permanent interests of the whole community.

MR. GOSCHEN: Sir, after the many interesting and able speeches which have been made, I must ask for myself the kind indulgence of the House. It might be thought that, in so lengthy a debate, every possible argument had been advanced, and that the subject had been put in every possible light; but so long as hon. Members opposite rise to attack the Bill, the House will, in the spirit of fair play, bear with us in defending it. We are entitled to all the more indulgence on this occasion, because the Government has to fight front and rear. Hon. Members attack the Bill and support the Amendment on such different grounds, that it is difficult to maintain the relevance of one's argument to one hon. Member, while one is replying to the arguments of another. If I understand the argument of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Walpole), he attaches the greatest importance to the redistribution of seats, and he mainly objects to the Bill before the House, because it does not deal with that branch of the subject. If other hon. Members had confined themselves as much to the Amendment we might have had easier work; but hon. Members, as much, perhaps, on our side as on the other, have not confined themselves to the issues raised by the noble Earl the Member for Chester, and, more especially, by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn. Hon. Members who have spoken in favour of the Amendment have tried to confine themselves to it; but then, so far from doing so, they have been unable to get to the end of their speeches without having a tilt at Reform. The reason why we find it so difficult to argue this question is, because we feel that while dealing with the arguments on one side, we have got to consider those which are made use of on another. What I mean is this—that it is exceedingly difficult, when hon. Members tell us that they are opposed to a reduction of the franchise, and at the same time that they only object to the mode of its introduction, to argue against persons who take up those two positions. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman), I may add, made a curious declaration the other evening, which filled me with surprise. He said, "If the Chancellor of the Exchequer had adhered to the Suffrage Bill, he would have heard no objection from us on the ground that he did not also deal with the redistribution of seats." But was the right hon. Gentleman, I would ask, speaking in the name of the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), whose able and elaborate argument dealt almost exclusively with the proposition, that there ought to be a redistribution of seats? Was he speaking in the name of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, who says that if this Bill be passed by itself it will give a preponderance to the working classes? In whose name, then, was he speaking? But the right hon. Gentleman went on to say, that if we had only introduced the Franchise Bill alone, he would have discussed the Bill on its merits; certainly, that was a great deal for him to say, for in the speeches which he has hitherto made, he seems to me to have been disposed rather to discuss the merits of the Gentlemen who sit on the Treasury Bench. I have no doubt, then, we should have this Bill discussed on its merits by the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends in much the same way as the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) was discussed last year; so that the Government have probably not lost much by the part that he has deemed it to be his duty to take. The proposal of the hon. Member for Leeds was opposed because the right hon. Gentleman, and those who supported him, complained of it as being a mere fragmentary measure—indeed they denounced it as a "miserable Bill;" and yet the right hon. Gentleman now informs us, that if the Franchise Bill had been introduced alone, we should not have heard one word of the objections which he has advanced. That statement, however, is quite at variance with most of the speeches which we have heard on the subject. It is at variance with what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman who has just addressed us (Mr. Walpole), as well as with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside). And what, let me ask, has been the line of argument taken by most of those who support the Amendment? Some, I regret to say, entirely misinterpreted the course honestly adopted by the Government in order to carry a measure of Reform. Some complain that information has been withheld; and, upon that point, I should like to say a word. But the Amendment covers other objections. It covers the objections raised by those who have an aversion to Reform, and of those who think that a Redistribution of Seats Bill ought to be laid simultaneously with a Franchise Bill on the table, in order that the House may, I suppose, undo with one that which it has done with the other. ["No, no!"] I know the House is sensitive on the question of its sincerity in favour of Reform, and that some hon. Members cannot be expected to listen without marks of dissent to the suggestion that they may not be over anxious on the point. I will, however, with the permission of the House, call their attention to several expressions which have fallen from various speakers in the course of this debate. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) said:—

> "The question of Reform was revived on Lord Palmerston's death, and, as I believe, against the wishes and feelings of the country."

These words were received with enthusiastic cheers by hon. Gentlemen opposite, who are "ready and anxious to consider Reform as a whole." Another hon. Member said:—

> "What would have been our position if Lord Palmerston had lived—would we now be discussing a Reform Bill? I do not believe it."

That statement also was received with enthusiastic cheering, as was also the statement of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton), who said that, under the calm and judicious leadership of Lord Palmerston, there was no chance of Reform at all. Was not there a remarkable unanimity on the point among those three speakers? and are we still to be told by those hon. Gentlemen to whom these remarks appear to have given so much satisfaction, that the House is "ready and anxious to consider Reform as a whole?" Now when, I ask, Is the House prepared to do so? Is it ready to do so now? The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) has supplied us with an answer to this question, for he has told us,

> "It is evident the whole scheme cannot be passed this year; and the best way, in my opinion, is to suspend the whole question until 1867."

I ask, do those who are so ready to discuss the question now mean to adopt the plan of postponing it to 1867? And what says the second part of the Amendment? "That it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the franchise in England and Wales"—the very thing which we have been discussing for the last fortnight. But then we are told that the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has not been answered. I would, however, remind the House, that there is another speech which has not been answered, and that is, the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General for Scotland, who dealt *seriatim* with every argument which the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn adduced. Hon. Gentlemen opposite are, of course, quite entitled to say that the arguments of the noble Lord have not been answered; but they can scarcely, with any show of justice, say that they have not been dealt with, because my hon. and learned Friend took them argument for argument, and disposed of them, in my opinion, in the most able manner. Fortunately for the House we have had a very clear analysis of the noble Lord's argument placed before us by the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), who began his analysis by saying:—

> "My noble Friend supports the Amendment because the Government bring in a Bill in halves, knowing that the whole cannot be carried. Schedules are elastic. A guarantee," he adds, "is wanted, that the same body shall decide both questions. Anomalies of inequality are increasing. Government will have more influence with new constituencies. To judge of future balance of power, it is necessary to know the effect of Government Bills."

Now, in the first place, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn says, "that the Government have introduced this Bill in halves, knowing that it could not be carried otherwise." My answer to that argument is, that that is precisely the reason why we have introduced the Bill in halves. This is the first occasion on which this course has been adopted. Why? Because all other Reform Bills have failed. This is the first instance in which a Reform has been introduced unaccompanied by a measure for the redistribution of seats; and it will, I think, very likely, be the first instance in which one will have been carried. We sought to keep the two proposals distinct, in order that hon. Members who might be in favour of the reduction of the franchise might not feel themselves compelled to vote against a measure with that object, because they happened to be opposed to, it may be, a single detail in a Bill for the redistribution of seats. The argument upon this point was exceedingly well put by my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General for Scotland; and I, for my own part, can very well conceive how an hon. Gentleman who may be perfectly satisfied with a Redistribution of Seats Bill might not be so with respect to a Bill for the reduction of the franchise. As the matter now stands, an opportunity is afforded to hon. Members to vote as they please on each of the two Bills. It is quite possible that, under other circumstances, a combination of minorities might become a majority. There might be a majority in favour of a Reduction of Franchise Bill and in favour of a Redistribution of Seats Bill, taken separately; and yet it is possible that, if the two measures were united together, they might be rejected. Two majorities would thus be thwarted, and that because hon. Members might not have an opportunity of voting as they wished on either of the two measures. But then the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn says that, even though we should pass a Franchise Bill this year, circumstances might arise leading to a dissolution of Parliament, which would prevent us from dealing with the second half of our scheme of Reform next year, and upon that, among other grounds, he supports the Amendment. That is an argument in favour of doing nothing; but it appears to me a reason for doing as much as we possibly can this year. The Government say they would, if possible, pass the whole of the Bill this year; but, if not, they would try to pass one-half of it this year and one-half the next; but hon. Gentlemen opposite say, that if they cannot pass the whole this year they will not take one-half and the other half next year. Another argument is, that if the Government carry the Franchise Bill they will make use of it as a lever to modify the Bill for the redistribution of seats, which is to be introduced. Is this statement made on the supposition that the same Parliament would deal with the redistribution or seats as had dealt with the suffrage of a new Parliament? If it is the present Parliament, the Government leave that Parliament master of the situation. But suppose that another Parliament has to deal with the subject—a supposition has been started that the Government (to use an offensive expression which he had heard in the lobby and not in the House) might "shuffle the cards under the table." He hoped that hon. Members, although they cheered, did not mean to say that they thought the Government capable of doing such a thing. If they did, such a charge could only be met by the most emphatic denial. An hon. Gentleman laughed; but could he get up and say that the Government, in dealing with a great and important political measure—one that would in all probability settle the Reform question for years to come—would, for the purpose of catching a vote, modify the redistribution of seats. [" Yes."] Hon. Members seemed to think that the Government would do so, but the charge could only be met by an emphatic denial. The other night the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) said, that he had the greatest confidence in the personal honour of Government, but that he doubted their political honour. I am so inexperienced in this House that I am unable, after the distinct and emphatic declarations made by the Government, to recognize the distinction mentioned by the noble Lord. But supposing a dissolution were forced on the Government, what leverage would the Government be able to get out of this Bill? It is supposed that the constituencies would be grateful to the Government for the extended franchise, and would give them more power to deal with the distribution of seats. But if hon. Gentlemen opposite vote in favour of the Bill, the constituencies will be as grateful to them as to the Government. The Redistribution of Seats Bill being on the table, all the constituencies that may lose a Member will know their fate, and will not vote in favour of the Government Bill, but against it. On the other hand, those boroughs that are expecting to gain Members would have no power to support the Government, because many of them are not at present Parliamentary boroughs. The Government, therefore, must necessarily lose by a dissolution; and the House, besides having the distinct declaration that no dissolution is intended between the passing of the Franchise Bill and the passing of the Redistribution Bill, would also have the guarantee that it was against the interest of the Government to bring about such a dissolution.

I will now speak a few words upon the Bill of the Government. It appears to me that half the arguments of hon. Members are based on the supposition that the Bill is not safe or expedient. Notwithstanding the repeated denials of hon. Members, given more by their cheers than by their speeches, it is evident that the fear of the preponderance of power in the working classes is the key-note of the whole debate. The speech of the right hon. Member for Huntingdon (General Peel), of the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), and of the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), show that the supremacy of numbers is what they most fear. But I do not see how, by any Redistribution of Seats Bill, they will be satisfied. The right hon. Member for Calne says, that if we wish to see the effect of lowering the suffrage we ought to look to America and Australia. But that does not strike me (Mr. Goschen) as the true argument by induction. On the contrary, it is an argument based upon the theory, that similar constitutions, under dissimilar circumstances, will produce the same result. To support that argument it must be proved, that the circumstances in Australia are the same as in England, and that the character of the people is also the same. One difference, and one difference alone, is sufficient to show the unsoundness of the argument, and that consists in the relative position of labour and capital in the two countries. In England, labour is dependent on capital; but, in Australia and America, capital is dependent on labour. Then, again, are we to suppose that the history and institutions of this country have no influence on the character of the men of the working class? It is a mistake to talk of the levelling tendency of the working classes, and to suppose that our institutions have no influence except on the upper Ten Thousand and the rich classes. Many people appear to think that the monarchy is the only thing we have that is hereditary. But is not the character of the working classes also hereditary? Is it not sometimes too hereditary? There are many prejudices among them; they are as difficult to cast off as to cut off an entail. If the working classes are anti-democratic, as I believe them to be, giving them the franchise would not turn them into democrats in a country like this, where the circumstances were entirely different from those in Australia. Therefore, this argument of deduction is of no value. It is said if you go down to £7, those between £6 and £7 will insist on coming in. That appears to me to be a most extraordinary argument. It appears to me to be an extraordinary argument to say, that if you assented to a £7 franchise you must reduce it to a £6 or a £5 franchise.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) said, that the unenfranchised did not wish to be enfranchised; but that is not, as I believe, a correct representation of the fact. I believe the statement of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge as to the number of petitions is not quite correct. There are a number of petitions from working men in favour of the Bill. If we were now acting under pressure it might be said, I admit, if you give way now you will have to give way again by-and-by; but we are not acting under pressure, but on grounds which seem to us to be those of expediency and justice. I am very reluctant, at this time of night, to pursue the argument; but, on the question of the preponderance of the working classes, I should wish to state that it has been assumed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, that the Bill of the Government, by itself, would give a preponderance to the working classes. The calculation is this. It is supposed that 330,000 of the working classes will come in under the Bill, as against 360,000 belonging to the other classes of the community; and it is argued that, if there is a mistake of 30,000 or 40,000, the working classes will have a preponderance of power in the country. That is not so; because the question is, not how many electors there are of the working classes, but how many Members they will be able to return. Even the pamphlet quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Dublin (Mr. Pim) estimated the number of Members to be sent to that House under the Bill would be only 97 Members out of the entire number of the House; but, even admitting that estimate to be correct, they would be largely outnumbered by the county Members. These authorities leave out of their calculation the counties altogether. The borough representation is treated by itself, and it is supposed that, if the working classes have a majority in the boroughs, they will have a majority in Parliament. Is 97 too much? At present the working classes have 25 per cent of the whole representation, and how many boroughs have they? Do you mean to say they have 25 per cent of the political power in the country? You know by your own calculations that, although the working classes do give 25 per cent of the votes at the polling booths, they have not 25 per cent of the representation. If they had 25 per cent of the representation, they would now be able to return eighty members; whereas it appears by the statistics that there are only eight boroughs, returning fourteen Members, supposed to represent the working classes. The statistics presented only show what we might have known by studying the division lists, how many represent the working classes in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin has picked out a few Members this evening who, he said, represented the working classes, and he enumerated amongst them the hon. Member for Birmingham. I was surprised at this argument, because, on all former occasions, when the hon. Member for Birmingham was referred to as the representative of the working classes, hon. Gentlemen opposite have invariably denied that he is so. Does he, or does he not, represent the working classes? We have in this House Gentlemen connected with various interests, who are understood to speak for them with authority. We have authorities connected with the land, with railways, with manufactures; but where is the hon. Member who, by the consent of this House, is an authority as regards the working classes? The hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett), the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Hughes), and two or three others, are well acquainted with the wants and opinions of the working classes; but even they cannot say that they really represent those classes. It is true that we all represent the interests of the working classes as well as we can. We represented them paternally; but we really cannot be called, in the strict sense of the word, a representation of the working classes. I maintain that the share which they will have in the representation under this Bill is not too great.

There is only one point more on which I wish to say a few words, and that is what is called the expansive process of the present franchise. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) last year insisted that, if the working classes would only make a very little effort, they would be able to attain the franchise; if they would but live in £10 houses they would be able to attain the franchise without our lowering it to the mire. If this be so, if the working classes only behaved themselves, we should practically have household suffrage already. Suppose the working classes answer the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, spending more money on their houses and less on their beer, we should be swamped. Where is the doctrine of the balance of classes? If that argument is correct, hon. Gentlemen opposite must be sorry to see the improvement of the working classes. ["No, no!"] I say the argument is a proof that you are afraid of admitting the working classes to the franchise. ["No, no!"] Is it so, or is it not? Here is a passage from a speech delivered in 1859:—

> "You cannot encounter arguments against the reduction of the franchise by sentimental assertions of the good qualities of the working classes. The greater their good qualities the greater the danger."

That was the language of an authority no less than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks. And what is meant by it is clear enough: they are more likely to combine if they are sober, than if they spent all their money on beer. Hon. Members opposite are more afraid of the working classes when they think than when they drink. I ask them, then, whether they would be glad to see them living in £10 houses? Would the working classes in such case be less likely to combine together and to strike? The question as to their fitness for the franchise has been abandoned, and we are now told that the expansive power given to the working classes will destroy the balance of power in this House. Is that so? It is a fallacy to suppose, that the working classes have so much power in the country. They were accumulated in the great centres. Of 108,000 of the working classes possessing the franchise, 44,000 are in the metropolitan districts, and there are only 67,000 left for the whole of England. Next to the metropolitan districts come the seaport towns, and not those of Lancashire, Yorkshire, including Rochdale, of which we have heard so much. Seventeen seaport towns absorb 21,000, leaving only 46,000 for the whole of England, viz. 6,000 for Manchester, which leaves only 40,000 for 175 seats. Of these there are twelve towns in Lancashire, which absorb 4,000 of the working classes, whilst Bristol has 3,500. What a place that must be for self-control amongst the working classes, so as to have within 500 working class voters as many as there were in the 12 towns in Lancashire! In the West Riding there are 3,800, and that is only double as much as the single town of Brighton. With such figures as these it is impossible to contend that the expansion process which has been spoken of secures an adequate share of the representation for the working classes. I do not say that the men of Dover, Southampton, and Birkenhead may not, perhaps, on account of the sea air they inhale, be as virtuous as the operatives of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, but I doubt whether they are more so. I believe that this expansion goes on where it exists from local circumstances and geographical causes, and has nothing whatever to do with the self-control of the working classes.

The Government have brought in a Bill which is simple, and that is one of the great reproaches which hon. Members cast upon the measure. Many hon. Members who have spoken in this House, and a certain section of Liberals out of the House, would have preferred what is called a more comprehensive measure: they desire one with infinitely more details. But the Government wish their Bill to pass. They have kept to the principle of the Reform Act of 1832. They have not gone upon the principle of classes, to which the right hon. Member for Cambridge University so strongly objects, but have adhered faithfully to the old principle of communities, and of the reduction of the franchise all over the country. Hon. Gentlemen opposite object to that. The right hon. Member for the University of Dublin spoke of the reduction of the franchise in Dublin and in Liverpool as an evil; but while that right hon. Gentleman condemns its reduction in the large towns, other hon. Gentlemen condemn it in the small towns. The fact is, as many hon. Members have candidly avowed, there is a general disposition on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite against any reduction of the franchise at all. The noble lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) told us the other night, that he and his party had been met by two arguments —the fear of the constituencies and the defamation of opponents; and he quoted a violent speech by a working man, or perhaps an Oxford man, addressing working men. But how have they met this Bill? By a fear of the people and the defamation of its friends. The right hon. Member for Stroud thinks to damage the measure by his historical and biographical anecdotes; and hon. Gentlemen opposite misrepresent its character, and hope to secure its defeat, by ascribing its origin to the hon. Member for Birmingham. They show a remarkable confidence in the people as long as the people have no votes. I trust the views of hon. Gentlemen opposite will never be such that they will be afraid of any prosperity which may increase the number of £10 householders. I know they have repudiated with indignation the idea that they regard the admission of the working classes to the franchise as though it were the admission of an invading army. But the way in which they carry their arithmetical calculations from county to county, and borough to borough, shows that they think the safety of our Constitution depends more upon such calculations than upon its own inherent strength and character.

Mr. LOWE moved that the debate be now adjourned.

Lord ELCHO said, that before the Motion was put, he desired to offer one word in explanation. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy (Mr. Goschen) had put expressions in his mouth to the effect that he had a respect for the personal honour, but none for the political honour, of the Government. He begged to state that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, no such words had fallen from him.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, the noble Lord was under a mistake. He had ascribed the expression in question, not to the noble Lord, but to the right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel).

Mr. ONSLOW rose to second the Motion, and was proceeding to make some remarks favourable to the conduct of the Government, when he was met by cries of "Order!"

An hon. Member said, that, as a young Member of the House, he hoped that hon. Members of more age and experience would not insist on occupying the time of the evening usually devoted to dinner by their speeches, so that young Members might not be driven into following the example set by the last speaker, who had attempted to speak on the main Question upon a mere Motion for adjournment.

Mr. YORKE also rose to complain of the length of the speeches, and the difficulty new Members had of obtaining a hearing. During the two last nights of the debate, twenty-two hours had been occupied by thirteen Members, and four Members had exhausted eight hours. He hoped that some arrangement might be come to to enable himself and other hon. Members to express their opinions on the Bill.

Sir RAINALD KNIGHTLEY wished to address a respectful appeal to the Speaker. He should be the last man in the House to impute to that right hon. Gentleman any political or party bias; but he thought Mr. Speaker would more conform to the wishes of the independent Members generally, and more also to the spirit as well as to the letter of the Standing Orders, if he would not so exclusively concentrate his eyes upon the front Benches, and if he would not give his right ear to the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Brand), and his left ear to the hon. and gallant Member for the county of Dublin (Colonel Taylor). About 130 Members had taken their seats for the first time this Session, and as there might be a considerable amount of latent talent in them, it would be only fair to give that undeveloped talent an opportunity of showing itself. A flood of eloquence, unparalleled in his Parliamentary experience, had been poured forth by past, present, and future placemen. It would be invidious to ascribe their speeches to their foreseeing at no distant day a disorganization and re-construction of political parties, and their consequent anxiety to put forward their various claims, and he was therefore willing to assume that they were all influenced by the purest and most patriotic motives. He certainly was not actuated by any personal feelings, as he had not attempted to address the House, nor did he intend to do so. He merely spoke on behalf of a large class of new Members, who no doubt desired to address the House.

Mr. BUTLER-JOHNSTONE said, that at the pace at which the debate had proceeded it would not conclude before this time ten years, and feeling certain that the Reform question would not be settled by that time, he was himself in no hurry. He made this calculation because thirty or forty Gentlemen, it was understood, had signified their wish to address the House; only four, five or six rose every night, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given twelve nights as the limit of time this Session. It was evident, therefore, that no Member under fifty years of age, not being a Cabinet Minister, could expect to have the opportunity of speaking, and though he was a young Member, and could wait, it was rather hard on middle-aged Gentlemen to deprive them of all chance. He hoped, however, that the interesting conversation which took place the other night between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks would be continued, and that hon. Members would be informed whether there was a probability of their dividing this year.

Mr. HIBBERT asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it was not possible that the debate could be adjourned from day to day, so as to give Members below the gangway, representing large constituencies, the advantage of addressing the House.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I am afraid that as regards the adjournment of the debate to to-morrow we have no choice, in consequence of the decision of the hon. Member for Dudley (Mr. H. B. Sheridan), who is unwilling to give way to-morrow, as other Members are. He compels the adjournment of the debate till Thursday. I confess I think that is very inconvenient. There is very great advantage in continuing debates of this kind from evening to evening without any intermission at all; but still I am not aware that any one has the remedy against the hon. Gentleman, who is completely master of the situation. The course this evening has been rather peculiar. It is not for me to notice the moment of a Member rising or sitting down, particularly as I myself am obliged sometimes to be a great offender in that respect—but undoubtedly I do hope that on Thursday, if we adjourn till then, it may be found practicable, from the course of the discussion that evening, for a number of Members, who are now waiting the opportunity of addressing the House, to do their duty. As far as the Government are concerned, I am sure they have shown no indications of impatience—and whatever takes place it is not for us to interpose, especially as the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) has somewhat pathetically stated that the six speeches I have delivered created some difficulties in the way of his friends—and that it required several nights of additional debate to counteract their effect.

Mr. DISRAELI: So far as I can form an opinion there seems a fair prospect, with some forbearance and management, of bringing this debate to a conclusion this week. I should have been very glad if to-morrow had been devoted to the discussion. So far as I am concerned, I own I am principally anxious for the debate being prolonged, to give hon. Members who have taken their seats for the first time this Session an opportunity of addressing the House. As far as I can control the debate, I am anxious to assist new Members. I should have very great pleasure in endeavouring to facilitate the object of any new Member who wishes to address the House; at the same time, we must all feel that it is almost impossible that by any arrangement we can make this a matter of certainty. I should be glad if we could come to some distinct understanding to-night as to the termination of the debate. I thought originally that it would end on Thursday. No doubt if the hon. Member for Dudley (Mr. H. B. Sheridan) would give way this might still be possible; but, under any circumstances, we may come to a definite understanding that the debate shall end on Friday. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer will use his influence to that end I will do all I can to effect that object, and at the same time to give opportunities for new Members to express their opinions.

On Motion of Mr. Lowe, Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday.*

EAST INDIA COMMUNICATIONS.

COMMITTEE. INSTRUCTION.

Mr. CRAWFORD moved—

"That it be an Instruction to the Select Committee on East India Communications, that they be empowered to extend their inquiry to China and Japan and Australia and the Mauritius."

Mr. CHILDERS said, he trusted that the Instruction would not prevent the Committee from going straight through the inquiry as regarded China and Japan before they came to Australia.

Mr. CRAWFORD said, that Australia and the Mauritius would only be considered incidentally until the other portion of the inquiry was completed. It had, however, been doubted whether, under the original Order of Reference, the Committee were justified in hearing evidence even incidentally with respect to Australia.

Motion *agreed to.*

Instruction to the Select Committee on East India Communications, that they be empowered to extend their inquiry to China and Japan and Australia and the Mauritius.—(*Mr. Crawford.*)—Select Committee to consist of seventeen Members:—Mr. Marsh and Mr. Brooks added to the Committee.

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, April 24, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Customs Duties (Isle of Man) * (82); Cattle Assurance * (83); Local Government Supplemental * (84).

Second Reading—Qualification for Offices Abolition (41); Forsyth's Indemnity Public Offices (Site) * (67).

Select Committee Report — Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) * (85).

Report—Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) * (86).

Third Reading — Forsyth's Indemnity *; East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer * (75), and *passed.*

NAVY.

HER MAJESTY'S SHIP "OCTAVIA."

QUESTION.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH said, that seeing the noble Duke the First Lord of the Admiralty in his place, he wished to put a Question to him arising out of the intelligence just received from India to the effect that Her Majesty's Ship *Octavia*, at Bombay, had 175 of her crew ill with small pox. He wished to know, What steps the Government took on board of Her Majesty's Ships for the purpose of guarding against the outbreak and spread of that disease?

The Duke of SOMERSET said, it was correct that intelligence had been received that 175 men of the crew of the *Octavia* had suffered small pox. Previous to 1864, general instructions were issued requiring every medical officer in the navy to take proper steps to prevent the outbreak of this disorder as far as possible; or if it should break out, to check its further progress. But in April, 1864, the Government issued a circular in which it was provided that in future no person should be entered for the service of the Royal Navy unless he had either been vaccinated or was willing to submit to that operation. It was also directed, that every man or boy in the service who had not had small pox, or had not been vaccinated, should be sent to hospital to have the operation performed, and that he should be vaccinated on board ship at the earliest opportunity. He believed that the outbreak had arisen in this particular ship from some Kroomen having been taken on board; but from the accounts which had been received, he was happy to find that most of the cases had been of a very mild character, owing probably to the fact that the men had been previously vaccinated.

WEST MIDDLESEX WATER BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into a Committee read.

Lord REDESDALE, in moving that the House do resolve into a Committee on the said Bill, said, that the Bill proposed to extend the Works of the Company to St. John's, Hampstead, Willesden, and other places. The area of supply was therefore greatly extended, and might demand a great increase in the water taken from the Thames. The Company had, at present, power to take 20,000,000 gallons of water from the Thames daily; but they only took 8,000,000 gallons on the average. The wants of the various Companies which derived their supply from the river were every year increasing, and in summer time the quantity taken from the river materially affected the flow of the stream. He thought that the Government and others interested ought to have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the subject; and therefore, under the powers vested in him as Chairman of Committees, he decided that this was a Bill which ought to be committed to a Committee of the Whole House. It was obvious that the supply of water in the Thames was by no means excessive, and it was desirable that new districts should look to new sources rather than the old ones.

Moved, That the House do resolve itself into a Committee on the said Bill.—(*The Chairman of Committees.*)

Earl GREY said, it appeared to him that the Bill raised a question of great importance — a question of far greater extent than the effect of the mere Bill itself. London was daily increasing in size, and the whole system of municipal affairs for the government of the metropolis appeared to him to be utterly breaking down. The time had, he thought, come when Parliament ought to consider whether some better system could not be devised, and whether some better authority could not be appointed for the management of these local affairs. Both Gas and Water Bills were at present transferred from the proper municipal authority to joint-stock companies, which were very apt to abuse their powers, and to consider the interests of their shareholders rather than those of the public. This was a serious and growing evil, and the House had a right to expect from the Government some distinct statement of their views on this subject. Did the Government mean that the Legislature were to drift on as they were now doing, passing Private Bill after Private Bill, without result; or did they contemplate that, if not this year, still that next year some larger measure of municipal reform should be attempted? If so, would it not be prudent to insert a clause in these Bills for the protection of the public, and with a respect to any claims for compensation which might hereafter be raised? He could not but think that the Government greatly neglected their duty if they failed to look to these questions of public interests, and to offer their advice to Parliament thereupon.

Earl GRANVILLE said, he could not very well answer the question of the noble Earl with regard to the great municipal reform of the metropolis. He quite agreed with his noble Friend that this was a very large and important question. No doubt, there were great evils in the present state of things, and it was very desirable to have more united action in municipal affairs. It was, however, a very difficult question to deal with, and the Government would not be justified in bringing in a measure of the kind desired by his noble Friend without seeing their way very clearly. With regard to the Bill before their Lordships it laid down no very new principle, although the noble Lord the Chairman of Committees had, no doubt, exercised a sound discretion in stating the circumstances. The Bill did little more than confirm the legality of certain Acts which were rather doubtful. It gave no authority to the company to take a single gallon more water from the Thames then they were at present entitled to take. He did not see why they should object to this Bill if it only confined powers to the company which they already possessed.

Lord RAVENSWORTH was understood to say that the district to which this Bill referred had been to a great extent drained of its natural supply of water by the effect of the main sewerage system.

The Earl of DERBY said, he quite agreed with his noble Friend (Earl Grey) that this Bill involved a very large and important question. His noble Friend the Chairman of Committees had exercised his usual judgment and discretion in bringing the Bill before a Committee of the Whole House; but their Lordships could, he thought, hardly refuse to pass it. The Bill had been sanctioned by the Thames Conservancy, and had passed the House of Commons as an unopposed Bill. It gave the company no powers to take more water from the river than they had at present; although, as they extended their works over a large area, it might be followed by a greater demand for a supply of water, and the cry might eventually come for another Act. The company were already empowered to take from the Thames 20,000,000 gallons a day for a population of 729,119 persons, but, on an average, they only took 8,000,000 gallons for a population of 283,000 persons. The supply was, therefore, more than double what they required for the increased population to be supplied under this Bill; and, by the present Act, the company were prevented from taking a single gallon more than 20,000,000 gallons per day. He believed the company had given up a large portion of their population, which now drew their supplies from other sources.

Lord OVERSTONE said, he had not understood his noble Friend (Earl Grey) to offer any opposition to the present Bill; but what he understood his noble Friend to do was this, to call the attention of the Government to the grievances under which this great metropolis was now suffering owing to the want of control over water, gas, and other public companies. These grievances had now reached to a great height, and it was universally felt throughout the metropolis that something should be done to correct them. He had himself continually heard observations in society to that effect, and he hoped that the serious attention of the Government and of Parliament would be directed to the subject.

Lord TAUNTON said, the noble Earl on the cross-benches (Earl Grey) was quite justified in calling their Lordships' attention to the great inconvenience to the public which arose from the present want of government of this great metropolis. Her Majesty's Government, however, were not to blame, and the only chance which the public had of getting a proper system of management for the metropolis was by public opinion taking up the question, and insisting that justice should be done to the community. He recollected what took place only two years ago, when what was considered only a moderate and just measure for putting the police on a satisfactory footing was introduced. The corporation of the City of London went about canvassing noble Lords and hon. Gentlemen; they got corporations in other parts of the country to come to their assistance. The result was that the public interests had no defenders, but everyone took a lively interest in what they were pleased to call the interests of the City of London. The consequence was that it was impossible to deal with the matter. There was no use, therefore, in discussing the abuses to which attention had been called until Parliament was prepared to look the matter in the face, and deal with it as the public interest required. His own attention had been specially called to to the subject from the fact that he had served on a Commission of Inquiry with other more distinguished men—the late Sir George Lewis and Mr. Justice Patteson—and no one could come to any other conclusion than that it was necessary to put the state of affairs on an entirely different footing. The way in which the affairs of this metropolis were managed was a scandal to the country. He believed there was no other instance in the world of a great city being managed as this was—there was no unity of action, everything was left to chance, and the consequence was that enormous sums of money were thrown away, while the safety and convenience of the public and proper sanitary arrangements were neglected.

The Earl of CARNARVON said, he did not rise to offer any opposition to the Bill now before the House, which, no doubt, would be considered upon its merits; but there were one or two points which had been touched on in the discussion upon which he wished to say a few words. The argument of the noble and learned Lord, as he understood it, was that this particular company were authorized to take 12,000,000 gallons more a day from the Thames than they actually took. At present they took about 8,000,000 gallons a day, and they desired to be allowed to enlarge their area of supply. That seemed to be a perfectly reasonable request at first sight; but there were two things which appeared very deserving of consideration. It should not be forgotten that while, on the one hand, the water companies had such a large supply of water at their disposal, the quantity of water which their customers daily consumed was continually increasing, that was to say, that the consumption of water per head was continually increasing. Some figures which he would quote would show that this was the case. In 1850, only fifteen years ago, the total water supply taken from the Thames was 44,000,000 gallons daily, in 1856 it was 81,000,000 gallons, or nearly double; and, nine years later, in 1865, it was 108,000,000 gallons. That showed the great increase in the consumption, and how much allowance ought to be made for the growth of the population, Again, London itself was enormously increasing; it was increasing one-half in twenty years, and doubling itself in forty. But that was not all. The arguments made use of in the statement which had been circulated among their Lordships concluded with this rather singular view. It was stated that a Bill which had been recently introduced into Parliament would enable the Conservators of the Thames to improve the navigation, purify the river, regulate the supply of water, and therefore the limited quantity taken from the river would be of less consequence hereafter than it was at present. From that conclusion he must dissent, because they all knew that there was a diminution from year to year of the quantity of water in the Thames, and also in the rivers flowing into it. In the year 1852 the minimum quantity of water in the Thames is stated to have been 400,000,000 gallons in the course of the day; in 1865 it fell by nearly one-fourth, or to 300,000,000 gallons. With the double fact of the increase of demand out of all proportion to the enormous growth of population, and the yearly diminution of the amount in the volume of the river, it behoved Parliament to see how far they would allow companies to enlarge their supplies from the Thames without insisting that due precautions were taken.

Motion *agreed to*: House in Committee accordingly; and Bill *reported*, without Amendment.

QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICES ABOLITION BILL—(No. 41).

(*The Lord Houghton.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord HOUGHTON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said: My Lords, in asking your Lordships to consent to give a second reading to this Bill, I do not think it would be either convenient or necessary that I should dwell on the subject-matter of the measure. It has been frequently before your Lordships, and if by your decision to-night you render it unnecessary for me ever to bring again its familiar features before your notice, you will confer a benefit upon the country and upon yourselves. But to those of your Lordships who are not familiar with the Bill, I would merely say that its object is to relieve a very large number of persons from the obligation on accepting office of making a declaration of a similar nature to that which until this moment has been incumbent upon Members of both Houses of the Legislature. My Lords, on the abolition of the Tests and Corporations Acts a certain declaration was appointed to be taken by all persons holding municipal and civil offices, the effect of which was that they would not exercise any power, authority, or influence they might possess by virtue of their offices to injure or weaken the Protestant Church as by law established, or to disturb the Bishops or clergy of such Church in the possession of any rights or privileges to which such Bishops or clergy might by law be entitled. The fate of this Bill is much affected, I think, by the circumstance that a Bill altering entirely the oaths to be taken by Members of the Legislature was read a third time and passed by your Lordships yesterday. It is hardly necessary to impress upon your Lordships that the Bill now before the House is in a great degree the corollary of that which your Lordships have already passed. I am sure your Lordships would not consider it necessary or just to impose upon a large body of men on their appointment to municipal offices declarations from which you have relieved the Members of both Houses of Parliament. In asking you to consent to the second reading of this Bill, I do not believe I am asking you to abandon any principle whatsoever. In allowing this measure to become law, your Lordships will not change any opinions or modify any views. It was impossible to have witnessed the manner in which the earnest and able exposition of principles by the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Bath) was received the other night without feeling that while the House did respect and honour these principles, it considered that the time had come when it was inconvenient that they should be enforced by law, and that it was to other securities and processes we must look for the defence of our institutions. It is a question of a change of procedure, and not of a change of principle. I ask you therefore to consent to the abolition of these declarations as you have consented to the modification of those oaths that were deemed necessary when formerly resistance led to civil conflicts, and which are the less required when disputes are relegated to the domain of public opinion. It is no longer either an illegality or an offence to hold opinions adverse to the present constitution of Church and State. To the majority of your Lordships certainly, and I believe to the majority of the thinking people of the country, the moderate, reasonable, and decent connection between Church and State which now exists is acceptable and advantageous from both an ecclesiastical and a civil point of view, and there need be no apprehension of any unjust interference with the Church on the part of the State. At the same time there will remain many excellent persons, whose morality and religion we respect, who do think that a dissolution between Church and State would be advisable and advantageous. The value of these declarations is well illustrated by a Return laid before your Lordships last year. It showed that in Manchester alone something like 3,000 persons who had held office during the last few years had never taken them. What has been done to meet this difficulty? You are compelled every Session to pass a Bill of Indemnity, the object of which was to indemnify those persons who have not made the declarations from the penalties they have incurred. I shall be glad if one effect of your Lordships acceding to my proposal should be that this Indemnity Bill should be either abolished or considerably altered. The passing of the Indemnity Bill is not in accordance with our notion of justice, and tends to bring the law into disrespect, dissociating our ideas of the breach of the law from its necessary penalty. If you pass the second reading of this Bill I cannot help thinking it would be advisable to bring the obligation imposed upon persons accepting office into harmony with the obligation which is now about to be imposed upon the Members of the Legislature, and that mayors, aldermen, town councillors, ward assessors, revising assessors, town clerks, and clerks of the peace should be required to make and subscribe a declaration in the same terms as the Parliamentary oath. By this procedure you will place all persons taking such offices upon the same footing in regard to conscientious declarations as the Members of both Houses. A noble Duke below me (the Duke of Argyll) emphatically stated the other night how great a relief our Catholic fellow-subjects would feel the change of the Parliamentary oath. I would venture to hope that our Dissenting fellow-Christians will feel, if your Lordships pass this Bill, that the obligations we have hitherto imposed upon them have not been caused by any personal ill-will, but that they have sprung out of accidental and historic circumstances for which your Lordships are in no way responsible. What we aim at now is to establish, as far as we can, equality of opinion and freedom of judgment among all the inhabitants of the country; and I believe that, so far from impairing by such an act the security of our present institutions, we shall root them more firmly in the hearts of our people.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Houghton.*)

The Earl of DERBY: My Lords, when on former occasions I have objected to the passing of a measure similar to this now before your Lordships, it has not been on account of any value I attached to the operation of the Bill; but, as I have more than once stated, it was because I considered it an indication of an animus hostile to the Church of England, and a measure designed to weaken its position in the country, and that not on account of the special provisions of the Bill, but because it was always accompanied by other measures having a tendency more or less hostile to the Church. I quite agree with the noble Baron (Lord Houghton) that after we have relieved the Members of the Legislature from making these declarations, we cannot continue to impose them on municipal authorities and other officers. It is not, therefore, my intention to offer any opposition to the second reading of the Bill. I concur generally with the views the noble Lord has expressed, and that it would be desirable that a declaration corresponding to the Parliamentary oath should be taken by municipal authorities, but not by those in subordinate positions. I think that the noble Lord who has taken charge of this Bill will find it necessary to introduce some provisions in addition to those he has proposed, because this Bill only abolishes certain declarations required to be made under particular Acts. Independently of these, municipal authorities are now required to take the oath of allegiance and make the declaration of supremacy precisely in the form in which Members of the Legislature do. I do not know whether, in accordance with the forms of the House, the Bill is capable of being altered so as to do all that is required; if not, the noble Lord will do well to withdraw it; and then another Bill may be introduced in the other House of Parliament, which, as there is a perfect agreement of opinion on this matter between the two branches of the Legislature, may speedily become law. This is a matter which I leave entirely to his consideration. I also entirely concur with the noble Lord in the other point to which he has adverted. When you have so much simplified the oaths to be taken by Members of the Legislature and public functionaries as is now proposed, it is deserving of our serious consideration whether it would not be wise to do away with the annual passing of the Indemnity Bill. To continue passing it year after year would be practically throwing a slur on the oaths still required to be taken; and therefore I hope that Her Majesty's Government will consider the propriety of discontinuing the Indemnity Act this year. This Bill provides retrospective indemnity for all who have not taken the oath; and it is time to give up the pernicious and injurious practice of annually passing an Indemnity Act.

Lord TAUNTON said, that there was a point to which he was anxious to call the attention of the noble Lord (Lord Houghton). He apprehended that the declarations were at present only taken by members of corporations in England, and not in Ireland or Scotland. Now, for his part, he saw no reason why an Irish mayor or a Scotch provost should not be called upon to make the declaration now proposed. He had always thought the old declaration most worthless as a defence of the Church of England, and he was glad to find that it was about to be abolished with the unanimous consent of the House.

Lord ROMILLY said, that notwithstanding the recent alterations of the law, there was no uniformity in regard to the oaths taken by solicitors and attorneys upon their admission. Both in the Courts of Common Law and in the Court of Chancery Protestants took one oath, while Roman Catholics took another. It was highly desirable that the law should be uniform; and, in his opinion, it might be made so by a little alteration in the present Bill.

Lord HOUGHTON expressed his gratification at the spirit in which their Lordships had received his proposal. He thought, however, it would be desirable to consider seriously the advisability of placing negative and positive propositions in the same Act. He hoped that the Bill would be passed as it stood, and would suggest that a Bill should be introduced by Her Majesty's Government in the House of Commons, with the object of assimilating all declarations to the form now taken by Members of the Legislature.

Earl GRANVILLE said, the Government had much satisfaction in seeing the unanimous concurrence of the House on this question, which had always received the support of the Government. He agreed that it would be desirable to do away with the annual passing of an Indemnity Bill. He could not agree, however, with the noble Lord behind him (Lord Taunton) that it would be advisable to impose the declaration upon persons who were not now called upon to take the oath. There were some other points with regard to these oaths. The Act passed the other day referred to the subject of Parliamentary oaths only; whereas a Catholic was still obliged to take the old form of oath in order to qualify himself to hold the office of magistrate. He thought the whole matter might be advantageously taken into consideration at the present moment, when there appeared to be so general a concurrence on the part of both Houses as to the liberal and sensible mode of dealing with the question.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday* next.

CONFERENCES.—RESOLUTION.

On the Motion of The Chairman of Committees, it was

Resolved, That the Lords are willing to receive from the Commons, by Message, without a Conference, any Communication desiring the Concurrence of this House to any Address to Her Majesty, under the Provisions of the Act Fifteenth and Sixteenth Victoria, Chapter Fifty-seven, to which the Commons may have agreed, unless at any Time the Commons should desire to communicate the same at a Conference: And a Message sent to the Commons, to acquaint them therewith.—(*The Chairman of Committees.*)

IRELAND—DAUNT'S ROCK—CORK HARBOUR.—QUESTION.

The Earl of BANDON said, it would be recollected that some time ago a large Inman steamer had been wrecked on Daunt's Rock, at the entrance of Cork Harbour. Several influential parties suggested at the time that the rock should be blown up, but this had not been done. Subsequently, however, a buoy, with a bell attached to it, was placed on the rock, and an alteration was also made in the lighthouses on the other side of the harbour. Neither of these schemes had proved successful. He wished to call the attention of the noble Duke the First Lord of the Admiralty to the circumstance that the wreck of the Inman steamer had been allowed to remain on the rock up to the present time. In June last a brig laden with sugar was wrecked upon that rock through coming in contact with the remains of the Inman steamer. The vessel was got off, but the valuable cargo was lost, and the owners were put to considerable expense before the brig was fit to go to sea again. He believed, too, that very lately a vessel connected with the Manx Fishing Company had sustained serious damage through coming in contact with the mast of the steamer. The difficulty in the case was that three separate Boards had jurisdiction in the matter, and the consequence was that it was not easy to get anything done at all. He thought the matter was of sufficient importance to deserve the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and he therefore asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the attention of the Government has been called to the fact of any other wreck having taken place on Daunt's Rock, at the entrance of Cork Harbour?

The Duke of SOMERSET said, that no official notice of any wreck on the rock had been received since March, 1864. He had seen the wreck of the Inman steamer himself some time ago, and he did not believe that it had since been removed. The Admiralty, he might remark, did not undertake to remove wrecks.

The Earl of BANDON said, Daunt's Rock was beyond the three mile limit, and consequently the Cork Harbour Commissioners had no jurisdiction in the matter. His object in putting the Question was to bring the subject under the notice of Her Majesty's Government and of the Board of Trade, which was not at present represented in their Lordships' House.

The Earl of MEATH said, that the Ballast Board of Dublin had placed buoys at the place referred to by the noble Earl. If the Board of Trade sanctioned a larger expenditure, something more might be done; but the fact was, that if those in charge of shipping only kept their eyes open, they were perfectly safe at that spot. As to the proposal to put a light vessel there, it was monstrous, as there was no holding ground.

House adjourned at a quarter past
Six o'clock, to Thursday next,
half past Ten o'clock.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, April 24, 1866.

MINUTES.] — Public Bills — *Resolutions in Committee*—Contagious Diseases [Expenses].
Second Reading — Transubstantiation, &c., Declaration Abolition [82], *deferred.*
Committee—Exchequer and Audit Departments (*re-comm.*) [79]; Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)* [117].
Report—Exchequer and Audit Departments (*re-comm.*) [79]; Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)* [117].
Considered as amended—Superannuations (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards) [52].
Third Reading—Prosecution Expenses* [28], and *passed.*

RYE ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Lauchlan Bellingham Mackinnon, esquire, is duly elected a Baron to serve in this present Parliament for the Town and Port of Rye.

And the said Determination was ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

That Thomas Bourne was bribed by the payment of £5 and £1 from Robert Hord for his vote.

That two letters, containing £5 each, were sent about the time of the Election to Samuel Lennard for the purpose of influencing his vote.

That it was not proved that such bribery was committed with the knowledge of the sitting Member or his Agents.

That the attempt to prove that the Revd. William Brocklebank was bribed by a promise of an appointment for his son by the sitting Member was entirely unsupported by evidence, and is frivolous and vexatious.

That the attempts to prove that George Jenner was bribed by a promise of an appointment for his nephew by the sitting Member was entirely unsupported by evidence, and is frivolous and vexatious.

The Earl of Bandon

That there is not reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last Election for the Town and Port of Rye.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW ZEALAND—BISHOPRIC OF NELSON.

QUESTION.

Mr. SELWYN said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Bishopric of Nelson, New Zealand, had not continued vacant for many months in consequence of the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to assent to the consecration of a successor, although such successor has been nominated by the Bishop of London, at the request and with the subsequent approval of the Synod of the diocese, and whether such assent has not been requested by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the Bishops and other members of the Church in New Zealand, without asking for any Patent, or for the grant of any temporal dignity or coercive authority. He also wished to ask, whether the assent of the Crown has not been given in a similar case in reference to Rupert's Land?

Mr. CARDWELL replied that it was quite true the succession to the Bishopric of Nelson had remained vacant for some time in consequence of the inability of the Crown to give a sanction to the appointment of a successor in the usual way; that inability having been occasioned by the difficulties which had arisen in law in consequence of the decision of the Privy Council in the case of Natal. The Bishops of New Zealand had presented a memorial to the Crown, in which they prayed that they might be permitted to surrender their Letters Patent, and that their successors should be appointed without Letters Patent. They further prayed they might be permitted to fill up vacancies in their own body by their own inherent right, without Letters Patent or Royal Mandate. That memorial from the Bishops of New Zealand was accompanied by a minute from the Ministers of New Zealand, objecting to the creating of corporations within the colony by the act of the Crown without their advice, and objecting to any arrangement by which any *quasi*-jurisdiction of the Bishops of New Zealand should receive any authority from the Crown. Under these circumstances, and considering the difficulty with which the matter was beset since the decision of the Privy Council, it had been the opinion of Her Majesty's Advisers that a Bill on the subject should be prepared and submitted to Parliament, as they were desirous to have the opinion of Parliament before any further action was taken. With regard to Rupert's Land, the Bishop there was waiting for consecration at the time when the decision of the Privy Council was given, and therefore, to obviate any inconvenience in that case, not Letters Patent, but by the advice of the Law Officers, a Royal Mandate was given for the consecration of the Bishop.

Mr. SELWYN said, he wished to know when the Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman referred would be introduced?

Mr. CARDWELL said, he would take an early opportunity of giving notice on the subject.

COOLIES—EMIGRATION TO THE FRENCH COLONIES.

QUESTION.

Mr. BAILLIE COCHRANE said, he wished to know, Whether the private information conveyed to him has been confirmed by any information in possession of the Government, to the effect that the French Government do not intend to press for the renewal of the Treaty permitting the exportation of Coolies from the East Indies to the French Colonies?

Mr. LAYARD said, he regretted that he could not give a satisfactory answer to the question of the hon. Member. The time for giving notice had been prolonged, and he was not certain what course the French Government would pursue. When he received information on the subject he would take care to communicate it to the hon. Member.

DIVISION OF NEW ZEALAND.

QUESTION.

Mr. ADDERLEY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, What reply the Government have made to Addresses from New Zealand for separation of the two islands under distinct Governments?

Mr. CARDWELL said, in reply, that the answer which the Governor of New Zealand had been directed to return to the addresses was, that the British Government were not prepared to encourage any expectation that they would be able to advise the concurrence of the Crown in the separation. At the same time, as it was stated that the Governor had expressed an opinion in favour of some change of Government in the northern portion of the Northern Island, he had directed that officer to bring the matter under the consideration of his responsible advisers, with a view to submitting to the Legislature of New Zealand such measures as might seem advisable.

THE FENIANS AND THE BRITISH AMERICAN COLONIES.

QUESTION.

Lord DUNKELLIN said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received any intelligence of an attack made or threatened by the Fenians on any of our North American Colonies; and, if he will communicate the purport of it to the House?

Mr. CARDWELL said, in reply, that he had received no account of any attack made by the Fenians on any part of the British North American Provinces. With regard to attacks threatened, it had been known to the House and the country for some time past that rumours of such threatened attacks had given rise to a great manifestation of loyal feeling among the people of the Provinces, and that precautions against such attacks had been adopted both by the Imperial and Colonial authorities. He had received no further account of the proceedings to which the noble Lord alluded, except that at the departure of the last mail from Halifax a body of Fenians was stated to be assembling on the eastern boundary of the United States, but he had the strongest expectation that the precautions taken would prevent any attack that might be contemplated.

RATES ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. Alderman SALOMONS, in rising to bring forward the Motion on this subject of which he had given notice, observed, that he would most willingly have given way to allow the important debate on the second reading of the Representation of the People Bill to be proceeded with; but, as the House was aware, the hon. Member for Dudley (Mr. H. B. Sheridan) declined to accede to the suggestion which had been made to him to do so. He, therefore, hoped the House would give him a patient hearing while introducing to their notice a subject which was one of considerable national importance, and in which his constituents were especially interested. About two years ago he had called the attention of the House to the anomaly which existed with respect to lands, houses, and buildings occupied by the Government for public purposes being held to be exempt from the payment of local rates. The Government claimed the privilege of occupying houses, premises, and lands without being subjected to the rates for local purposes, for the relief of the poor, for maintaining highways, for lighting, watching, sewerage, or sanitary rates, while other occupiers of property in such neighbourhoods were compelled to pay and did pay a greater proportion of rates than was their fair share in consequence of the Government not paying their proper quota for the property they occupied. The rates of the United Kingdom amounted to a very considerable sum, and they were yearly increasing. In England and Wales they amounted to about £17,000,000 ; and, taking Ireland and Scotland into account, they probably amounted to over £20,000,000—an amount equal to the revenue of some of the large kingdoms of Europe. Surely it was but just that those rates should be fairly distributed among occupiers, so that every occupier should only pay his proper share ? Last year the important question of liability to local rates was brought before the highest court of appeal in order to determine a case which had been many years in litigation between the Mersey Docks and the parochial authorities of Liverpool. The result was an unanimous decision of the Law Lords, concurred in by a majority of the Judges, that all property in useful occupation, whether held by trustees or not, was rateable. From time immemorial charitable institutions had been exempt, but by the decision of the House of Lords even property of that description was now liable to the payment of local rates, and he might mention that King's College Hospital had already acknowledged its liability in accordance with the decision. The only property now held to be exempt—not by statute, but the precedents of the Courts of Law, was property occupied by the Crown, whether for personal or for public purposes, the Crown not being held to be liable to any rates or taxes, unless specially named by Act of Parliament. The subject was not new to the House, for in 1858 a Committee was appointed composed of many most experienced Members, to consider this question, and it was presided over by the late Sir George Lewis. The opinion of that Committee was expressed very much in the language of the Resolution of the hon. Member. In fact, he had copied his Resolution from it—that all lands and buildings used and occupied for public purposes ought to be liable to local rates in the same manner as other property, and pay rates accordingly. His constituents were peculiarly aggrieved by the present exemption of Government property from rates. In Deptford especially the whole district around the Dockyard Victualling Establishment was at one time comparatively uninhabited and the neighbourhood pauperized. A large proportion of the Government property there was situated in a small parish, and the consequence was that the poor's rate at one time amounted to 12*s.* in the pound, and the other rates to 2*s.*, making together 14*s.* in the pound. To give effect to the Report of the Committee of 1858, the right hon. Gentleman then Member for Wiltshire brought in a Bill to make all property liable to rates. The first clause of that Bill was to this effect—After the 1st of October next no lands, tenements, or hereditaments shall be held to be exempt from assessment to the poor rate or other local rate on the ground of the Royal prerogative, or because the trusts on which the same are held or the purposes to which they are applied are of a public nature, or because no person derives any beneficial interest from the occupation thereof. That Bill was opposed by the representatives of the charitable institutions which would have been affected by it, and their opposition prevailing, the measure was withdrawn. In the next Session the Government proposed in the Estimates a sum of money to be given in certain cases to those districts where the public establishments were large, and by their exemption from rates added greatly to the burdens of the inhabitants. But that he thought was found to be a very unsatisfactory arrangement ; and, seeing that now every occupation, whether for charitable purposes or otherwise, was by the recent decision subject to local rating, he thought it would be becoming in the House and the Ministers of the Crown to accept the terms of his Resolution. It was not only his constituents who complained of the present state of the law, he had also received numerous applications from different parts of the country from persons who felt aggrieved. The wrongs of Chelsea had been brought forward by the hon. Member for Bath. The Government occupied seventy-six acres in Chelsea, which was about one-tenth of the whole surface of the parish, the total rates levied in the parish of St. Luke's being £51,000, to which the Government contributed only £515. There was not a town in the kingdom that had not a post office, and a post office was nothing more than a trading establishment carried on in the name of the Government. The business of the post office might be thus described. It possessed an entire monopoly of the carriage of letters at a profit. It carried parcels at a profit. It sold stamps, competing with private dealers. It transmitted money at a profit, competing with bankers. It had opened Government savings banks, competing with the other institutions of this kind. And it now undertook to grant annuities, &c., thus competing with the insurance offices. And yet these various establishments, competing as they did with private establishments and carrying on this large amount of business, contributed nothing towards their share of the local burdens in the districts in which they were placed. This exemption was an antiquated remnant of a system of privilege enjoyed by the Crown to the detriment of the subject, and ought no longer to exist; for it was clearly unjust that the people of any parish should be subjected to additional taxation, merely because of the existence of a Government establishment in it. Parishes mostly preferred submitting to the injustice, to the uncertainty and expense of seeking redress in the Courts of Law, but the law reports were full of cases of this kind, and the Judges had repeatedly expressed their opinion of the hardship which was inflicted by this practice. The legal tribunals having now laid down the broad principle that all property of whatever description, whether occupied for charitable purposes or otherwise, should be subjected to rating, he thought the time had come when the House and the Government might, with propriety, accede to his proposition. The hon. Member concluded by moving—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, Her Majesty's Government should consider the expediency of recommending to Parliament that all lands and buildings used and occupied for public purposes ought to be liable to local rates in the same manner as other property, and pay rates accordingly."

MR. TITE, in seconding the Motion, said, that by way of illustrating the grievances which now existed, he would take the parish of Chelsea, in which he was a resident, and acted as one of the overseers of the poor. The parish contained 771 acres, and a population of 60,000 persons; the annual rating was £51,000, and the Government occupied seventy-six acres or one-tenth of the whole parish—and yet, although the parish was exceedingly poor, the Government contributed nothing to the rates, except for a few houses occupied by military officers. They had, however, recently taken a large extent of land and had built an enormous extent of barracks, thereby greatly increasing the burden on the parish, but they had only thought it right to contribute the mere agricultural value of the land some £300 or £400 per annum. The parochial burdens were exceedingly heavy, and the presence of the pensioners entailed a great expense to the parish. An appeal had been made to the Lords of the Treasury on the question, and they replied that their rule was, that if the Government property amounted to one-sixth of the area of the parish they considered themselves liable to the poor rate; but, as in the case of Chelsea the proportion was only one-tenth, no remedy was obtainable. If that rule was universally enforced something might, perhaps, be said in its favour; but at Plymouth, where the Government only held one-twelfth of the parish, they contributed £6,000 to the local burdens, whereas at Chelsea they paid only £600 for some additional land and buildings. He could see no reason for such an inequality, and as the poor rate in Chelsea was 2*s*. 10*d*. in the pound on the rack rental, and he had himself paid 4*s*. in the pound on his own property, he thought that a strong case for redress had been made out, and that the rule applied to Plymouth should be also applied to Chelsea.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, in the opinion of this House, Her Majesty's Government should consider the expediency of recommending to Parliament that all lands and buildings used and occupied for public purposes ought to be liable to local rates in the same manner as other property, and pay rates accordingly:"—(*Mr. Alderman Salomons.*)

MR. P. WYKEHAM MARTIN (Rochester) remarked that in the case of St. Margaret's, Rochester, the grievance was even greater than that complained of in Chelsea, as the Government refused to make any contribution to the local burdens, although, in addition to their military prison or hospital, they kept a large part of the parish under grass, and rendered some of the best building sites useless on account of the present kind of artillery necessitating a much larger space for fortifications. The parish was principally inhabited by the poorer classes, who complained very much of the pressure of the rates, to which the Government refused to contribute one farthing. He thought, therefore, that the sum voted for the rating of Government establishments ought to be shared in fairer proportions among the various parishes entitled to participate in it.

Mr. CHILDERS would first state what the proposition of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich was, and then what was the exact state of things with regard to the rating of Government property at the present time. The proposal made by the hon. Gentleman was that all public property should be rated, and that, not according to its then value, but according to what its value would be if it were built upon by private speculators. The annual amount at present paid by Government for rates upon public property in different parts of the country was about £27,000, but what they would have to pay were the property to be rated as if it were built upon—for instance, in Chelsea—he could not even guess at. Therefore, in the interest of the general taxpayers of the country, he trusted the House would hesitate before they acceded to the proposition of the hon. Member. The state of things as regarded the payments made by Government on account of local rates was this—It had been supposed that the law made a distinction between property said to be beneficially occupied and that not so occupied; and that the latter was not subject to local rates. That appeared to have been the received doctrine on the subject until the decision in the House of Lords in July last, which laid down the rule that all property whether beneficially occupied or not was subject to the payment of rates, but that as the Crown was not expressly mentioned in the statute, Government property was generally exempt. Until 1861 no payment whatever was made by Government on account of rates upon public property, but in 1858 there was an inquiry into the subject by a Committee of that House, and the result was that a Bill was introduced to render Government property liable generally to poor rates. That Bill was not proceeded with beyond the second reading, but the late Sir George Cornewall Lewis took the opportunity of entering fully into the question, and eventually an arrangement was come to whereby all Government property, when it should amount to one-sixth of the whole rateable value—not one-sixth of the area—of the parish should pay rates for the relief of the poor, but no other local rates; the amount to be provided by an annual Vote to be taken for that purpose. Where the Government property did not amount to one-sixth of the whole rateable value of the parish, it was not considered that the parish had such a claim as would justify Government in asking Parliament to supply funds to meet it. In the case of new property to be acquired by Government, however, it was agreed that Government should continue to pay, not only the poor rates, but all other local rates to which the property was liable before it passed into their hands, but only according to the value assessed at the time of Government becoming the owners. That was the state of things up to the middle of last year, but since that time two things had happened by which the question had been substantially affected. In the first place, by the decision of the House of Lords in July last, the whole doctrine of beneficial occupation, as it was formerly understood, was swept away. The law as laid down by that decision was simply this—that all property was subject to rating except that in the occupation of the Crown, the Crown not having been mentioned in the Act. The next disturbing cause was the passing of the Union Chargeability Act, by which the area of rating was extended from the parish to the union, so that the proportion of Government property before it would become liable to be rated, must amount to one-sixth of the rateable value of the union instead of one-sixth of the rateable value of the parish. These two changes had taken place since last year. As regarded the object of his hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Alderman Salomons) the great anomalies of which he had complained would thus be to a great extent removed. For instance, the parishes which most complained of the operation of the rule of one-sixth would, he believed, have no cause of complaint when the union rule should come into operation. At the same time, he was prepared to say that it was difficult after the decision of the House of Lords, and after the change in the area of rating, to say at once whether the present system was entirely satisfactory; and, therefore, before either the Government or the House pledged themselves to maintain the existing state of things they required further time to see how the present law operated. If necessary, Government would at some future time ask the House to make such alterations in the present system as might be found necessary. At the same time, it must be remembered that there were two sides to the question. It was perfectly true, as the hon. Gentleman stated, that in certain districts the local authorities did not receive anything from Government in the shape of rates upon public property; but if local rates were to be paid fully by the Government, it would be proper to charge property belonging to local authorities, such as parochial or local institutions, with Government taxes such as the income tax and the house tax. And in such case it was by no means clear that the change would be to the benefit of the local taxpayers. Believing that he had shown to the House that the adoption of the Resolution might lead to many difficulties, he would strongly urge its rejection.

Mr. FERRAND thought that the hon. Member who had brought forward this subject had by so doing done good service to many persons who at present suffered considerably. He was almost afraid to refer to the injustice which the present state of things inflicted upon the inhabitants of his own constituency (Devonport), lest the Chancellor of the Exchequer, instead of confining himself to the disfranchisement of the dockyard men, who were to lose their power of voting in consequence of their Members having made known their grievances, should introduce a clause into the Reform Bill disfranchising the whole of the borough. He must, however, so far perform his duty as to state that the exemption of Government property in Devonport from rating was a great injustice to the ratepayers, and constituted another reason, arising from the additional taxation, why the dockyard men were entitled to the increase of wages which they had petitioned for.

Mr. BRADY gave his decided opposition to the Motion, on the ground that the inhabitants of the places where Government property was situated derived advantage in other ways from its being in their neighbourhood.

Mr. GATHORNE HARDY observed, that the Government already paid rates in some instances, and, therefore, they to a certain extent admitted that there was some claim upon them for rates in respect of their property. It did not seem unjust that when all other property paid rates Government property should also pay. As to the rateability of public property and of private property not beneficially occupied, the whole question had recently undergone a material change. The decision to which attention had been called, though it did not affect Crown property, yet affected the decisions of the Courts that had decreed originally the exemption of Crown property. In the Statute of Elizabeth, Crown property was not mentioned, and therefore from the beginning it was exempt from rating; and the Judges looked not merely to the fact of the exemption, but to the ground of exemption—namely, that the buildings were occupied for a public purpose, and not for the benefit of the persons occupying them; and they carried out that principle. On that principle the docks at Liverpool, and the great charities in London and other large cities, were exempted from rating. But the decision which had lately been given in the House of Lords materially changed all this, and, therefore, it was time that the law should be carefully looked into. He thought his hon. Friend had done good service in bringing forward this Resolution, although he should not advise that the Motion should be pressed to a division, as investigation was promised; yet he wished to say that he thought that the matter should be investigated, not by the Treasury only, but also by the Poor Law Board. The question was a very large one, and he should be glad to see the whole subject inquired into, and the exemption, if continued to Government property, extended to charitable, and literary, and scientific institutions.

Mr. DENMAN wished to illustrate the hardship of the present state of the law, by a case in which he had been professionally concerned. Formerly, property vested in the old East India Company was rateable; but it was decided some short time since that, from the time the Act of Parliament passed transferring the government of India to the Crown, the same property when invested in Her Majesty for the purposes of India was exempted. The consequences of this was, especially in one instance—of the parish of Lambeth—that when the Crown possessed large property, the burden of heavy poor rates was thrown upon those who, from their own poverty, could ill afford to support it.

Major DICKSON denied that the Government works at Dover were any attraction to strangers, and contended that the land which was employed for the safety of the country ought to share the burdens of the district upon whose inhabitants it conferred no special benefit.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, there could be no doubt as to the importance of the question now raised, particularly after what had been said by the hon. Member for the University of Oxford. He said, "We admit our liability to local taxation by the provisional arrangement which now subsists." [Mr. GATHORNE HARDY: Not our liability, but the justice of the claim.] He was bound to say that the observation just made reflected upon another point of the speech of the hon. Member, which was not quite accurate. The hon. Member observed that the question was not a great change in the law; but, in point of fact, it was a very great change in the law which was now the question—inasmuch as, by law, up to the present moment, the whole of the property of the Crown for purposes of rating was entirely exempt from taxation. He inferred, however, from the tone of his hon. Friend, and the general tone of the House, that, owing to a want of information on the subject, it was not now possible to come to any conclusion upon it. Perhaps, however, the House would allow him to bring into view one or two topics which it was very necessary to bear in mind in discussing the question. In the first place, it was necessary to bear in mind that, whilst Gentlemen appeared there as the advocates of particular parishes which had Government works within their limits, the great majority of the parishes in the Kingdom had no such works. In passing, he would relieve the mind of the hon. Member for Devonport, who seemed to labour under great anxiety with regard to the borough he represented. He seemed to think that his fate was trembling in the scales; but there would be no betrayal of confidence if he were to state that the Government had not the slightest intention of proposing the disfranchisement of the borough of Devonport. [Mr. FERRAND: Will the right hon. Gentleman omit Clause 10?] He would limit his answer to the question which was first put to him, and he replied that there was no intention to disfranchise the borough of Devonport. As he understood the matter before the House, there were four great classes of exemptions from rates in the country; but it was the double character of the exemptions which he wished to impress upon the mind of the House. Besides the question of rateability very fairly raised by his hon. Friend, there was another question which it would be the duty of the Government to raise when the important and extensive inquiry was instituted to which reference had been made—namely, the question of taxability. By rateability he meant liability to contribute to the funds contributed for local government; and by taxability, liability to contribute to the funds necessary for Imperial Government. It had been said that it was exceedingly unjust that Government property should be exempted. His hon. Friend (Mr. Alderman Salomons) had said—and the point was not at all an ill-selected one—that he was connected with a large institution, the London and Westminster Bank, opposite to one branch of which was a Post Office, which transacted mercantile business in the carriage of letters, and which, as a savings bank, competed with the Bank in the transmission of money, and so forth. Now, did his hon. Friend think that the London and Westminster Bank suffered any serious detriment, or any detriment at all, from the competition of the Post Office savings bank in the receipt of deposits of 1*s*. and upwards? He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) would gladly make the bargain with the hon. Member, that if he would admit the savings banks to the general banking business, savings banks and money order offices should be rated. The fairest case of complaint, however, of the exemption of Government buildings from payment of rates was that with which the hon. Member for Devonport was conversant, where manufacturing premises were exempt. In those establishments competition was carried on with private traders; but the business of the Post Office savings bank consisted of the dregs, the refuse which nobody else cared to appropriate. With regard to the case of fortifications, the Member for Dover had stated a case. It was somewhat singular, it amounted almost to a paradox, that when the State was at great expense to surround a particular place—certainly for the special advantage in case of invasion of the inhabitants of that particular place—with walls and trenches and other fortifications, they should be made subject to rates for the purposes of local government. What he wanted to point out, however, was that it was not a question merely of Government buildings, nor a question merely of liability to local rates, but that if exemptions from direct taxation were to be removed all classes of exemption must be removed, and removed not merely as it regarded local taxation, but Imperial taxation. All buildings required for local government, all the municipal buildings, and the buildings of local bodies of every kind would necessarily, if this principle were to be established, become liable to contribute towards the revenues of the State. The question was a very large one, and he did not think it was possible for any hon. Member to take into view at the present moment the complexity and diversity of results which such a change would involve. The present arrangement, as had been stated by his Friend the Secretary to the Treasury, was a defective arrangement. It was not, however, to be considered as an arrangement that rested upon any ground of law; he apprehended that it was a provisional arrangement made to meet a pressing and urgent demand. His hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford was perfectly correct when he stated that the subject was not a matter merely for the investigation of the Treasury; it was quite evident that it must go beyond the province of that Department, and embrace the case of religious buildings and charitable property, the case of municipal property, the property of all public boards, and of *quasi*-public and semi-public boards. And with regard to these different classes of public buildings it would be necessary to consider their liability, not merely to local rates, but to the direct taxation which was levied for Imperial purposes. The subject was undoubtedly assuming a somewhat urgent character. It was very hard when, owing to the construction of some new works of the Government in a parish, a large area of land, which formerly was made contributory to the rates, was withdrawn; for the consequence was that the rates levied on the other portion of the parish became proportionately heavier. The question from its nature, extent, and variety was one of great difficulty; but undoubtedly it ought to be searched to the bottom, with the view, if possible, of arriving as soon as might be at an advantageous settlement.

MR. WARNER stated that the anomalies which had been brought forward that night had been very much aggravated during the last year or two. If there were to be exemptions, they should be founded on some fixed principle. According to the decision of Lord Westbury, charitable institutions—which formerly, by a kind of courtesy or oversight, had not been rated—were now liable to contribute to the local rates. If schools for the education of the poor were to pay poor rates, it seemed but fair to levy rates upon buildings erected for the general benefit of both rich and poor. He was very glad that the question had been raised, feeling convinced that the discussion would lead to a re-consideration of the law. He believed that nothing was more needed than a consolidation of the law of rating, and he hoped the Government would turn their attention to it.

MR. ALDERMAN SALOMONS expressed his satisfaction at the turn the discussion had taken, and with the understanding that the subject would not be lost sight of, but be thoroughly investigated at an early day, he begged leave to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

POOR LAW EXPENDITURE.

RESOLUTION.

MR. KNIGHT, in moving a Resolution on this subject, said, that for nearly three centuries each parish had provided the money for relieving its own poor, and directed the way in which the money was to be expended. The tendency of modern legislation, however, had been very much to change this order of things. The agitation for the extension of the area of rating had been confined to very few places, and it was got up chiefly by the action of the Poor Law Board. The law of Elizabeth laid it down that everybody ought to be rated according to his ability, but it was very difficult in parochial rating to ascertain the ability of a person to pay. The matter was at last settled in 1839 by a distinct decision that stock-in-trade was absolutely rateable, but it was afterwards found necessary to excuse it from rating. Be that as it might, the state of the law was now altogether changed. Modern legislation had since 1839 laid down many new precedents, and it had been in repeated instances acknowledged that it was unfair that the whole of the local rates should be paid by real property. A portion of the county rate, he might add, for certain local purposes, a portion of the police, the salaries of the masters and mistresses of union workhouses, the stipends of pupil-teachers, part of the expenses for medical officers, and some other small charges were at present paid out of monies annually voted by Parliament. Now that a new Poor Law had been established in England a national rate was called for from all quarters, and he wished under those circumstances to ask the House to lay down a rule which would render the principle established by modern legislation safe; because it would not, he thought, be safe to establish a national rate in the full sense of the word, as contemplated by many persons, which would surely be to allow the guardians to dip their hand in the national till. To make everything a national charge would be to lead to great confusion and almost to national bankruptcy, and he found by the accounts of rating which had been published by the Poor Law Commissioners in 1837 that there were more than thirty heads of such expenditure which had nothing to do with the maintenance of the poor. Recent Returns showed that the amount of property which paid the poor rate was £143,000,000, but the large amount of £169,000,000 of ascertained income was not assessed to the poor rate. He did not bring forward his Motion with the expectation of its being at once carried out, but only with the view of obtaining an expression of opinion on the part of the House that certain items should from time to time be added to those which he had already mentioned as being placed on the national Exchequer. The head centres of the great agitation in favour of national rating were Norwich, St. George's-in-the-East, Hammersmith, and Fulham, but those places were left in the same situation in which they were previously to the recent measure for the establishment of union rating. While he did not deny the justice of the appeal for the reduction of the malt tax, it must not be forgotten that only a comparatively small portion of the country would benefit by its abolition, but to reduce the poor rate would be to confer a benefit on every voter in the United Kingdom, and especially on the smaller class of voters. In conclusion, he begged to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that all items of Poor Law expenditure throughout the United Kingdom, not being inmaintenance or out-relief, or otherwise under the immediate control and direction of Boards of Guardians or Parishes officers, should become a National charge."

Mr. WARNER seconded the Motion; and said the expense of taking care of the sick in workhouses and the hospitals ought to devolve upon a general and not local rate, as the cases of inhumanity recently made public in connection with the London workhouses had sufficiently shown that Boards of Guardians were not capable of managing these departments.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that all items of Poor Law expenditure throughout the United Kingdom, not being inmaintenance or out-relief, or otherwise under the immediate control and direction of Boards of Guardians or Parish Officers, should become a National charge."—(*Mr. Knight.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER was glad to hear the hon. Gentleman who made the Motion say that he did not expect his Motion would be at once adopted by the House, and probably, therefore, the hon. Gentleman did not intend to press it upon the attention of the House, his object being that the principle contained in his Resolution should be considered by the House. The moderate course pursued by the hon. Gentleman relieved them from much difficulty, because it would enable them to discuss the question raised without prejudice, and it was very desirable that the attention of the Government and of hon. Gentlemen should be directed to the subject, in order that a clear conclusion might be arrived at as to the best mode in which local charges should be provided for. He might say that he was one of those who did not think that these transfers of local charges to the Consolidated Fund were things in themselves politic and advisable, and in his opinion no such transfer should take place, except for some very strong and definite object of public policy connected with the immediate matter. The hon. Gentleman mentioned various precedents in favour of his proposal, referring to the police rate and the medical and educational expenses connected with the administration of the Poor Law, and he might also have referred to the greatest instance of all—the constabulary expenses in Ireland. With regard to the police rate, the reason why the Consolidated Fund was saddled with one-fourth of the expense was simply to secure a great object of public policy in the establishment of an efficient police. So with regard to the medical and educational expenses, one great object in view was to bring up the administration of the Poor Law to the point which it was deemed requisite that it should attain. In the case of the Irish constabulary, it was thought necessary to establish a force which should be in some degree independent of local control, and, that being so, a very large portion of the charge was from the first placed on the public Exchequer. He regretted that it had been found necessary to carry the transfer of those charges even to the point that had now been reached. The hon. Gentleman had stated that whereas there were £169,000,000 of ascertained income not assessable to the poor rate, the whole burden fell upon £143,000,000 of property. At first sight there appeared rather an inequality in this, but in point of fact the inequality was extremely small. Where a parish was entirely rural, it was quite immaterial whether the local rate was laid according to the Scotch principle, now abandoned, on means and substances, or upon visible property subject to rating. In town parishes, also, the inequality would be perfectly immaterial; and the only parishes where the inequality was of any importance were mixed parishes, partly rural and partly manufacturing or mining. In that case he admitted that the mining income and profits of trade were not taxed equally with the agricultural property. But, then, it must be borne in mind that all that mining and manufacturing property usually came into the parish not to aggravate, but to alleviate, existing burdens. The question of transferring local taxes to the public Exchequer was far from being free of political difficulty. If those taxes were in excess, the feeling of the people on the spot was made to bear on them. In respect to Imperial taxation people were called on to pay taxes not for purposes of which they witnessed the results with their own eyes in their own neighbourhood, but which they had only a vague impression of. If the rule of transferring local burdens to the general Exchequer were acted on without discrimination, the political danger would be most serious. The public debt of the country amounted to about £800,000,000, and it was almost hopeless to deal with it. But it was not necessary to put our local taxation in debt. Local taxation would be made to pay its way from year to year. On the other hand, the course of natural indebtedness (to use an American term) had been continually becoming worse and worse. He wished the hon. Member also to consider that every claim of this sort made for England raised corresponding claims for Ireland and Scotland, and, then, a series of questions would be created which would be almost incapable of solution, for it was almost impossible to apply to the three countries a uniform principle which would not cause a great deal of discontent, and it would be difficult to persuade people that they had not been unequally dealt with. The hon. Gentleman proposed, in effect, that a large amount of charge should be carried from the local to the Imperial Exchequer, and so far as he could estimate the amount so charged would be about £2,250,000 for the three kingdoms. At present these local charges were paid out of a fund borne by the property of the country, and computations which he had seen showed that not more than 1-12th or 1-15th of the local taxation was paid by the working classes; but putting their contribution at 1-9th, which was a high estimate, they would pay £250,000. But supposing the principle were adopted that the whole of the charge should be carried to the Imperial Exchequer, what proportion of the taxation would the working classes pay? Not less than one-third unquestionably. The hon. Member opposite shook his head, but if he had not studied the subject, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) ventured to assure him that it was not an extravagant computation. Hardly any person would place their contribution at less than a fourth; he himself was inclined to rate it higher than one-third. Assuming one-third to be the correct proportion, the effect of the change would be that the working classes, who now contributed £250,000 towards the local charges, would then contribute £750,000 to the Imperial Exchequer. In every point of view, the question was a most serious one, and he was glad that the House was not then called upon to give any decision upon it. Before pressing the matter forward on any future occasion, the hon. Gentleman, he hoped, would carefully examine all the important elements which the Motion embraced.

Mr. KNIGHT, in reply, said, that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been more appropriate if it had been delivered before the passing of the Act of last Session, when the Government threw the whole adjustment of the question previously existing to the winds, and substituted an entirely new state of things. The ratepayers were greatly grieved by the operation of that Act, because in many parishes property was one-eighth less in value now than it was before the passing of the Act.

He regretted that he could not coincide with the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer).

Question put, and *negatived.*

FIRE INSURANCE.—OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. HODGKINSON appealed to the hon. Member for Dudley not to proceed with his Motion relative to the further reduction of the fire insurance duty. Considering the excitement which prevailed in the House, and in the public mind at the present time with reference to another subject, he thought the hon. Gentleman would best consult the interests of the cause which he had at heart by postponing his Motion, and leaving the subject for the present in the hands of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. H. B. SHERIDAN said, that if he had been present on the previous night when the discussion took place between the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the right hon. Gentleman the leader of the Opposition, he should certainly have announced his intention of withdrawing his Motion to-night. So many representations had been made to him in the course of the afternoon that it would be better to postpone this question, at all events for the Session, leaving the matter in the hands of the right hon. Gentleman, who had already made large concessions, that he thought his best course would probably be to withdraw the Motion of which he had given notice and wait patiently to see what the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to do with reference to the subject.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION, &c., DECLARATION ABOLITION BILL.

(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Sir John Gray, Mr. Cogan*)

[BILL 82.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Colman O'Loghlen.*)

Mr. WHALLEY said, that no statement had been made as to the scope or origin of this Bill. It seemed to be the co-relative measure of the Bill respecting the Roman Catholic oath. That measure was called a Bill for unmuzzling Roman Catholics, whilst the present Bill might be called one for muzzling Protestants. The effect of the Bill would be to relieve persons from taking a declaration against the doctrine of transubstantiation at the offering up of the Mass. He should like the hon. and learned Gentleman to tell them what he meant by transubstantiation. Whatever was meant by it, it had always been considered as that particular feature of the Romish faith to which persons might object without being open to the charge of religious bigotry. Transubstantiation was not merely a matter of faith with Roman Catholics but was with the mass that particular ceremony of the Church which derived all its efficacy from a power conferred on priests by the Pope, and though it was the policy of this country to allow every man to worship God as he pleased, they never, on any pretence of religious liberty, had allowed a Foreign Power to interfere in that House.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN said, there had been some misunderstanding as to whether this Bill would be brought on to-night, and therefore he begged to withdraw his Motion for the second reading.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, there certainly had been some misunderstanding upon the subject, and therefore it would be better to postpone the second reading for a fortnight.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Second Reading *deferred* till *Tuesday* 8th May.

SUPERANNUATIONS (OFFICERS METROPOLITAN VESTRIES AND DISTRICT BOARDS) BILL.

(*Mr. Harvey Lewis, Mr. Chambers.*)

[BILL 118.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

Amendments made.

Another Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 33, after the word "allowance," to insert the words "or of the late Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers."—(*Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Other Amendments made.

Another Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 19, after the word "district," to insert the words "and also all corporate bodies elected by the vestry for parochial purposes."—(*Mr. Wyld.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

Bill to be read the third time upon *Friday.*

EXCHEQUER AND AUDIT DEPARTMENTS (*re-committed*) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers.*)

[BILL 79.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 9 to 14 *agreed to.*

Clause 15,

Mr. AYRTON called attention to its language, according to which, he said, Ways and Means were to be granted by Resolution without an Act of Parliament. The clause would allow the Treasury without the sanction of Parliament, to take possession of money and dispose of it as they liked.

Mr. CHILDERS replied that this was the state of things at present, and practically it was the only possible state of things.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 16 and 17 *agreed to.*

Clause 18,

Mr. E. CRAUFURD objected to the Controller being made co-ordinate with the other officer, and stated that there was a possibility of there being a divided opinion in the Report the clause directed should be presented to the House. He thought justice had not been done to the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Childers) for the way in which he had watched over the great principle of the Bill, which enabled the House to stop the supplies whenever circumstances required the adoption of such a course; and the House owed him a great debt of gratitude for the attention he had given to the subject.

Sir COLMAN O'LOGHLEN did not see how, in certain circumstances, the Report could be made a joint Report from the officers named in the clause. The Bill stated that there was to be a Report made and signed by two officers; but if they were to differ in opinion he did not see how this could be done.

Mr. HENLEY said, that the clause, in the way he read it, unless amended would bring things to a dead lock, and the result would probably be that the House would get no Report at all. He could not see that it was necessary that the Controller and Auditor General should be aided by the Assistant Controller and Auditor in drawing up the Report; but if it were to be so, the words "jointly or separately" should be inserted in the clause, so as to insure a Report from one of them.

Mr. CHILDERS said, he could not take credit for all that the hon. Member for Ayr had said regarding the preservation of the great principle of the Bill. It was true that the Bill when originally proposed did not contemplate the aid of the Assistant Controller in the matter; but after a full inquiry it was deemed advisable to follow the example of public companies, and appoint two auditors. In discussing the subject a variety of questions arose, and, as it was believed that no work would be done unless the responsibility were fixed upon one individual, it was agreed that a head officer should be appointed in whom the Parliament could place confidence, and that he should be well paid and have power to make rules for the discipline of his office. There would, however, be no objection to introduce the words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire, and with that Amendment he trusted the clause would be agreed to.

Mr. WHALLEY was of opinion that, as the clause now stood, the difficulty anticipated by the hon. Gentleman could not possibly arise. The clause did not say that the Controller General and the Assistant Auditor were to report unanimously. They might, therefore, as it appeared to him, express their separate opinions in the Report.

Mr. E. CRAUFURD said, his object was that, though the whole responsibility rested upon the Controller General, the Assistant Controller would be brought in upon equal terms with him when the Report was made to the House. He therefore moved the omission of the words "the Assistant Controller and Auditor."

Mr. HENLEY could not vote for the Amendment, the effect of which, taken in conjunction with the eighth clause, would be that the Controller General might leave the Report to be made by the Assistant Controller alone. The House, in that event, would only get a Report from the less responsible officer.

Mr. CHILDERS said, he would take care that words should be inserted in order to prevent the possibility, in case of a difference of opinion, of separate Reports being made.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 18 to 26 *agreed to.*

Remaining clauses *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* next, and to be *printed.* [Bill 120.]

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL (HARDEN PETITION).

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire whether the signatures to the Petition presented to this House upon the 12th day of April 1866, professing to be a Petition of Inhabitants of Harden, near Bingley, in the County of York, in favour of the Representation of the People Bill, are the genuine signatures of the persons whose signatures they profess to be; and, under what circumstances such signatures were annexed."—(*Mr. Ferrand.*)

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES [EXPENSES] BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to make provision for the payment of any Expenses that may be incurred, under any Act of the present Session for the better prevention of Contagious Diseases at certain Naval and Military Stations, out of money to be provided by Parliament for that purpose.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at half after Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, April 25, 1866.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—John Eldon Gorst, esquire, *for* Cambridge Borough.

Select Committee—On Trade in Animals, Mr. Alderman Salomons and Mr. Wilbraham Egerton *added;* on London (City) Corporation Gas, Mr. Westropp *discharged,* and Mr. Paull *added.*

Report—Shannon River Committee (No. 213).

Public Bills—*Resolution reported*—Contagious Diseases [Expenses].

Ordered—Veterinary Surgeons*; Execution of Deeds*; Marriages (Ireland) (No. 2).*

First Reading—Veterinary Surgeons* [121]; Execution of Deeds* [122]; Marriages (Ireland) (No. 2)* [123].

Mr. Childers

Second Reading—Turnpike Roads [39], debate *adjourned.*

Referred to Select Committee—Railways (Guards' and Passengers' communication* [81].

Committee — Fellows of Colleges Declaration [26].

Report—Fellows of Colleges Declaration [26].

Withdrawn—Marriages (Ireland)* [99].

MR. SPEAKER'S ILLNESS.

The Clerk, at the Table, informed the House that the state of Mr. Speaker's health was such as to prevent him from attending the House this day:—Whereupon Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker; and after prayers, counted the House, and Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

INCLOSURE OF HAINAULT FOREST.

QUESTION.

Mr. J. STUART MILL said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Inclosure Commissioners have finally signed and sealed their award for the Inclosure of the newly-created Common set out for the ratepayers of the parish of Chigwell; if he is aware that the timber on the fifty acres of recreation ground granted by Parliament in 1862 for the use of the Metropolitan public is being cut down, thereby destroying the forestal appearance of the spot, which the intention of the Legislature was to keep uninclosed and preserved in its natural wildness; and if the destruction of the timber has been sanctioned by the Inclosure Commissioners?

Sir GEORGE GREY: Sir, the Inclosure Commissioners have not finally signed and sealed their award for this inclosure. The appeal meeting was held only on the 17th of this month, and they have not yet received the Report of their Assistant Commissioner on that meeting. With regard to the latter part of the Question of the hon. Member, the Commissioners have no knowledge of the timber on these fifty acres being cut down, and if it is so it is entirely without their sanction. The timber, they believe, belongs to the lady of the manor within which the fifty acres are situated.

FELLOWS OF COLLEGES DECLARATION BILL—[BILL 26.]

(*Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Dudley Fortescue.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

MR. E. P. BOUVERIE: Sir, I do not propose to occupy the attention of the House at any great length, having on former occasions stated the circumstances which appeared to me to render such a measure as this desirable. The House will be good enough to bear in mind that this Bill does not touch the question of the Universities in any degree whatever. It can only indirectly affect the Universities, inasmuch as by modern practice nobody can be a member of them unless he be also a member of one of the Colleges. In ancient times, as is well known to those who are familiar with these subjects, the Colleges were mere offshoots of the University, and had no direct and immediate connection with it, except as far as these were places where members of the University lived. But in modern times the Colleges have established a complete monopoly, and no one now can be a member of the University except he be also a member of a College. The Bill, therefore, only affects the Universities indirectly, its direct object having reference to those corporations—the Colleges—included within the two Universities. The position of Cambridge and of Oxford with respect to the subject-matter of the Bill differs somewhat, and I will state shortly what the present position is. As regards Oxford, as everybody will be aware from the discussion which took place the other day upon the Bill of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Exeter, religious tests are still imposed in the case of all degrees except that of bachelor. Under the Oxford University Act there was an express prohibition of any religious tests being imposed in taking bachelor's degrees in arts, music, or medicine; but, as regards masters of arts, doctors of music, doctors of medicine, theological degrees, and so forth—with regard to all these, the ancient tests are still retained. That is to say, a candidate, before the degree is conferred, is required to sign the Thirty-nine Articles and the 36th Canon, by which, in effect, he declares his adhesion to the Church of England. Unless, therefore, the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter becomes law, this Bill, as I shall presently explain, can have no direct and immediate operation in the Colleges in Oxford; because, though it removes the test applied by the Colleges respectively under the Act of Uniformity to the candidate for fellowship, yet, as the fellows, in taking the master's degree, which at Oxford is a condition of the fellowship, must take these University tests under the existing law, the change which my Bill proposes would merely remove one difficulty in the way of Nonconformists becoming fellows, and would not remove the great and substantial difficulty of University tests. But at Cambridge matters are entirely different. Under the Cambrige University Act no religious test whatever is imposed upon any degree except the theological degree, and the test which a person taking a degree is required to swallow, if he wishes to become a member of the Senate, to have a voice in the governing body of the University, or in the choice of a Member of Parliament, is a simple declaration of *bonâ fide* membership of the Church of England. If therefore there were no further impediment in the way of a Nonconformist becoming fellow of a College at Cambridge, the object of my Bill—which I distinctly avow is to enable Nonconformists to obtain such fellowships, in certain of the Colleges, at any rate—would be accomplished, without further legislation. But there is another impediment. In the first place, most of the Colleges by statutes of their own insist that a candidate for fellowship, before taking his fellowship, shall declare that he is a member of the Church of England. There are but six of the Colleges at Cambridge, of which Trinity is the principal, which do not impose that requirement through their own statutes. And therefore, unless I proposed to deal with these College statutes and to impose by the power of Parliament a prohibitory clause, saying that for the future they should not require these tests, the Bill which I have now the honour to submit to the House would not apply to the large majority of those Colleges. There are, as I said, six Colleges at Cambridge which make no such requirement at all. They either impose no test upon the candidates, or else one so wide and general in its character that nobody who is a sincere believer in Revelation could have any difficulty in taking it. But there is still a bar imposed by the Act of Uniformity. That Act requires the fellows and heads of Colleges, in taking their fellowship or headship, to make a declaration that they will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England. That enactment had been so little thought of before the great changes which took place in the University under the University Reform Acts, that in many instances it was thought not even to be in operation. And, if I am rightly informed, the great bulk of the fellows at the University of Oxford have never taken this step, and are in consequence liable, under a strict interpretation of the Act of Uniformity, to the forfeiture of their fellowships. But, however that may be, at Cambridge all candidates for fellowships are required to declare in the terms of the Act of Uniformity that they will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England. That Act at present is in a state of considerable confusion on this subject. For not merely fellows and heads of Colleges were required by its provisions to make the declaration, but a great number of Ecclesiastical persons as well; in fact, till last year it was required from all beneficed clergymen. The eighth section of that Act enumerated heads and fellows of Colleges in a long list comprising a great number of spiritual persons, and also including school-masters, tutors, and others, who were all required to make the declaration. But last year we altered the tests required of those who are beneficed clergy in this country; we repealed the tests requiring a declaration from them of unfeigned assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer, and we also repealed the whole of that section eight of the Act of Uniformity which enumerated the various persons required to make this declaration of conformity to the Church of England. As the matter at present stands, therefore, in clause nine, there is merely the bare declaration—"I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England;" and then, in another section, there is an enumeration of the consequences that will follow if that declaration be not taken, not merely by the fellows and heads of Colleges, but by all the Ecclesiastical personages who, under section eight, now repealed, were required to make that declaration. And this has thrown the Act of Parliament into such confusion, that doubts are entertained by legal minds whether the repeal of section eight, enumerating all the persons required to take the declaration, has not by implication repealed the following sections—nine and ten, enacting the declaration itself and the penalty for not taking it. Whether that be so or not, I do not think it would be satisfactory to Parliament or to this House that this test should be got rid of in an indirect way. That would be taking advantage of an Act of Parliament passed altogether with a different object, and although these doubts were suggested to me, I thought that by far the more direct course was to submit the question directly to Parliament, and ascertain whether it would not be willing to repeal the remainder of the clause, and to enact that this declaration of conformity should no longer be required. I ought also to state that fellows and heads of Colleges, in common with a great number of other office-holders of various kinds, civil and Ecclesiastical, are required to take the oath of abjuration. This oath, if it is insisted on, no doubt would be a formidable and insuperable impediment to Roman Catholics being able to take fellowships in Colleges. My Bill does not propose to deal with that question, and for this reason—not because I have any doubt that a rule which is just as regards Nonconformists is equally just as regards Roman Catholics, but because that Act forms part of a very large subject. The requirements of that oath are insisted on by Parliament in the case of a very large number of persons—barristers, advocates, attorneys, solicitors, clergymen, and a large string of office-holders in the different professions, and that subject must be dealt with by itself. I rejoice to think, from what has recently happened in another place no later than last night, that there is some reasonable prospect of that matter being fairly considered. It is a comforting sign of the times that at last the Conservative leaders in this and the other House of Parliament have discovered that there is no real security in these tests for the permanence of those institutions which they so justly cherish, and to which we are not less warmly attached, and that no real support comes from the maintenance of such forms. What possible security can be attained by the imposition of this test? In the first place, it is no evidence whatever of religious belief. What conceivable belief is it that is implied in a declaration of conformity to the Liturgy of the Church of England? The House will remember that on the second reading of the Bill I presented a petition from one of the gentlemen who are injuriously affected by the Act of Uniformity—a gentleman who took a very high degree, and would have had a fellowship if he could have made this declaration; but he was advised by one of the most eminent counsel, now a Judge, that this declaration would engage him to observe all the Rubrics of the Church of England, and he felt, as an honourable and conscientious man, he could not make that promise. There were some of the Rubrics at which he scrupled, and he refused to make the declaration. That gentleman had been brought up as a member of the Baptist denomination, but when an undergraduate in the College to which he belonged he had always attended chapel without a murmer. He had constantly received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England; and what conceivable good could be attained for the interests of religion or of the Church by excluding such a gentleman as that from the just rewards of his literary eminence? And I should observe that with regard to a declaration of religious belief any honourable man who does not entertain it would scruple to make such a declaration, whatever his opinions were. It is quite true with regard to all these tests that they have very much broken down and have failed; because men have not scrupled to take them, and I believe that a laxity of morality has been created very much by their imposition. But I wish the House to see that anybody who believed in anything or in nothing might have no scruple in saying that he would conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England. The ordinary interpretation would be that when at church you would use the Prayer Book; or when you went to public service at all you would go to the Church of England. Who would scruple to make such a declaration, involving no assertion of belief, but merely that you would pursue a certain course of conduct in certain circumstances? Well, then, I say this test is really no security for anything at all. It is not a security for the religious belief of those from whom it is required; nor is it any security—and this is the hitch with hon. Members opposite—that the governing body of a College and those to whom the instruction of a College is confided shall be exclusively members of the Church of England. To hear this subject and analogous questions argued in this House, one would imagine that the whole educational apparatus at Oxford and Cambridge was directed to the religious instruction of undergraduates. There is nothing of the kind. No direct religious instruction is conveyed at Cambridge, and very little more, I believe, at Oxford. Undergraduates are required to show a certain knowledge of the Thirty-nine Articles, but in my time there was no daily instruction in religious dogma or practice of any kind. The tutors at Cambridge lectured on Aristotle and Newton's *Principia*, and various other branches of learning, in which undergraduates have to pass before taking their degrees. I was myself a tolerably diligent student while at Trinity College, Cambridge; but I do not recollect any religious instruction whatever being given to the undergraduates. We had lectures on algebra, on Aristotle, on the differential and integral calculus, and other branches of high learning; but there was no instruction in religious doctrine. We were required to go to chapel; those of us who were regular in our habits did so, and on Sundays we went to St. Mary's Church and heard a sermon, which was sometimes a good, and sometimes a bad one. That was pretty nearly the amount of religious instruction received at Cambridge. I do not mean to say that there would be no advantage whatever in the authorities of a College belonging to a distinct religious body, and that the parents of young men should have no security that the doctrines taught in the chapel sermon, and the general tendency of instruction, should be in conformity with the views generally entertained in the Church of England; but what I say is, that this test is no security whatever, it does not advance you one step further towards the attainment of that object. If hon. Members will carry their minds back to many of the fellows they have known, they will have no difficulty in recalling many instances—though it would be invidious in me to particularize—where men obtained fellowships in consequence of their University distinction, but to whom we should not like to intrust the education and instruction of our sons. Yet these men had taken this test and conformed. These tests, indeed, do not and cannot exclude men of sceptical opinions or irregular and immoral life, but merely a few conscientious men who have honest scruples about taking them. At Cambridge we had really nothing of what is commonly known as religious instruction. For the University examinations a certain amount of information in the Gospels in Greek was required with Paley's *Moral Philosophy and Evidences*—a moral philosophy which a great many theologians of authority say is of a very questionable character, and not calculated to improve the tone and temper of our morals. If the House relies on a statutable security for the religiousness of these establishments, it is not to be found in this portion of the Act of Uniformity at all. The history of this declaration shows that it was enacted by Parliament for a totally different purpose. An attempt was made in the reign of Charles II. by a system of statutes—by this and by the Corporation and Five-mile Acts, to secure an entire monopoly to the Church of England of all instruction; so that we find even tutors in private families and schoolmasters were required to take this declaration. After the civil wars, when the High Church party were rampant in this country, and determined to put down the Puritans, *fas aut nefas*, they endeavoured to engross the monopoly of religious instruction, not only in the Universities, but all over the country. In *Kennet's Register* are to be found the discussions between the Lords and the Commons with regard to the Amendments proposed in the Act of Uniformity, and the question seemed to have arisen whether schoolmasters and tutors should be included or not among those who were to take the test. It was urged by the Commons on the Lords—who then as now seemed sometimes to be more rational than the Commons—that a great many of the nobility and gentry during the rebellion had been adherents of the Parliament, and to obviate this, that the Church of England should have complete control over the whole educational system of the country. But this test has entirely failed of its object, and I hold it is unjustifiable and wrong now to maintain such an enactment for a totally different purpose. It has, however, succeeded in one thing, in which I think all reasonable men will agree it should not have succeeded—namely, in excluding from the proper reward of intellectual distinction a certain number of English Nonconformists, who scruple to take it. When I argued this subject some years ago, I was told this was purely a hypothetical grievance. One Senior Wrangler had indeed refused to take the declaration; but he was put up to it, it was said, by the Nonconformists, and there was no practical grievance whatever. That cannot be maintained now. No less than six gentlemen, all of whom have petitioned the House, have really been excluded since the passing of the University Act from getting fellowships, which according to all human probability, from their place in the triposes, they would otherwise have attained, because they scrupled to take this declaration. They were, no doubt, persons of the very class whom the declaration was intended to hit—but these are just the persons who might be admitted to fellowships without the slightest danger to your securities. If you want a security by Act of Parliament, it is to be found in the 17th section of the Act of Uniformity, which enacts that the chapel service shall be in conformity with the Book of Common Prayer, and also that the heads of Colleges shall sign the declaration contained in that Act of unfeigned assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer. The tutors engaged in the business of instruction are not elected by the governing body, but appointed by the heads of Colleges at Cambridge—and I believe at Oxford also—as gentlemen qualified to instruct the undergraduates. If, then, according to your statutory requirements, the head must belong to the Church of England, and the services in the chapel must be conducted according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, what possible security can you require more for the religiousness of these establishments—so far as they are religious establishments? If the Universities were merely theological Colleges—places for the training of a certain number of clergymen for the Church of England—the case would be different and you might require something more; but they are places for instruction in the arts and general learning, and not directly theological institutions. On that point, indeed, we are at issue with those hon. Gentlemen who represent the Universities; but they are practically the representatives of the country clergy of the two Universities. The lay element is a powerful one in intellect, in cultivation, and in knowledge, and I trust from day to day it is getting more powerful. I think I see symptoms that this is so. But still practically the representation of the Universities is in the hands of the country clergymen, and their impression naturally is that the Colleges are schools for training young men in theology instead of fitting them for the world at large. I wish to satisfy hon. Members opposite that this proposal of mine is not aimed with any hostile intention at the Church of England, nor intended to injure its influence in the country. The gentlemen who first requested me to take the matter in hand were all members of the Church of England. The petition I presented four years ago on this subject was signed by members of the Church of

England and by seventy-four fellows and members of Colleges. This is not, therefore, a hostile movement against the Church of England. On the contrary, it is a friendly movement arising from a desire to see the Church of England assume that position which she ought to take up, and to take the lead in removing these restrictions, which can never be to its advantage. I would ask the House, whether any good end is served by excluding such gentlemen as I have described from the just prizes of their ambition? They would have remained some of them at the University, engaging in what they were admirably qualified to undertake, the professorial education of the University; and there is no reason that I know of why Baptists, Congregationalists, and Scotch Presbyterians should not instruct in the various branches of secular learning—in mathematics for instance. Is it necessary for teaching the differential calculus that a man should declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer? Here is one case furnished to me—A gentleman who had taken his degree and took the first place in the Science Tripos wished to become a candidate for the comparative Anatomy Chair, which was vacant; two other gentlemen who did not occupy so distinguished a position in examination on the science they were required to teach were candidates; but because he was unable to declare that he would conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England he was unable to compete for the chair. Is there not really something absurd in maintaining that a man shall not teach comparative anatomy—a knowledge of the form, physiology, and constitution of animals—because he will not take such a declaration? My proposal is simply to get rid of this declaration of conformity. There would still be the security, if security were wanted, of the chapel services, the mode of selection of the tutors, and other securities for the general business of the Colleges being conducted in accordance with the views of the Church of England; and I do not believe that this declaration gives any additional security whatever. Even if this Bill should pass, the greater part of the Colleges would still have a majority of clergymen among their fellows. It seems absurd to suppose that the introduction of a few Nonconformists would in any way endanger that mysterious connection between the Colleges and the Church of England which hon. Gentlemen opposite are so anxious to maintain. The House will bear in mind that this is a statutory restriction on the freedom of these corporations. I do not propose to interfere with their freedom. I do not say they shall not in their bye-laws impose such restrictions and conditions on fellowships as they please. I do not ask you to impose any new fetters on fellowships, I only ask you to relieve these Colleges from statutory restrictions on their freedom. That freedom of action they have a right to claim —that freedom which is reconcilable with the common right which, I maintain, every dutiful subject of Her Majesty has to become a member of a lay corporation, if he is willing to fulfil the duties required by its bye-laws. I simply move, Sir, that you do now leave the chair.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. E. P. Bouverie.*)

MR. WALPOLE: I think, Sir, if my right hon. Friend had remembered the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford presented a petition the other night, which has been ordered to be printed by the Petitions Committee, under the corporate seal of that University, and had he borne in mind the further fact that I myself, just before he commenced his speech, presented a petition under the corporate seal of the University of Cambridge, he would hardly have made the remark which elicited cheers from the other side — that we were the representatives in this House of the clergy and not of the two Universities. The petition which I have had the honour to present on behalf of the University of Cambridge expresses so clearly, so briefly, and so justly the objections to this Bill, that I hardly know whether I can do anything better than call the attention of my right hon. Friend to it as furnishing a complete answer to the statement which he has just made to the House. The petition begins by stating that everything connected with the government, studies, and religious training of the Universities was referred, as the right hon. Gentleman well knows, to a Royal Commission, among whom there were many persons familiarly acquainted with the constitution of the Universities, and also with the religious education carried on in the separate Colleges. It then goes on to state that those members of the University of Cambridge, to whom I have referred, recommended, long before the University Acts were passed, that persons who were not members of the Church of England should be allowed to proceed to take degrees in the University, but that the taking of those degrees should be accompanied by certain securities for keeping up the connection between the University and the Church of England. The petition proceeds to point out that, pursuant to those recommendations, an Act of Parliament was passed by means of which all the advantages of a University education were extended to persons not members of the Church of England, and that in the course of that education all such persons are entitled to compete for scholarships, prizes, and exhibitions; that they can take degrees—in Cambridge, at least, both Bachelors' and Masters' degrees — and that this arrangement is only qualified by the reasonable condition that they should not have a governing part in the institutions which were never founded by, nor intended for, such persons; and that they should not fill any offices which had heretofore been filled by members of the Church of England. My right hon. Friend opposite seems to forget these facts, which are really the important facts in the discussion of questions of this kind, for what do they amount to? They amount to this—that the arrangement which Parliament made in respect to the University of Oxford in the year 1854, and in reference to Cambridge in the year 1856, is an arrangement both Liberal and just—liberal, inasmuch as it gives to Dissenters and Nonconformists all the benefits of a University education; and just, because it secures the trusteeship, the management, the government of these Colleges to those persons who alone can administer them according to the wills and intentions of those who founded and endowed them. Well, but then my right hon. Friend concluded his speech with some very warm and animated remarks, and he seemed to get warmer and more animated as he approached those remarks—the substance of which was, "All I want is to take away these statutory restraints upon the Colleges; I want to give them some little freedom." Now, surely my right hon. Friend ought first to ask the Universities themselves if they desire this freedom for which my right hon. Friend is so earnestly contending. [Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE: The Colleges.] My right hon. Friend says "the Colleges;" but has a single College presented a petition for that purpose? Is there a single College which will present such a petition? So far as I know the University of Cambridge, I believe there is none, but this I do know, that, though my right hon. Friend some four years ago presented a petition from about seventy gentlemen who were, I am quite free to admit, very able and distinguished men, praying for the substance of this Bill, though it took a different form on that occasion, from that time to this we have had no other petition to the like effect. That petition, as soon as it was first heard (for it was privately circulated and signed before being presented to this House) was met by counter-petitions from both Universities and from many of the Colleges. Divisions were taken both in the University of Oxford and in the University of Cambridge, in Convocation in one place and in the Senate House in the other, to see how far the different Members of those Universities approved this Bill or not, and what was the result? The result was this, that in Oxford 182 declared against the Bill of that day, and only 51 for it; while in Cambridge 150 were against the Bill and only 25 were for it. So that when the matter came to open discussion some of those seventy persons who had signed the petition withdrew from the opposition. [Mr. FAWCETT: No, no!] At any rate, they did not appear in the Senate House to support the opinion they expressed in the petition. And what has happened this year is still more striking; for, though full notice was given of a Motion for the adoption of the petition which I have this day presented, when it was discussed in the Senate not a dissentient vote was recorded, and I even venture to say that hardly a dissentient voice was raised. I only mention this to show that my right hon. Friend is hardly justified in thinking there would be any appreciable effect produced by this Bill on the minds of those who are resident at the Universities, and who, therefore, with all respect be it spoken, know even better than the country clergy what is good for the Universities; and to show further that those gentlemen do not desire this freedom to be given them, which would be turned, as I believe, into a source of agitation for the purpose of obtaining compulsorily that which the supporters of the Bill now only seem to ask for voluntarily. Now that being the case, perhaps my right hon. Friend will allow me to state how I think the matter stands. The education of the Universities has always been carried on and conducted in connection with the Church of England. The education of the Universities has always been in strict conformity with the wills and intentions of those who founded the Colleges—that is to say, in strict conformity with the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England, by the members of which these Colleges were endowed. Now, my right hon. Friend says that this declaration in the Act of Uniformity is a test. I take leave to dissent from that opinion altogether. I say it is that which my right hon. Friend admitted it still to be—namely, a means by which you practically secure religious discipline in connection with the Church of England in the Colleges and Chapels; and if by the removal of this test, as my right hon. Friend calls it, you allow any person, whatever his religious opinions, to obtain not only fellowships and tutorships but chaplaincies and masterships in those Colleges, you would either have to carry on the religious discipline of the Colleges in a different way—that is to say, either by persons of different religious creeds, or by having no religious services at all. For if you have a certain number of men in the Universities who do not agree with, and do not conform to, the Liturgy of the Church of England, I should like to know how religious services can be carried on in the Colleges except as I have said. Either you must have as many different chaplains as there are students of different religions in the Colleges, or finding that an impracticability, which you would soon do, then you would say, "We will have no compulsory religious training whatever." In other words, I am convinced that you would arrive at this point—namely, either you would have in the Universities what I venture to call religious confusion, or you would have religious indifference. Now, to either of these results I am decidedly opposed. Religious confusion is not the way in which to train up the impressionable minds of young men, and religious indifference is the very last thing which ought to be allowed in any of our seminaries, since the better part of education will thereby be ignored. I tried to gather from my right hon. Friend's remarks what were the real grievances which he thought existed in the present state of the law, and those grievances I think I may sum up on these two points—first, that it was not for the benefit of the Colleges themselves that very able men—one whom he mentioned was a very able gentleman indeed, a Senior Wrangler, and one of those who might no doubt have become a fellow of Trinity College if he could have made this declaration—should be debarred from enjoying the full benefits of these institutions; and secondly, the supposed injury inflicted upon certain individuals in depriving them of the opportunity of sharing in the highest honours which their talents and ability entitled them to enjoy. Now, Sir, with regard to any injury which accrues to the Colleges through their not having the opportunity of electing gentlemen who do not conform to the Church of England to their professorships and tutorships, I believe it is a matter of infinitesimal account. I quite agree with my right hon. Friend that it is very advantageous for the Colleges to have men of the highest character and ability placed in the foremost position in these Colleges; but I say that that is already as well determined by the Colleges themselves as it could be by any statutory freedom which my right hon. Friend would wish to extend to them. The heads of these Colleges have taken care, and will take care, that the ablest men for all the purposes for which a University education is given will be found at those Colleges. Hitherto, I believe that no injury whatever has happened to the course of that education because some one or two men are not admitted, in violation of the principles upon which the Colleges are founded, and of the wills and intentions of the founders, to take part in the government of those institutions. Well, now, with regard to the injury to individuals, that injury, I allow, was a great one in former times, before two things happened. Thirty years ago the Nonconformists of this country could truly say, "We have no opportunity of receiving the benefit of a University education, for we have no University in which we can be educated, and we have no means by which we can go to National institutions like Oxford and Cambridge." But five-and-twenty or thirty years ago the University of London was established for this express purpose, and all the grievance which a Dissenter could feel in being debarred from a University education was by that measure reduced to a minimum. The only disadvantage the Dissenter could then feel was this, that he had not the prestige of a University degree conferred upon him by the old Universities of Oxford or Cambridge. Even that, however, was subsequently removed by the two University

Acts, for not only did those Acts fully and freely give the benefit of education at those Universities to Nonconformists as well as to members of the Church of England, but they gave full opportunity to any person who might wish to establish private halls, as they are called at Oxford, or hostels, as they are termed at Cambridge, where those who were not members of the Church of England might be educated according to their own religious notions, and attend Chapels in conformity with their own religious views. The grievance, therefore, has been entirely removed, and unless you mean to contend that Dissenters have a right to the endowments of Colleges which were not founded for them, but distinctly for other persons, you have not an atom of a case for this Bill. My right hon. Friend did not say it in so many words, but I cannot help thinking that what was in his mind in this matter was that which has been so often urged in this House and elsewhere—namely, that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are, in fact, National institutions, and that every subject of the Queen has a right to enter them and receive the education that is there imparted. [*Cheers from the Ministerial side of the House.*] I am delighted to hear that cheer, because it enables me to meet the point which is evidently uppermost in the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I think my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) was one of those who cheered, a distinguished Professor in that University which I have the honour to represent, and one for whom I must always entertain a sincere respect. Let me deal, then, with this argument in his presence; let me see what you mean by calling the Universities National institutions. I contend that there is a fallacy in the proposition as you enounce it. I perfectly agree that they are National institutions in one sense, but they are not, and never were, National institutions in that sense which the supporters of the Bill wish to convey to us. They are National institutions in this sense, that they offer the fullest University education to every person in this country who chooses to take advantage of it; but they are not National institutions, they never were National institutions, and they never ought to be National institutions in the sense that every one who goes there has a right to claim the benefit of endowments which were never intended for him, or a share in their government which was only to be carried on in connection with the Church of England. They are, in fact, National institutions just as the Established Church is a National institution. The Universities have always been connected with that Church; they have shared its fortunes, they have followed its vicissitudes, they have strengthened its means of doing good, and I am happy to say that they are partaking in its triumphs and successes in spreading religion throughout the country. The Established Church is a National institution, because, just as the Universities open their doors to every person who wishes to have his education there, so it opens its doors to every person who wishes to partake in its worship, in whatever part of the country he may be dwelling; but the Church of England is not, it never was, and it never ought to be a National institution in the sense that those who will not conform to its doctrines and its discipline ought to have a voice in its management, and partake of its revenues. That is the fallacy which always prevails upon this subject when people talk of Universities as National institutions. I concede that they are such in the sense which I have interpreted. Now I will concede more than this—I will concede that they are National institutions in the sense that they have been founded and endowed by great public personages, reaching down from the Sovereign on the Throne, through nobles and prelates, and persons below those ranks in life, who have given their estates and munificent benefactions for the purpose of establishing a system of education upon just, and safe, and religious principles. They are National institutions as coming from such quarters, but the persons who gave those endowments gave them not out of any public money belonging to Parliament, but out of their own private means, and they contributed those benefactions for the maintenance of those principles which they wished to prevail in the Universities; in other words, one and all of them, from first to last, desired the Universities to be in connection with the Established Church. And I must here say, as I pass by this part of the subject, that I think there never were institutions which have more nobly or more gloriously discharged the trust which was committed to them, for they have produced a constant succession of men who have served their country with unparalleled success in all the great walks of politics, literature, science, or religion. In this sense our Universities are National institutions, but they are not and never were so in the sense that persons who will not conform to the conditions under which the Colleges were founded are to have the right to share in the endowments or the government of them. Let me illustrate this by a case which is familiar to all of us. London University and the Queen's Colleges in Ireland are National Universities which have been established and supported in whole or in part by grants made by Parliament, and, receiving such aid, Parliament has the right to impose its own terms as to the way in which the education shall be conducted. But what happened in the case of the London University? Dr. Arnold, one of the best men that ever lived, and who always thought that education should be based upon religion, was anxious, when the London University was founded, that religion should have a place in its teaching, and he thought that religious teaching might be given by lecturers appointed for the purpose, who should deal with the general topics of religion, and should not enter into any of the distinctive differences between one communion and another. It was found, however, that that would not answer, and the consequence has been that as a part of University teaching you have no religious instruction in the University of London. You may have it separately: but it is no part of the University system. The inference I draw from this is not that that University does no good, but that when you attempt to mix up different religious denominations or different religious creeds in the persons who are to instruct the students, you will find that you cannot carry on a common education in religious matters, because you will differ as to the form and manner in which it should be conducted. Now I come to the Queen's Colleges in Ireland. They were founded by grants from this House; and there you did combine different religious teachings. The Roman Catholic can have his Dean of the chapel, the Presbyterian or the member of the Church of England can have theirs; but what has happened last year and this year? Why, I find that the largest proportion of the inhabitants of Ireland, the Roman Catholic portion of the population, are so far from being satisfied with the result that they are insisting upon what has always been the case at Oxford and Cambridge—namely, that they should have Universities of their own, where they can carry on their own distinctive religious teaching. Now, Sir, for these reasons I think it is tolerably clear that since these Universities were founded on the condition that they should be connected with the Church of England, and since they always have been so connected, there is nothing whatever in the proposition of my right hon. Friend which ought to commend itself to the approbation of this House, contrary to the mode in which this question has now been settled for so many years; and if I might venture to sum up the reasons which induce me to move the rejection of the Bill, I would put it in this way. I gather the points together, that my right hon. Friend may answer them if he can, and, if he cannot, I claim the decision of the House in favour of the Motion which I am about to propose. I say, then, that I object to this Bill, in the first place, because it disturbs a just and reasonable arrangement made by Parliament in the University Acts only a few years ago, giving to the Dissenters all the facilities of a University education, but reserving the government and management of the Colleges of the University to Members of the Church of England. In the second place, I object to this Bill because it begins by being permissive, and, if permissive, is not needed; while, if it ends in being compulsory, and allowing gentlemen not members of the Church of England to be admitted to the governing body of the Colleges, it will then be no longer a measure not needed, but it will be a measure that is absolutely injurious. I object to this Bill, in the third place, because it applies to the Universities the novel principle of their being National institutions, in the sense that persons who will not be bound by the conditions on which they were established may claim as a right a share in their endowments and a voice in their government; and I object to this Bill, in the last place, because, as I understand it, it would ultimately, though not immediately, remove the basis of religious teaching and religious discipline from University education. Inasmuch, then, as I am one of those who think that education is of comparatively little worth unless religion is connected with it, I, for one, will always maintain that noble legacy which has been handed down to us by our ancestors to be secured to our posterity as we have received it from them, and that is that in all these National institutions, wherever you plant the tree of knowledge, there the tree of life shall always be planted along with it. I beg, Sir, to move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day six months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Walpole,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. FAWCETT said, he was anxious to make a few remarks upon the subject under discussion, as from his long connection with the University, he was thoroughly acquainted with all the details of the administration of Colleges, and because he trusted he should be able to interpret fairly and candidly the opinions of those gentlemen who, like himself, appealed to Parliament to remove a restriction which they believed acted prejudicially against the best interests of the Universities. He thought he should be able to show the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University (Mr. Walpole) that he did not quite understand the feeling of the University with regard to open fellowships. It was quite true that each University, as a University, had petitioned against this Bill, and that in the case that had been alluded to in this debate the fellows agreed not to oppose the petition from Cambridge, and for this reason—any one in the University who was not resident could vote, and consequently those who formed the residential body were swamped by men who were not resident, and came from all parts of the country, and therefore they thought it better to refrain from voting on the matter. Three or four years since the right hon. Gentleman who had already spoken on the question presented a petition in favour of open fellowships, signed by seventy-four fellows, including many most distinguished ornaments, not only of the University, but of the Church. That was a public petition circulated in every commination room, and was emphatically a fellows' petition. The right hon. Member for the University had said they did not repeat that petition, and therefore threw out the insinuation that the same feeling did not now exist in the University; but the reason why they did not repeat the petition was that every one who signed that petition had not altered his opinions; on the contrary, his convictions were strengthened. If the value of a petition was to be estimated by the names attached, let hon. Members look at the names appended to the fellows' petition. In Trinity College, out of sixty fellows, twenty-eight signed, and out of thirteen tutors and assistant tutors, nine signed and two remained neutral, refusing likewise to sign the counter petition; while in some of the Colleges there was actually a majority of fellows who signed it: and if, during the debate, any hon. Member said that those who signed had a feeling opposed to the Church, he would not reply to that by a parade of his own churchmanship, which was always an invidious thing to do, but he would refer hon. Members to the signatures in the petition, amongst which would be found those of some of the most eminent men in, and the best friends of, the Church. A reference to those names, amongst others Professor Sedgwick, would show that they did not intend to injure the Church. What they asked for was as just and as moderate as anything could be. He would briefly, and as clearly as he possibly could, state the case as it existed at the present time. By recent legislation the Dissenter was admitted to study in the University. He could obtain scholarships and exhibitions. He could obtain the M.A. degree, but the degree was shorn of half its dignity and advantages, as its possessors could not become members of the Senate. In the new statutes it was specially provided that the majority of the fellows of a College might from time to time, by petition to the Queen in Council, get those statutes altered; but if there was in existence an Act of Parliament such as the one which it was now sought to repeal, of course the provisions of the statutes were overridden, and the fellows had no power to get the statutes altered, notwithstanding that the Colleges might be unanimously in favour of admitting to fellowships distinguished students, who might not be able to express their conformity to the Liturgy of the Church of England. It was now sought to repeal that clause of the Act of Parliament, and to leave everything with regard to the election of fellows entirely to the free will of the governing bodies of Colleges. He would say at once, that to a measure to compel Colleges to elect Dissenters or members of any other religious body to fellowships, all the Colleges would join the right hon. Gentleman in offering a most determined and uncompromising opposition. What was desired was that, if a College unanimously thought—and the case had occurred—that the election to a fellowship of one of its students who had taken brilliant degrees, and who was of unimpeachable moral character would be of infinite benefit to the College, they should be at liberty to elect him, notwithstanding the fact that he could not conscientiously conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England. What were the reasons upon which they founded the demand for the repeal of the clause in question? In the first place, they said that the repeal of the restrictive clause of the Act would promote the best interests of the College; secondly, it would uphold the influence of the Universities as the great seats of learning, and that influence would be extended; thirdly, by the repeal of the clause no security of the slightest worth would be taken away from the Church. As to the first point, he for one would contend that it was of primary and essential importance that the College should be able to retain, for the purpose of carrying on the education, the ablest and best men. The existing restriction prevented them from doing this. It must not be forgotten, in speaking upon this point, that the demand now made came in the first place not from the Dissenters, but from the Colleges themselves. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kilmarnock had told the House that the great College of Cambridge, Trinity, was for twelve or fourteen years without a Senior Wrangler. At last it obtained one; and a most brilliant man he was, for not one in a century passed a more distinguished examination. That man was Mr. Stirling. He was universally beloved, he was distinguished for his high moral character and great intellectual power. A more conscientious man never was a student there. But he could not conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, being a Scotchman; and what was the result? The College, although unanimous in wishing to give him a fellowship, and in retaining him in the College to assist in the education of the College, could not do so, and they were obliged to put an inferior man in the place which he ought to have occupied. But the mischief thence arising was destined to be repeated. Three brothers, the gifted sons of a gifted father, took year after year brilliant degrees in the College. But not one of them could be elected to a fellowship because they were Nonconformists. But this kind of mischief was not confined to one College. In his own University the great majority of the fellows were in favour of the repeal of these restrictions. Two or three years since Mr. Jardine, a student of Christ's College, Cambridge, obtained a high mathematical degree, and stood first in the moral sciences examination. At that time, in consequence of certain changes which had been introduced in the studies, the College was anxious for a man to lecture on moral science, and they wished to elect this Mr. Jardine, and he was authorized by the Rev. Mr. Dunster to state that he could not be retained in the College as a fellow on account of his being unable to take the oath. The resulting mischief to the College could hardly be over-estimated. But the mischief did not stop there. A great inroad had been made on the great and glorious principle which regulated the elections of fellows in the Universities. What they prided themselves upon was what he might call the life-spring of the University. What every University man felt particular pride in was this—that they elected the most distinguished students to fellowships. And they felt deeply pained when, in consequence of these religious restrictions, they were obliged to cast aside a distinguished man, and elect in his place one less distinguished. Then, with regard to the second ground on which they based their claims—namely, that so long as the restriction was retained the Universities would not do all the good they might do as national seats of learning. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Exeter, in a brilliant speech they would all long remember, seemed to think that when the Dissenter was admitted to the M.A. degree he ought to be satisfied. But they were now asking for a much more important measure. What was now asked for on behalf of the Dissenters was that they should have the full right to look forward to the endowments of the University as the reward of their intellect. What a mortification it must be to a man going to Cambridge, taking a distinguished degree, becoming attached to the University, feeling that he would like to make the University his home, and to take part in the future education of the country, and then to find that because he was a Dissenter this restriction stood in his way, that he should be cut off from his reward, and see a less distinguished man placed over him, and in the receipt of the remuneration which he, the Dissenter, had won. Thirdly, he maintained that the restriction was no security to the Church of England, as it could be, but a mere cobweb defence in the event of hostilities, while it was the foundation of a real grievance. Had religion ever been promoted by fostering a grievance? And ought not the promotion of religion to be the end and aim of all education? Even admitting that it was some slight security to the Church, he should contend that so many other important interests were affected by it that the Church of England had no right to retain it. His right hon. Friend the Member for the University had spoken of the original intentions of the founders of the Universities. He seemed to forget that most of the Colleges were founded for the performance of masses for the dead, and, therefore, it was impossible to give a literal interpretation to the intentions of the founders. But let the right hon. Gentleman give a free interpretation to the founders' wishes by bringing as many as possible under the hallowing and inspiring influences which must always be connected with places where the best, the wisest, and some of the noblest of the nation had been educated. It had been said that if we admitted to fellowships persons of different creeds in one College we should introduce religious bickering and discord. He did not look much into the future; but the predictions of hon. Members opposite, when they essayed in that direction, were often only uttered to be falsified. When it was proposed to admit Dissenters to scholarships the discord prediction was resorted to. But in his own College he had seen half the scholarships filled by men who did not belong to the Church of England, and a more united College there could not, possibly, have been; and one of the most popular men who held a scholarship was the son of a distinguished Roman Catholic Judge. And such he believed would be the case in regard to the prediction that discord would be introduced into Colleges by admitting Dissenters to the fellowships. It must not be forgotten that among men of education differences of opinion, whether on religion or on other subjects, were freely tolerated. But, asked his right hon. Friend, ought not the Dissenters now to be satisfied? Had they not their London University? Were they to be satisfied, indeed, in face of the vast endowments of Oxford and Cambridge? Hon. Members seemed to forget what these endowments were. Why, it would take more than £20,000,000 to found another Oxford and Cambridge. And in such splendid endowments ought not the whole nation to be entitled to participate? But they talked about founding another College or another University in which the Dissenters could be educated separately from the Church of England. But if they could get the money there would still be something absent which money could not buy. Could they buy the historical memories of the past? Could they buy the historic prestige connected with the old Universities? Could they buy those associations which must ever be called forth when a youth visited the spots where Milton wrote his sublime poem, and Newton acquired the power to perfect his as sublime discoveries into the laws of the universe? Connected with these old Universities were influences under which he claimed that the whole nation should be brought. If we could found a University for Dissenters the result would be most unfortunate. Nothing was so mischievous as separating men in education, because they held different religious opinions. To advocate such a separation a man must have a narrow mind; and there was nothing he felt so strongly, in looking back into the past history of this country, as to see how much of the energy and the power of good in a Christian nation had been wasted, because Christians had not been sufficiently united. How much better would it be to foster a union of sympathy by bringing together young men of different religious opinions? They would then learn to respect and love each other, and to work together in those good works which Christians holding different opinions on more essential matters might yet unite to perform. He had only one word to add on another subject. He had been asked by members of the University to thank the right hon. Member for Calne for the speech which he made when the Oxford Test Bill was before them. That speech laid down ably and clearly the programme of the Liberal party on the question. He was the more anxious to give the right hon. Gentleman this recognition of his services, for he thought it well to be generous in a time of great political excitement. He could only wish that the same outspoken language and definite policy might be advocated on this question by the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury Bench, and then there might be a chance of their just and moderate demands being conceded. It had been said to him that he ought to feel grateful to the University, and that he ought not to meddle with it. No one could be more grateful to the University than he was. He had there passed some of the happiest days of his life, and had acquired all he had that was worth possessing. But because he had also there learned to love freedom of thought, and liberty of action—and from day to day only more and more prized these advantages—he should, he believed, be pursuing a mean and ungenerous policy if he did not endeavour to extend such advantages to the greatest possible number of his fellow-countrymen?

Mr. BERESFORD HOPE congratulated the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) on the eloquence, earnestness, and sincerity, which had characterized his speech, abounding, as it did, with an enthusiasm and gush of feeling which was rarely met with in that House. He was sure that they all heartily sympathized with the feelings which prompted the speech, though they might not all agree in the views laid down. The first part of that speech, though less forcibly argued than the second, was the portion which would tell most sensibly on his hearers. Accustomed to hard calculating views on the questions which came before them, they were naturally apt to be carried away when a Member burst through the conventionalities of debate with a genuine gush of nature. More, therefore, was the reason that they should be on their guard to act under such a contingency by reason and not by impulse. He referred to that part of the hon. Member's speech in which he argued that there was a strong undercurrent of feeling against the petitions presented on this subject from the University, evinced by the declarations of various fellows of Colleges, and especially of the twenty-eight fellows of Trinity College. These twenty-eight names included persons for whom he had the highest respect, and who were among his most intimate personal friends. They belonged to that illustrious College of which it was his own privilege—one of his greatest privileges, as he always felt—himself to be a member. But, after all, what did it prove? It merely proved that those eminent fellows of Trinity were no more than men. The College had been deprived of the services of such men as Mr. Stirling and Mr. Aldis, who had been trained under their eye and their care for the honours they had gained, and he sympathized alike with the College on its loss, and with those gentlemen on the high and conscientious feelings which led them to renounce the prizes which their ability and perseverance would under other circumstances have insured. But when he had said that, he had urged all which would be averred for that side of the argument. Was there, he asked, any law in the world which did not, in some way or other, lead to instances of individual hardship? If the case was that of naturalization, it necessarily happened that men of brilliant talents were sometimes shut out from serving the Government of other countries than those in which they were born, although their whole interest might be locked up in the new country of their adoption; and if they looked to the laws relating to those most sacred and delicate ties of private life, the marriage laws, and if, as it must be, they admitted any kind of restrictive legislation as the correlative of the idea of marriage, they would find as the necessary sequel some case or other of personal hardship therein involved. If this were so, did the personal hardship in the present case furnish a sufficient reason for altering the law? He must here remark parenthetically upon the manner in which the debate on the Bill of the hon. and learned Member for Exeter ran into the question involved in the present discussion. This debate on the Bill of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock resolved itself into what was simply a hashed-up second edition of the former discussion. All those remarks which the hon. Member for Brighton had made with regard to the softening and Christianising influences of association, among men domesticated together in our Universities, constituted arguments much more germane to the former, not desirable but much less mischievous measure than the present, Bill. The material advantages of a fellowship had often been exaggerated. Unless it led to a living it was often but a poor provision for a few years; and the man who, after attaining high distinction was thrown upon the world with that distinction as his introduction, might perhaps be better off than one who was tempted to go on agitating upon a fellowship. With the exception of a voice in the governing body, Dissenters had the full right of sharing the advantages of the education afforded by the University, and might carry off the honorary distinctions, which marked the degrees they took. There were very few restrictions, and the whole case might be summed up in the following formula:—"We wish to make Dissenters as full graduates in all the schools of the University except the school of divinity as the most earnest and zealous members of the Established Church." To this he would moreover add, that he desired Dissenters might have their share in the Parliamentary franchise. The hon. Member for Brighton, descending from his pedestal of eloquence, had twice made an admission of which he probably did not see the full force when he said that the main point at issue was that the Dissenters were desirous of possessing the endowments of the Colleges, and upon this head he would rather accept the testimony of the hon. Member for Brighton than he would that of his right hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie). His right hon. Friend had passed through a most distinguished career at Trinity College, but after his mingling so long with the world the politician had probably overridden the Cambridge man, while the hon. Member for Brighton was still a fellow of an eminent College in their common University; and he also filled one of the most important professorial chairs at Cambridge. The hon. Member for Brighton, on the other hand, might more than any other Member of the House be regarded as the representative of a resident party—a clever and an active party—in the University itself, and he spoke as it were in cap and gown. He accepted the statement of the hon. Member that the Dissenters wanted their share of the College endowments. That was an exemplification of a peculiar phase, a peculiar development of that often used, very grand, but not seldom oddly applied term, "Liberalism." For true Liberalism he was sure his side of the House had as much regard as any man who sat behind the gentle "whip" of the Treasury Bench. But there was something that was often called Liberalism, but which, when looked into, was found mainly to consist in wanting to get something that belonged to somebody else; and that was the species of Liberalism with which they had then to deal. An attempt was being made to obtain for the Dissenters that which had hitherto belonged to somebody else—namely, the endowments of the Colleges; and the question arose whether they had a fair claim to that property, or whether by so transferring it to them any advantage could be gained to the body politic. These endowments were founded for certain purposes in connection with the Church of England, and the Reformation which took place in the Church had not taken away the right by which they were still held. The other side had not scrupled to bring up again the old stale assertion that the Church of England had no claim to them, because the Colleges were founded by persons who wished to have masses said for their souls; but it was not less true that they were founded with a view to the maintenance of a certain corporation known as the Church of England before as well as after the Reformation, which as a Church had not unfrequently come to loggerheads with the Pope of Rome, and had in that opposition received the support of the Kings of England. A day came when an end was put to those masses; but that circumstance did not alter the identity of the Church of England. The man who made such a statement would, as Canning said of the man who expressed his admiration of dry champagne, say anything. The Reformation of the Church of England was a long and complicated operation, which continued from the time of Henry VIII. to that of Charles II. himself, and was consummated in that very Act of Uniformity now under discussion; but it preserved intact the old corporation of the Church with its hierarchy, its dioceses, its constitutions ecclesiastical, and its other constituent elements; and it no more disidentified the Church than the Crown was disidentified by the Revolution of 1688. The accidents of the Church were altered by it, but its essentials remained unchanged. Now there was not a single College at Oxford or Cambridge that was not founded in connection with the Church of England; and with a special view to the maintenance of the service of the Church of England, though some were founded by English Bishops in Roman Catholic days, and others after the rupture with Rome. New Colleges at Oxford were instituted by William of Wykeham before the Reformation for the English Church, although that Church was in connection with Rome. Emmanuel College, on the other hand, at Cambridge, was founded by Sir Walter Mildmay in Elizabeth's reign for the promotion of Puritanism, but it was Puritanism in the Church of England that the founder desired to foster. He would go further, and he maintained that if the candid friends of the Church of England should unfortunately now take her reformation in hand, and make such alterations in her doctrine, her discipline and her ministrations as would drive many sincere persons, himself perhaps among the number, out of her pale, nevertheless, if this were done with such legal prevision and precision as to enable her to maintain, as hitherto, her continuous corporate character in the eyes of the law, she would have a right to carry these Colleges and fellowships with her. It had been argued that these Colleges were lay corporations; and no doubt, in the strict legal sense of the word, they were so, and could not be called Ecclesiastical in the sense in which the Cathedral chapters were such, because a proportion of their members were and might be laymen, and because they had certain lay functions to fulfil; but if regard were had to the formal and official style of these Colleges it would be little better than a quibble to deny that they were religious foundations. Why, their formal designation was the "religious foundation of such and such a Colege," except in a case like Queen's, King's, and Trinity Colleges at Cambridge, where the founder was a sovereign, and then it ran as the "Royal and religious foundation." The right hon. Member for Kilmarnock had spoken of the absence of religious instruction in the Colleges; could he be unaware that the morning University sermon at Cambridge had been done away with at St. Mary's Church, in order to introduce into most of the Colleges, and certainly into Trinity and several of the most important Colleges, a sermon preached for the purpose of the religious instruction of the undergraduates? could he be unaware of the importance which questions on theological subjects possessed in the College examinations, which at Cambridge, at all events, formed so large an element of the general instruction? He asked what was expected to be gained by depriving these Colleges of their relationship to the Church of England? The Church of England, if she were more cunning than conscientious, and wanted in a political point of view to be omnipotent in the realm; if she would save her endowments and wanted to have no liberation societies picking at her heels—had only one thing to do, and she would be mistress of the situation. Let her abolish distinctive doctrine, do away with distinctive discipline, and open her door to every one, and, although her proud function as the keeper of what she believed to be Christ's faith was gone, her power in the State as an organization for political, social, or financial purposes would be paramount. If she renounced her birthright, she would receive not a mess of pottage, but all the wealth of the earth. He trusted, however, that she would never adopt such a course. But they were now asked to take a first step in that direction by giving their sanction to the present Bill. He believed that the measure would lead them in the direction of that which was the great god of some men's idolatry—of that which was still more difficult to understand than Liberalism—and that was "progress." True progress was a most desirable thing; but there was such a thing as spurious progress, and to it they were then asked to offer up those Colleges as a burnt offering, and to it they would hereafter be invited successively to sacrifice the distinctive religious tenets and practices of the Church, He believed that no little portion of moral greatness of this realm of England had its rise in the fact of the existence of that unique institution—unique in its combinations of moral and material elements —the Established Church of England, a Church which he thanked God was as tolerant as she was learned, a Church conformity with which was no longer a condition to attaining the highest positions in the State, a Church which did not prosecute, which opened the door to all who would enter her portals; but a Church, at the same time, which had her distinctive belief, her own credo, her own organization, and which possessed a great numerical majority in the State notwithstanding that fallacious Census of 1851, cooked up by the Liberation Society, but which it took care not to repeat, when it was invited to do so in 1861—a Church which had mustered to its side the majority of numbers, of intellect, and of wealth. These Colleges were but a small possession of the Church of England, considering the large population the Church could boast, her intellectual vigour, and the high list of her votaries who aspired to the highest honours in the State. But, could the endowments be better employed if they were taken away from the Church? If so, the Dissenters had proved their case; if not, his advice to the Dissenters (given without any feeling of rivalry or antagonism) would be to be content to let Churchmen do their own work, while to the Dissenters he said "go and do likewise." The hon. Member for Brighton said that £20,000,000 could not set up Colleges for the Dissenters; £20,000,000 were not required to found Nonconformists Colleges or halls at Oxford and Cambridge, or elsewhere. The Nonconformists possessed the amplest powers to found fellowships of their own, in houses of their own, as amply endowed, if they so pleased, as those of the elder Colleges. He hoped they would found them. But there were many branches of education in Universities which were not religious. For a long time the Universities had invited learned foreigners to take up a position for general teaching. He should like to see professorships for general teaching and readerships really open to all. At the present moment at Cambridge one of the most popular and eminent classical tutors, was a gentleman who from pure conscientiousness deserted the Church of England for Rome, and whose sincerity had thus earned him the respect and confidence of persons who most regretted and differed from that step. Other Nonconformists might be similarly employed in the University. Having made that statement in all sincerity, he pleaded for the maintenance of the integrity of the Colleges, and in the cause of religious truth, he asked the House to stand up for more sharply-cut lines in defining the character and objects of the Colleges than that to which the fashionable pseudo-Liberalism or "squash" of the day might have to recognize. Nothing would be gained by the infusion of the Nonconformists into the existing Colleges. By the infusion you would spoil the Nonconformists and dilute the Church also. Let every opportunity be given for forming Nonconformist Colleges, but let not those be spoilt which are already in existence, and let them allow the old religious institutions—so long existing and respected—of our great centres of learning to continue to go on in their own old way.

Mr. GOLDSMID said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge had maintained that all that Dissenters and those who did not agree with the Church of England could desire was given by the foundation of the University of London. Now, although he had pursued his studies at that University, and bore towards it the same affection which most men bore towards their *Alma Mater*, he was prepared to contend that there were many things which the University of London could not grant him, but which had he graduated at one of the older Universities he would have obtained. For instance, as the hon. Member for Brighton had said, there were great and beneficial associations connected with the older Universities, apart from all their social advantages. He would also urge upon the House another view which he thought went against the argument of the right hon. Gentleman. As far as he was aware the University of London had contributed very greatly to the establishment of a good feeling between persons of different religious opinions, and had also given rise to a feeling of common interest and mutual respect. These circumstances greatly enhanced the benefit which all derived from a University education. He believed that this was what the older Universities of Oxford and Cambridge desired to confer, and he contended that one good effect of the present Bill would be to bring about such a result. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge had said that the Nonconformists who pursued their studies at the older Universities could now obtain all they could legitimately desire in the way of degrees. Now he (Mr. Goldsmid) maintained that all those who had become attached to their Universities would like to have some share in their management. Not only the endowments but a portion of the governing power were at present withheld from the Nonconformists—and although it might be a small matter, still they desired to have their share. Some years past, Gentlemen sharing his own religious opinions were denied the privilege of participating in the debates of that House. They could now do so, and he did not think they had done any harm to the Christian character of the Assembly. By the same rule he thought that a beneficial result would follow from persons of different religious opinions taking part in the government of the older Universities. The right hon. Gentleman had also told the House that the original founders of the great majority of the fellowships intended them for the benefit of those who professed the religion of the Church of England, and that their intentions ought not to be frustrated. The right hon. Gentleman had, however, admitted either too much or too little. If the original intention of the founders had been solely attended to, none but Roman Catholics would have been admitted to the scholarships, for the great majority of the founders belonged to that Church. But of late Liberal views had extended their influence, and the Universities had given the benefit of education to all persons whatever were their religious opinions; consequently, having admitted Nonconformists to a share in the education, the Universities were bound to carry their principle to its legitimate conclusion, and also admit them to a share in the endowments and the government. He maintained that the principle of this Bill was one that ought to be affirmed by the House; and in conclusion he would add that he should not have trespassed upon the time of the House if it had not been asserted that the University of London could confer all the advantages which could be acquired at the older Universities. He must also say that he believed that the influence of the London University had been of service in inducing the older institutions to extend their usefulness, and open wider their gates.

Mr. SCHREIBER observed, that having been for ten years resident at the University of Cambridge he naturally took an interest in this subject of the debate—and this circumstance placed him in a position in which hon. Members trespassed with most confidence upon the indulgence of the House—namely, when their acquaintance with the subject under discussion was not altogether speculative. The Bill before the House proposed to remedy a grievance, but he denied the existence of a grievance. It had not befallen him in the course of his University career to have, as far as he was aware of, a Jew or a Nonconformist for a competitor. Had it been so, he was free to confess, that it would not have been without regret that he would have parted company with him upon the threshold of a fellowship or a Master of Arts degree. But it would have been with something of surprise that he would have heard from his friend that he had anything to complain of, and those who had a practical acquaintance with the rivalry of the University would understand what he meant by this observation. That friend would have entered on the competition with a full knowledge of the conditions connected with it; he would have received all the educational advantages of the University course, and, what was beyond all price, he would have imbibed the spirit and shared the associations of the place. That was his answer to his hon. Friend the Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett); although, perhaps, to have shared those associations and imbibed that spirit would not altogether satisfy those whose cause the hon. Gentleman pleaded. As a man of spirit, proud of the principles which he professed, he would have thought that the first impulse of a Nonconformist would have been to resent the officious interference of friends who were anxious, as hon. Gentlemen appeared to be in this matter, to make things pleasant for him. How was it in life, and how was it in that House? Was not every man making sacrifices which, regard being had to the great principle for which they were made, were not sacrifices at all? How would right hon. Gentlemen and noble Lords who had conducted a life-long opposition from the front Bench on that side of the House, regard a sort of Bill of Indemnity for their political principles, which would admit them to share the prizes of political life in consideration of the high ability which they had displayed? He believed they would have regarded it as something of an insult. Even if the Bill before the House would remove the evil complained of, which was only an imaginary evil, it would create most serious difficulties. The University fo Cambridge might be divided into Trinity College and the smaller Colleges. He would take the case of the latter first. How it might be with respect to classical studies he did not know, but there was nothing in Nonconformity incompatible with great mathematical excellence. Nothing would be easier for Nonconformists than by sending their able mathematicians to carry all the small Colleges in detail; and when they had done that, and had established a majority of Nonconformist fellowships, how would it fare with the established service of the Church of England and the master of the College as a member of the Church of England? The case of Trinity College might be taken, where the fellowships were held for seven years by individuals as laymen. Under the provisions of the Bill there might be persons engaged in the tuition of the College who were Roman Catholics, and although he was not one of those who would argue that such a thing would place the theory of gravitation, or the earth's motion round the sun, in danger, he would ask the House how would the heads of families throughout the country regard such a result? Would it tend to increase or to impair their confidence in the University? Would it not deter them from sending their sons to the University? And would not that be a great evil? But, if the Bill were to pass, would the matter stop at that point? There were hon. Members in that House whom no concession would satisfy. The admission of Nonconformist fellows would constitute the religious service of the chapels an intolerable grievance; and the House would have the honeyed eloquence of the hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Coleridge) employed in saying that it would materially serve the interests of the Church of England to separate both the Colleges and the University from that Church. No man who was not blind to the way in which these subjects were argued on the other side of the House could have the smallest doubt upon that question. The present position of the University was most logical and intelligible. It admitted the Nonconformist to all the educational advantages of the place, but it denied him a voice in the governing body, and that was a position which ought to be maintained and defended at all hazards and all costs. No hon. Member on either side of the House was more indebted than he was to his University and to his College, and he could not reconcile his sense of the deep obligations he was under to them with giving a silent vote on this question.

MR. NEATE said, that much stress had been laid upon the objection that the Colleges were so far private property that the State was not at liberty, without departing from the principles upon which all property rested, to modify those institutions in the way proposed by the Bill now before the House. Now, he was not surprised to hear such a preposterous notion coming from the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent. That hon. Gentleman had intimated that the Church of England was a great corporation holding its property by a title independent of the State, and that it was at the same time at liberty at any time to renounce its connection with the State, and yet to retain its property. He confessed that he was not surprised to hear such a notion from the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent, but he was surprised to hear his right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge so far forgetting those legal studies in which they once took common part as to lose sight of the great principle that whatever was given in the way of charitable endowments was given to the State upon the condition of public utility. He did not suppose that there was any lawyer in the House who would venture to contradict this principle. The real state of the case was that the State in the first instance had to judge of the utility, and if the endowments were accepted, the Attorney General on behalf of the State was called in to settle the mode in which it should be administered. If, in the course of time, abuses crept in, the action of the State would be required, and the intervention of the Attorney General. He did not mean to say that it was desirable or right that the State should too lightly exercise the right of diverting property from that application of it on condition of which it was accepted. But if the State at any time found that the restriction of an endowment in any particular way acted in opposition to some great principles which the State had subsequently adopted, it was at liberty to modify that endowment so as to suit great and paramount interests. This course was not only adopted by the State, but it was a principle of law. He did not lay any stress upon the fact that the property was chiefly either intrusted to the State, or was the endowment of individuals when masses were said throughout the country. Because in either case the State had precisely the same right to the property. He would now come to the question under the consideration of the House. The House would see that after the removal of the declaration the Church of England would still be in possession of far stronger protection. With respect to the University of Cambridge, the extent to which the adoption of the Bill would affect that University had not been clearly stated. It was expressly required that the heads of Colleges should make regulations in the case of each College for the maintenance of the doctrines of the Established Church, and there were other safeguards in the administration of the Colleges which would prevent any violation of the intentions of the founders through the instrumentality of this measure. The protection which the law gave to the Church of England in those Colleges was very slight, and its removal could not entail any serious consequences upon it. The law in question was enacted in the time of Charles II. The difference between that time and the present forbade the presumption that the same law would be applicable now; and the onus lay upon the supporters of the present system to show that the law of Charles II. was now required. If the Colleges were of recent foundation, and provision had been made by the founders for the maintenance of worship according to the usages of the Church of England, would the House pass a law requiring that all those who were to be educated in those Colleges should conform to the Established Church? Yet he must insist upon the fact that the retention of the present system would be tantamount to re-enacting a law which they would not think of passing if the case were entirely new. The Church of England did not continue to exist because of its laws and regulations; it had a firmer foundation; it stood because its members comprised the greater portion of the intellect and learning and goodness of the land, and when it ceased to do so "all the King's money and all the King's men would not be able to set it on its feet again." Therefore, when he asked them to support the further progress of the Bill he was only asserting the same principles as those which had led to and sustained the Reformation—the principles of freedom of thought and honesty of purpose, and he was doing no more than advocating a measure of justice—the granting of which would redound to the advantage of the Church of England itself.

Mr. SELWYN observed, that the hon. Gentleman who last spoke had ventured to assert, in reference to one of his propositions, that no lawyer would dissent from his views; he, however, would be rash enough to do so. The hon. Gentleman had asserted that whenever the times and circumstances of the case had changed, and the Attorney General had been called in, the courts had considered themselves at liberty to alter the laws and constitution of charitable or educational foundations; but he had entirely overlooked the principle upon which the courts so acted, and upon which the Attorney General was called in with respect to the questions raised in connection with those foundations. The will of the founder, if clearly expressed, was the one distinct rule from which the courts would never depart. This fact would be admitted by the hon. Gentleman if he referred, even for one moment, to the elementary principles of those legal studies which he stated that he had once pursued. If the instrument of the foundation did not clearly express itself on the matter in dispute, the circumstances under which the foundation was made might be taken into account; and these were often sufficient to lead to a correct estimate of the will of the founder with reference to the altered circumstances of the times. This was not a doctrine insisted upon for the exclusive benefit of the Church of England. In proof of that fact he need only refer to the familiar case of Lady Hewley's charity, where the same principle and doctrine were insisted upon by the Nonconformists, and where in accordance with such principle a Trustee, otherwise unobjectionable, was ejected from the governing body of that charitable institution solely on the ground that he was a member of the Church of England. He hoped he might be allowed very briefly to correct one or two assertions made, no doubt unintentionally, by some hon. Gentlemen, especially by the right hon. Gentleman who introduced this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman rested his case upon two supposed grievances: first, the grievance which the present law inflicted upon certain individuals; and secondly, the supposed injury done to the Colleges by the exclusion of some of the ablest men in the Universities from the office of teachers. Now, in respect to the first allegation, the right hon. Gentleman as well as the hon. Member for Brighton were compelled to admit that the existing law admitted Nonconformists to all the educational advantages of the University, and permitted them also to acquire any of the scholarships. They had thus every facility for pursuing their studies, and were admitted to all the social and educational advantages and honours conferred by the University; but they were excluded from the governing body. The hon. Member for Brighton, however, went much further and announced that he and those who were of his opinion claimed the endowments of the fellowships. That, indeed, was the case which the House had to decide. It was contended that these fellowships were prizes, and it was unjust to deprive the Nonconformists of those prizes. But it must not be forgotten that all such prizes were accompanied by duties, and that those who held them had obligations to discharge; such as conducting the education, superintending the discipline, and performing the religious services in the chapels and the other various duties of fellows of Colleges, in which it was admitted that distinctive religious teaching did and ought to form a material part of the system of education. That circumstance had been entirely overlooked by the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, and who had treated these fellowships as mere prizes. He was afraid of venturing an opinion of his own, as it has been said that the University Members represented only the country clergy. He might, however, be allowed to say that in making these statements he believed he represented the feelings of a very large majority of the legal and medical professions, as well as of the country gentlemen who were members of the University, and who wished to transmit it to their children with the same advantages which they had themselves enjoyed.

He would not, however, give his own opinion, but that of one of the leading lights of the Liberal party who had stated—

> "That he was a decided advocate for the claims of the Dissenters; but that when the power of obtaining degrees was given to them they had received all they had a right to ask. They had no right to complain of being excluded from fellowships. These were founded for members of the Established Church, and those who were not members of the Established Church had no more right to claim to participate in the pecuniary advantages which belonged to that Church than any member of the Church of England had a right to share in the endowments founded at Highbury, Maynooth, or Stoneyhurst, or any other dissenting College. The individuals who bestowed the funds from which fellowships were derived had a right to prescribe any restriction they chose upon the disposal of them, and the Dissenters had no more ground to complain of their exclusion from these emoluments than they had to admission into any private charity."—[3 *Hansard*, xxv. 866.]

[*Cries of* "Name, name!"] He had quoted the opinion of Lord Brougham. Then, with reference to the second point, the alleged injury to the College, it was asserted that the present law prevented the appointment of a Dissenter as a teacher in the College, although he might be eminently fitted for the post in all other respects. That was altogether a mistake; it was true the Nonconformists were excluded from the governing body, but they were not excluded from the teaching power, and it was perfectly competent on the part of those with whom the appointment lay to make any such gentleman a lecturer, in order that he might give the College the benefit of his experience and learning. But there was another place open to them, a lucrative place of very great importance. Anyone who knew anything of Cambridge University knew that if they wanted to find the Senior Wrangler they would not go to any of the lecture rooms in the Colleges, but to the rooms of some private tutor, such as Mr. Hopkins, or the gentleman now holding his place. It was quite open to Dissenters to constitute themselves teachers such as Mr. Hopkins was. No better proof of the absence of injury to the Colleges could be given than that offered by his right hon. Friend the introducer of the Bill, when he observed that the numerous bodies who were supposed to be sufferers had abstained from complaining. They had evidently been acting on the faith of the settlement of 1856; and having reformed themselves as occasion required, rested perfectly satisfied with their condition. On what grounds, then, could the House be asked to interfere on their behalf? Then the right hon. Gentleman said his Bill only extended to fellowships, and did not affect the heads of the Colleges; but could the House believe the matter would stop there? It was impossible; if such an extension were admitted at all, it would speedily reach the heads of Colleges. Pursuing the consideration of the opinion expressed by Lord Brougham, he would ask any hon. Gentleman who had seen the trust deeds of Nonconformists' endowments, whether their terms were not most stringent with respect to the religious opinions of the governing body, and whether they had not noted the caution of the founders that none but the principles of their creed should be taught by means of their endowments. The Courts of Law, too, had continually maintained the justice of those trusts. It was evident that unity of religious feeling must be preserved in the governing body, and he did not see how that could be insured if this Bill were allowed to pass, and it must be remembered that many of the Colleges were very small bodies, and that to them it would be most disastrous to introduce the element of religious differences. It had been truly said by his right hon. Friend (Mr. Bouverie) that the appointment of tutors was vested in the heads of Colleges, and he proposed that the law should still be left so in order to insure the appointment of a proper religious teacher; but if the most competent among those eligible for the tutorship did not conform to the Church of England, would the head of the College venture to pass him over? It was impossible to assume that. Besides this, in many of the Colleges there were officers who were appointed by seniority, as, for instance, the Dean, who was the officer to whom the whole of the religious discipline was intrusted, and who was appointed solely on account of seniority, and a Nonconformist might therefore be placed in that position. So that if this Bill passed into law, a Roman Catholic, or Unitarian, or a member of any other denomination, might by seniority fill the office of Dean in a College established for distinctive religious teaching in connection with the Church of England. Was it, he would ask, in the slightest degree probable that the parents of nineteen-twentieths of the young men who were sent to the Universities would continue to send their sons there if a share in their government was given to Dissenters as the Bill proposed?

But, beyond that, would not the effect of such a proposition be calculated to be prejudicial to the interests of Dissenters themselves? They did not like to have their sons sent to separate halls, because they objected to being ticketed. They would not purchase even exemption from church rates on that condition. What they desired was to be admitted to all the social as well as the educational advantages which Oxford and Cambridge conferred; to mix and to compete on terms of equality with members of the Church; but in attaining their object by being admitted to the governing body they would alarm the religious feeling of the country, and be doing themselves the greatest harm, inasmuch as members of the Established Church would be driven perhaps to seek some other institution for the education of those belonging to it, hedged round by regulations so stringent that it would be impossible for Parliament to divert it from its original purpose. The Dissenters had been fairly and liberally treated by Churchmen, and it was not too much to ask them to act fairly towards the Church of England in return. But then it was said that the Universities were lay corporations, and he was surprised to hear that argument endorsed the other day by one so well versed in the law as his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Exeter. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London had read a familiar passage from *Blackstone's Commentaries* which defined a lay corporation to be a corporation of which some of the members were laymen, and it was a mere truism to say that the Universities came within that definition. But that fact did not in the least advance the argument on the other side. There were many other bodies, such, for instance, as the Ecclesiastical Commission, and the lay clerks in the Cathedrals, of which many or all of the members were lay, but which were nevertheless created solely for purposes affecting the Church of England. And it might as well be said that because lay clerks were lay men, the money given to them for the purposes of service in a Cathedral ought to be taken away and devoted to other purposes, as that the endowments of our Universities and Colleges might be placed at the disposal of Dissenters as members of the governing body to direct them, it might be, into other channels than the present. He would only add, in conclusion, that he hoped he had succeeded in showing the House that the Dissenters had no real grievance to complain of in this matter, and that it ought not to assent to any proposal which might lead to the diversion of the endowments of the Colleges at our Universities from the objects to which they were, in accordance with the will of the founders, legitimately appropriated. And he would appeal to his right hon. Friend, and entreat him by the love for his University and his College which he had expressed, to withdraw his Bill, and to give to them both that period of repose which they so much desired.

MR. THOMAS CHAMBERS was surprised to hear from the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down an argument which he considered to be fatal to the position which the hon. and learned Gentleman wished to maintain—namely, that Dissenters having been admitted to the office of teacher at the Universities ought to be satisfied with that concession. It seemed to be forgotten by those who urged that argument that Oxford and Cambridge were places of education; that those who acted there as teachers filled positions at once the most responsible and important; and that the fair inference to be drawn from the fact that Dissenters were allowed to occupy such positions was that no good ground any longer existed for refusing to them the further slight concession which the Bill proposed to grant. A fallacy, he might add, pervaded the great majority of the speeches in which such a concession was opposed. It was assumed that the various Colleges at the Universities were founded for the purpose of maintaining the Established Church in this country; and, no doubt, the recital of the Act of Charles II. plainly showed that at the time when it was passed the Established Church had determined, as it were, to take possession of the whole mind of the nation in the matter of education. The provisions embodied in five-sixths of that recital had, however, been since repealed, because a different state of things had arisen and Parliament had come to the conclusion that all attempts to take possession of the mind of the country in that way, on the part of one body, however respectable, were prejudicial to the religious as well as to the literary and intellectual welfare of the nation. That being so, his right hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock merely asked the House to repeal the last portion of the Act of Charles II., the result of the operation of which Act had been to reduce the Church and the country at the expiration of 100 years after it had passed into law to a position, both as respects religion and learning, lower than that which it had occupied for centuries. It was well, too, to bear in mind that in proportion as the provisions of that Act had been done away with, in proportion as the education of the people had been taken from the clergy, had there been an increase in the activity, the energy, and the earnestness which the Church of England had exhibited, and in the influence it held in the affections of the people, until it at length occupied a higher and nobler position, and had become a greater agent of good than was ever the case when all other religious bodies were discouraged and persecuted, and the Church was backed up by the whole authority of the State. But it was said that the grievance of which the Dissenters in the present instance complained was, after all, a very small one, inasmuch as it amounted to little more than the exclusion of one or two Senior Wranglers, who belonged to that body, from being fellows of Colleges. He, however, put the question at issue on the broad principle that our Universities were institutions for the promotion of learning, and that a man having gone with credit through the curriculum which they prescribed was entitled to reap the rewards which they held out to successful merit. Besides, in proportion as men who were calculated to do credit to the Universities were debarred from taking advantage of the education which they offered, in the same proportion was their influence and the benefits which such an education was calculated to confer diminished. What, then, were the difficulties in the way of acceding to the Bill before the House? It was said that the result of its passing into a law would be to put an end to religious education in the Universities, and the noble Lord the Member for Stamford facetiously suggested the other day the appointment of a Committee to determine what was meant by religious instruction without any doctrinal peculiarities. But he, for one, must admit that he did not estimate the religious discipline and teaching of the Universities at so high a rate as the noble Lord the Member for Stamford and others who supported his views. He had been at the University of Cambridge himself, and, with the exception of critical lectures on one of the Greek Gospels, he knew nothing of any particular religious instruction which was communicated. In fact, so little of that kind of teaching was there, that several Colleges had been built to supplement the University teaching of theology. It had been urged that indifferentism would be the consequence of introducing into the governing bodies persons not members of the Established Church, but he had no fear of such a result, as he believed that the bringing of persons belonging to different religious persuasions into contact with one another at the Universities would rather tend to create an interest in religious questions. He placed, he might add, no faith in the prediction that painful collisions of opinion would be a result of the operation of this Bill. For he did not forget that between 1830 and 1836, when there were no Dissenters at Oxford, and when the governing body was supposed to consist only of conscientious and steadfast members of the Church of England, a schism had arisen greater than any which had been known in that Church for 100 years before. There was, he contended, the widest possible distinction between being indifferent to the truths of the religion which we professed, and being uncharitable and unjust to those who differed from us in opinion; and zealous Churchmen ought, he thought, rather to rejoice than the contrary to see young men belonging to the Dissenting bodies brought within the hallowing influences which our Universities, with all their old associations, exercised. He believed that nothing but good could come from this Bill. Those who opposed it were standing on ground which was becoming narrower every day, because they did so on the assumption that the Established Church and the nation were one and the same thing, which was daily becoming more and more wide of the truth.

Sir WILLIAM HEATHCOTE said, that they had heard two remarkable speeches in this debate which he thought must have left no doubt in the minds of hon. Members as to what was meant to be the effect of this Bill. Nothing of that effect was to be discovered in the cautious speech of the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock, or in the speech of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for the city of Oxford. But the hon. Member for Brighton had told them distinctly that what he had in view in supporting the Bill was that Dissenters should share in the endowments of the Colleges, carrying with them not merely pecuniary advantages, but the high duty of governing the University and leading the minds of a great part of England through the connection existing between the Church and the University of Cambridge. The hon. and learned Gentleman who had just addressed the House, had left no doubt as to his views on the subject. The hon. Gentleman considered the claims of the Established Church to predominate in the education of the country to be entirely unfounded. That was just an illustration of the great difficulty which every one must feel in a debate on those subjects—he presumed to call them unhappy subjects—which occupied so much of the time of that House. The difficulty was that there was no common ground on which they could conduct their argument. On other subjects, however much they might differ, some common ground of debate was found, and no one was at a loss to mistake the object aimed at. Thus on the Reform discussion they proceeded on the common ground of love of country. One party said they wished to improve its institutions, while those on the other side contended that what was proposed would damage them. Within these narrow limits the controversy was confined, but here it was of little avail, except for their own satisfaction, that those who were devoted to the Established Church should demonstrate that certain measures would damage the University or the Established Church itself, when they very well knew that that was the very object sought to be attained by those who supported those measures. This was not disguised by many. There were indeed some few who advocated such measures, and yet went on different grounds—Gentlemen who shared in the poetic visions of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Exeter, and thought all kinds of advantages would result to the Established Church from these measures. He would venture to tell his hon. and learned Friend that if he made out his case he would lose a great many of his supporters, and that few of them would go into the lobby with him. For these reasons he was not disposed to go over the ground again, especially as his right hon. Friend on his left had dealt so ably with the question, and had shown how the Bill would be injurious to the connection which existed between the University and the Church. But there was another point alluded to as to which he wished to say a few words. They had heard a great deal in a recent debate of the danger of fragmentary legislation—how in dealing with a part only the difficulty was increased of dealing with the rest. The present measure was open to that objection. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilmarnock said that he was not going to impose any law on the University of Cambridge, but was going to give her an opportunity to make laws for herself. The right hon. Gentleman was going to establish in every College in Cambridge a standing subject of debate, not tending to peace, or to assure parents that they would find, in a year hence, any College to which to send their sons. The right hon. Gentleman said that he desired to open the University with all its advantages to Nonconformists without distinction, and had used, as an argument against the Church claiming any special right in the property of the Colleges, the fact of a great part of it having come from Roman Catholics before the Reformation. This argument, however, would not serve the present Bill, or rather it would be fatal to it. The argument had indeed been answered again and again. It had again and again been demonstrated that for such purposes as the present the Reformed Church of England was the real representative of the Church of England established before the Reformation — and he thought rightly—that the Universities had inherited part of that property, and that part of it had come into the possession of the Church and the University at the time of the Reformation. But be that as it may, it is clear that if any religious body was entitled to use that argument against the Church of England it was the Roman Catholic Communion; whereas the Roman Catholics would be excluded from the University by the Bill of his right hon. Friend, though every other Dissenter from the Church of England might come in. In his spirit of universal toleration his right hon. Friend still left Roman Catholics subject to the Act of George III., and to the Amendment Act of the present reign, which required them to abjure the supremacy of the Pope, and thus they were prevented obtaining any of the advantages enjoyed by others. If the Legislature attempted to deal with that difficulty they would land themselves in doctrinal discussions on the subjects to which the tests had been applied. In fact, what was said amounted to this —"We do not exclude on account of religion—we admit those we favour, and we keep out those we do not like." A test based on the principles of the Established Church and because it was established, was one which the Legislature could adhere to without difficulty, and without entering on the regions of polemics, because the Established Church was an established fact, recognized by law; but the moment it was sought to prescribe any other test, questions would spring up which could not well be discussed on the floor of that House, and the attempt to introduce them would turn the House into an assembly of Divines. He thought that the Bill ought not to pass this year, and that it ought either to be re-considered or put in a different shape. He must say he was surprised that the right hon. Member for Kilmarnock had spoken so slightingly of the amount of religious education given in the Colleges. His own recollections were at variance with the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. A great portion of the lectures in his day were devoted to the study of Scripture and to the distinctive doctrines of theology. There was another point which he thought betrayed some weakness in the argument of the right hon. Gentleman. His right hon. Friend said that these tests were effectual against conscientious men, but that they did not exclude men who had no conscience in that matter. But did his right hon. Friend mean to say that those men, who, from the very statement of the case, must be unworthy of being trusted in any relation of life, were really common in his acquaintance? As his right hon. Friend made that assertion, he, of course, concluded that instances had come within his observation of men making those declarations, who did not believe in them; but in this case also he must say that his own experience did not agree with that of his right hon. Friend. He repeated that in his opinion the Bill was a partial and an ill-considered measure, and that it would lead to difficulties instead of solving them. In conclusion, he would therefore express the hope that his right hon. Friend would either withdraw his Bill for the purpose of re-considering it, or, what would be better still, that he would withdraw it with the intention of not bringing it forward again.

Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE, in reply, said, he had no doubt that before a very long time the question of the oaths taken by Roman Catholics in connection with the holding of offices by persons of the Roman Catholic religion would occupy the attention of Parliament, and that subject was a much wider one than the question with which the present Bill proposed to deal. But he hoped his Roman Catholic friends would not for a moment suppose that he intended to exclude them from the advantages of the Bill. They would be enabled to avail themselves of those advantages; because, as the House was aware, there was an Act passed every year—retrospective as far as the period of the Session which elapsed before the passing of the Act, and prospective up to the commencement of the next Session—to relieve from the penalties imposed by the old Acts of Parliament those who did not take the oath of abjuration. The right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge said that the Bill would disturb the arrangements come to four years ago. The right hon. Gentleman and his friends now took credit for that settlement, though they had resisted at the time the basis on which it was founded. The Colleges were either public or private bodies. If they were public, and Parliament had a right to interfere with them, then no objection could lie against his proposal. If, on the other hand, they were private establishments, Parliament ought not to have interfered with them by the Act of Uniformity, and he was justified in seeking to abolish that interference. His right hon. Friend said that the University had petitioned against the Bill. He should like to know whether the Colleges had petitioned against it. He was aware that even if the Bill were passed a great number of the Colleges would not for the present avail themselves of its provisions; but he also believed that Trinity College, the greatest College, in the University of Cambridge would take that opportunity of admitting Dissenters among its fellows, and he felt persuaded that other Colleges would gradually follow its example. Even though the House should refuse the concession demanded on this occasion, those who urged it would not cease until it should be conceded, and the whole history of the movement for opening the Universities to Dissenters showed that it would not be much longer postponed. He would add that he should not feel at all surprised if his right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge and his party were to return to office to find them, as Ministers of the Crown, proposing those very measures of justice and toleration which they were at present resisting. He would go to a division; and he hoped the majority of the House would show by their votes that they were favourable to the Bill.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House *divided:*—Ayes 208; Noes 186: Majority 22.

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; to be read the third time upon *Wednesday* 6th June.

TURNPIKE ROADS BILL—[Bill 39.]

(*Mr. Whalley, Mr. Ayrton.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. WHALLEY, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said, that the turnpike system of England and Wales involved an expenditure of about £1,000,000 a year, and as far as he could form an estimate, not having been able to obtain the Returns which he had moved for, the debts amounted to some three or four millions. Therefore, so far as the turnpike system was maintained for the purpose of paying debts incurred, the only question which the House would have to consider was in what way they were to meet a charge of about £150,000 a year in payment of an existing debt, which being disposed of, he ventured to say there would be no pretence whatever for keeping up a single turnpike road in England and Wales. In the turnpike Acts passed from time to time, the object in all cases being either to make a new road or improve an old one, the toll authorized to be levied had been applied not only to the purpose of the payment of the debt, but likewise to the repair of the roads. That, from the first, was a great stretch of power for Parliament to grant, for it was a transfer, by express legislation, of the common law liability of keeping the road in repair from the land to the public generally. Now, the term during which tolls could be levied for making a new or improving an old road had been always limited, but there was scarcely a single case in which the condition with respect to time had been complied with. As long ago as 1836 a Committee of that House had declared almost unanimously that this tax was the most vexatious and most injurious to every interest of the community that could possibly be levied, and that opinion had been confirmed by the Report of another Committee in 1864. Notwithstanding that, there had been a continual violation of the contract between the managers of the turnpike trusts and the public, and the Government, in spite of repeated appeals, had allowed that state of things to be perpetuated by Turnpike Trusts Continuance Acts, which were renewed from year to year. Under these circumstances, wherever the landowners and occupiers in any particular district took the sensible and practical view of the case that it was their interest to pay what might be necessary, whether for debts or repairs, the object of this Bill was to offer facilities for doing so. The Bill was similar to that which he introduced last Session. It was permissive, and its object was simply to get rid of turnpike trusts and tolls by empowering landowners and ratepayers who took the view he did of their interests to rate themselves for the maintenance of the roads belonging to such trusts and hitherto paid out of such tolls. The Bill was to operate upon the decision of a majority, say of two-thirds. There was, however, one compulsory provision. Some turnpike gates were kept up, not under original Acts, but under the continuance Bill passed at the end of every Session, usually at such an hour as to preclude the possibility of discussion. He proposed that in these cases the gates should remain so long as the debt was unpaid, that the tolls should be applied exclusively to the payment of the debts, and that the Home Office should undertake the responsibility of inquiring into the circumstances of these trusts, and that it should have the power, by its own order, to keep alive original Acts so long as any debts remained due by the trusts. The evidence before the Committees showed that 25 per cent at the very least of the tolls was absorbed in keeping up the gates, and by the jobbery that were going on between the trustees and the lessees, and the lawyers, and that it was clearly the interest of the landowners and the tenants that the repairs should be paid for out of rates. It ought, therefore, to be a matter of honour with Parliament not to sanction the continuance of a monstrous injustice any longer than was absolutely necessary. It was unjust that tolls should be levied except to pay off debt, and that view was concurred in by the late Sir George Lewis.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Whalley.*)

Sir WILLIAM JOLLIFFE solicited an opinion from the Government as to the desirability of passing the Bill, when so much had been done to remedy the evils it was designed to meet. This Bill, so far from being a permissive Bill, would be a coercive Bill, compelling a certain course to be adopted with regard to turnpike trusts. Some years ago, when he took an active interest in the matter, the position of turnpike trusts was as different from what it was now as light from darkness, and gradual improvement had taken place. The aggregate debt which was once £8,000,000, had dwindled down to half that sum. The late Sir George Cornewall Lewis attempted to meet all cases by a general measure; but it was found that it was possible to proceed only by a careful consideration of each case by a Committee of the House. Every case rested on different grounds, to which it was impossible to apply a general rule. He trusted that the Home Office would continue to bring as many cases as it could under the consideration of Parliament, although the number that could be dealt with must be necessarily limited by the great pressure of private business. It was, however, as he had already stated, impossible to deal with all cases at once.

Lord HENLEY, who had acted on the two Committees that had sat upon the subject, thought that the House and the public were under some obligation to the hon. Member for Peterborough for the care he had taken in preparing the Bill, some parts of which, however, were almost impracticable. The subject was one that Parliament ought to take into serious consideration, and the Government had been very slow in dealing with it. The system of turnpike trusts was most expensive, and cost more than it ought to do, and it was therefore a wise policy to annihilate the trusts; but they were being abolished so slowly that their diminution was scarcely perceptible. In 1854 there were 1,112; in 1860, 1,095; and in 1864, 1,085. There were a number that were actually out of debt, and those might be dealt with much more easily than others, because the expense of maintaining the roads would be thrown upon the rates of the parish or district, although there would be injustice in throwing the interest or the principal of the debt upon the rates. But the Government had scarcely even dealt with the trusts that were out of debt. In 1860 there were 153 that were free of debt; and in 1865 there were 160; but in the latter year only eleven were annihilated. The system would never come to an end if the trusts were abolished only at the rate of eleven a year. No doubt the debt was much less now than it had been. He thought, however, the best course for the hon. Member to pursue would be to leave the matter for the present in the hands of the Government. But this diminution was largely owing to the fact that many insolvent trust had been dealt with, the debts having been in some instances cancelled, the deficit in 1841 having been £7,500,000 and in 1864, £4,350,000; whereas, at the present time, considering the depreciation of the property, it might be taken in round numbers as low as £3,000,000, the expense of collection being equal to the interest on that sum.

Colonel DOUGLAS PENNANT said, that the cost of the collection of tolls at the turnpike gates was equal to the interest of the debt, there being 1,100 trusts, having an average of four gates, each costing at least £25 a year. The best course would be to withdraw the Bill with a view to the further consideration of the subject by those best acquainted with it, and the introduction of a Bill to effect a considerable improvement of the present system.

Sir MICHAEL BEACH said, he thought the thanks of the House were due to the hon. Member for Peterborough, not for his Bill, which would rather lead to the inference that he was in favour of, than opposed to the present system, but for drawing the attention of the House to this subject. The principle of levying this amount by rate instead of toll, and over a larger area, was, he believed, gaining ground. Farmers were anxious that some change should take place, and the subject was to be taken into consideration at the next quarter sessions of Gloucester. They should take care that nothing unfair was done, by throwing on small parishes the cost of maintaining roads which were almost exclusively used for the purposes of manufacturers and miners who contributed nothing to them, otherwise great injustice would be done to parishes bordering large towns, and to agricultural interests. He also contended that legislation on this subject should not be retrospective in its operation, but if it was possible to extend the area of turnpike roads beyond the area of parishes, it would be desirable. That course was recommended by the Committee of 1864, and he hoped that the Government would introduce a Bill to accomplish this object, and which would deal finally with this subject.

MR. CLIVE also hoped that the Secretary of State would be induced another year to consider whether something could not be done, and stated that Sir George Cornewall Lewis had a Bill in the course of preparation when he left the Home Office. This Bill did not propose to throw additional burdens on the rates. He did not think there was any difficulty in this matter which the Government might not overcome.

MR. BARING could not at all agree in the opinion which had been expressed, that the Government had been remiss in this matter. If the House would refer to the Report alluded to by the hon. Member for Peterborough, they would see that the Government had acted on the practical recommendations of the Committee, and had acted on them with vigour. It was assumed that the Committee had recommended some system by which tolls would be abolished, and that some area of rating should be adopted. That was far from being the case. There were three several proposals made to the Committee. The first was that if turnpike trusts were abolished, the expenses should be thrown on the highway districts. That proposal was negatived by the Committee. The next proposal was, that the expenses should be thrown on the parishes. That, again, was negatived by the Committee. The last proposal was, that the expenses should be thrown on the county rate, and the Committee likewise negatived that proposal. Now, he would ask the hon. Baronet what course he would recommend. The hon. Baronet had himself pointed out how unjust it would be to throw the expenses of the maintenance of roads forming long lines of communication between large towns on the parishes in which the roads were situated. That was the main difficulty in this matter. If the highway districts were to be taken as the area of taxation, it would be necessary first to make the adoption of the Highway Act compulsory, and it might be advisable to consider if in all cases proper districts had been formed. He objected to this Bill because it dealt with all trusts together, and did not consider the circumstances of each, so that if it were to pass, it would inflict great injury upon ratepayers in many instances. Some progress had been made in the abolition of the trusts. In 1863, 92 miles of turnpike road had been thrown open; in 1864, 63 miles; and in 1865, 219 miles, including those important trusts on the south of the Thames; and in this year, 476 miles would be thrown open, and a circular had been sent to the clerks of various trusts, in order that trusts free from debt might be abolished, where there was no hardship in the case, and the expense of the roads thrown on the highway rate. He thought he had shown sufficient reasons to the hon. Member for Peterborough to withdraw the Bill, and to leave the question to be dealt with as a whole.

MR. WHALLEY said, he could not accede to the suggestion. [*Cries of* "Time."]

MR. AYRTON had observed that he did not see the absolute necessity of stopping the discussion at that moment, when—

It being a Quarter to Six of the clock—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

BRIDGWATER ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Henry Westropp, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Bridgwater.

That Alexander William Kinglake, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Horsham.

That the last Election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of Henry Westropp, esquire, is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

That Henry Westropp, esquire, was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery and treating at the last Election.

That it was proved to the Committee that John Cooze and John Staples were bribed by the payment of £10 each.

That Philip Gilbert and Frederick Jones received offers of money in order to induce them to vote for the said Henry Westropp; but that it was not proved that such bribery and treating were committed with the knowledge and consent of the said Henry Westropp.

That there is reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last Election for the Borough of Bridgwater.

Report to lie upon the table.

VETERINARY SURGEONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. HOLLAND, Bill to prevent any person who has not obtained the diploma of the Royal Veterinary College from assuming the title of Veterinary Surgeon, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. HOLLAND and Mr. NEWDEGATE.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 121.]

EXECUTION OF DEEDS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. GOLDNEY, Bill to simplify and lessen the expense of the Execution of Deeds by Married Women, and to amend the Law as regards the effect of Deeds executed under Powers of Attorney, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. GOLDNEY and Mr. POWELL.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 122.]

House adjourned at three minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, April 26, 1866.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Prosecution Expenses* (88).
Second Reading—Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland) (77).
Committee—Sale of Land by Auction (93).
Report—Public Offices (Site)* (67).

SALE OF LAND BY AUCTION BILL.

(No. 93.)

(*The Lord St. Leonards.*)

COMMITTEE ON RE-COMMITMENT.

House in Committee (according to Order) on *Re-commitment.*

LORD ST. LEONARDS said, the Bill had been called a class measure, but it applied as well to the humblest cottage as to the greatest mansion or the most magnificent castle. The object of the Bill was to disturb as little as possible the present mode of proceeding in sales by auction, and at the same time to put an end to a state of things which was by no means creditable either to the law of England or to the practice of the Courts of Equity. In consequence of what passed in Committee upon the Bill, he thought it his duty to take the opinion of experienced solicitors in London and the country, and also of some eminent auctioneers, and then for the first time he discovered that it was the invariable custom of auctioneers to bid at auctions, perhaps a dozen times, without announcing their intention to do so. Now, he felt bound to tell these gentlemen that every one of the sales which had been carried on upon that system was absolutely illegal, and could not stand for one moment. The auctioneer could not bid unless there were some restrictions upon him. He did not mean to say a single word against the character of any of the gentlemen who conducted those sales, but, nevertheless, the system was open to the most serious objection. Now, if this Bill passed, the effect of it would be that if a man proposed to sell without reserve, he must say so; and if he desired to sell with reserve, he would be at liberty to do so, provided he stated clearly that such was to be the case; and if the price was not reached which the owner wished the property to go at, the auctioneer must declare the estate unsold. If the auctioneer should reserve to himself the right to bid either once or as often as he liked, he must state distinctly that he did so, and then there could be no objection to it. In fact, such a condition might be absolutely necessary, in order to protect the seller and to prevent estates being snapped up much below their value.

LORD ROMILLY said, that the principal object which he had in view in the suggestions which he had made to the noble and learned Lord was that the conditions of sale should be set forth in print beyond the possibility of mistake—namely, whether the property was to be sold without reserve or subject to a reserved price, and whether the seller or his agent reserved to themselves the right to bid. He must express his regret that the Bill, instead of being confined to land, did not extend to all cases of sales by auction. It might have been difficult to make it so comprehensive; but at the same time many abuses, such as he had previously pointed out to the House, might have been dealt with. He approved the Bill so far as it related to sales of land by auction.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR concurred with his noble and learned Friend that the Bill would effect an amendment in the law. It would be a salutary reform, although it did not extend as far as he could have wished. With respect to the observations of his noble and learned Friend (Lord Romilly), he quite agreed with him that great evils existed in the sale of ordinary chattels. In too many instances such auctions were regular swindles; but they did not stand in the same category as auctions of land did. There were, as they all knew, fictitious sales in the City to which unwary people were entrapped. It was desirable that more effectual means should exist than were now available to put down this species of swindling.

Amendments made: The Report thereof to be received on *Monday* next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 89.)

POOR PERSONS' BURIAL (IRELAND) BILL—(No. 77.)—SECOND READING.

(*The Earl of Belmore.*)

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of BELMORE said, that this was a Bill which had come up from the House of Commons, the object of which was to enable Boards of Guardians in Ireland to provide, out of the poor rates, for the cost of coffins for persons who might have been in destitute circumstances at the time of their death, or whose relations might be unable to bear the expense of coffins for them. Up to the year 1864, in any case of this so t, it was the duty of the Churchwardens of the parish to provide coffins, and to defray the expense of them out of what was called vestry cess, and that irrespective of the religion of the deceased. In that year, Sir Robert Peel brought in a Bill to abolish vestry cess, which passed through Parliament, and since then there had been no fund applicable for the purpose. It was very true that these cases might very seldom arise, but they had arisen, and he would instance two cases which had occurred in the Enniskillen union. In one case, an old woman had died in destitute circumstances, and but for the charity of the landlord of the place in which she had previously lived, must have been buried without a coffin. The other was a still stronger case. The relieving officer was in the act of conveying a woman in a cart to the workhouse when the woman died in the cart. She was clearly not in receipt of relief, not having been admitted to the house, although, if she had lived a short time longer, she would have been. The relieving officer buried the woman at his own expense, and applied to the Guardians to recoup him. He was answered that they had no power to do so, but they referred the case to the Poor Law Commissioners. He (the Earl of Belmore) did not know what reply the Commissioners gave, or whether they had given any answer, but he apprehended that there was only one answer they could give, and that was that they had no power to interfere in the matter. He did not know that there was anything more that he need say, and he hoped that there would be no opposition to the Bill of which he begged to move the second reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Belmore.*)

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE said, he looked with suspicion upon Bills to increase the burdens thrown upon the poor rates; and, while he did not object to the principle of the Bill, he thought it ought to have contained some limitations.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

House adjourned at Six o'clock,
till To-morrow, half past
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, April 26, 1866.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Representation of the People [68]; debate *resumed*, and *further adjourned*.

Committee—Contagious Diseases (*re-comm*) [116.]

Report—Contagious Diseases (*re-comm.*) [116].

Third Reading—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland)* [117], and *passed*.

Lords Amendments agreed to— Parliamentary Oaths Amendment [119]; East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer * [75].

NEW WINDSOR ELECTION.

House informed, that the Committee had determined,—

That Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of New Windsor.

That Henry Labouchere, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of New Windsor.

That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election.

And the said Determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

House further informed, That the Committee had agreed to the following Resolutions:—

1. That Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery at the last Election.

2. That Henry Labouchere, esquire, was, by his Agents, guilty of bribery at the last Election.

3. That it was proved to the Committee, That various acts of bribery have been committed by the engagement, by the Agents of the said Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare and Henry Labouchere, esquire, of an excessive number of public houses as committee rooms, in which none of the legitimate business of the Election was transacted, and to the owners of which, who were Voters, sums varying in amount from £10 to £20 were paid.

4. That it was not proved that such Acts of bribery were committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare and Henry Labouchere, esquire.

5. That it was proved, That previous to the Election, the Agents of the said Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare and Henry Labouchere, esquire, gave various donations to the funds of the "Odd Fellows" and certain other benefit societies, and to the sick fund belonging to men in the employment of Mr. Cooper at Windsor, many members of which societies were Voters.

6. That Police Sergeant Noble, Police Constable Joseph Taylor, and Police Constable Alfred Colburn voted at the last Election for the said Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare and Henry Labouchere, esquire, thereby incurring a penalty of £10 each and costs, which amounts were paid by the Agents of the said Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare and Henry Labouchere, esquire.

7. That the Committee have no reason to believe that corrupt practices have extensively prevailed at the last Election for the Borough of New Windsor.

Report to lie upon the Table.

DAUNT'S ROCK, IRELAND.

QUESTION.

Mr. **MAGUIRE** said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that the wreck of the *City of New York*, an iron-built ship of large tonnage, has not yet been removed from Daunt's Rock, off Cork Harbour, and that no steps whatever have been adopted for its removal; whether he has official knowledge of the fact that in June last a brig, laden with sugar, was so damaged by striking on the wreck that she had to be towed into Cork Harbour; and there stranded on a bank to prevent her from sinking; that not only was her cargo totally destroyed, but a considerable expense had to be incurred to fit her again for sea; whether it is not the opinion of the naval authorities of the Board of Trade that the position of the wreck has very much increased the natural dangers of the Rock, especially to vessels leaving or entering Cork Harbour from the West or South-west; whether, in the judgment of the Board of Trade, the owners or underwriters of the *City of New York* are the proper parties to be called on and compelled to remove the wreck, or to be made responsible for its non-removal; and, in case the Board be of opinion that these parties, or either of them, will not be compelled to remove the wreck, whether the Board of Trade will themselves, on the part of the Government and in the public interest, take any steps to accomplish that object, or whether they will allow it to remain in its present position for years to come?

Mr. **MILNER GIBSON**: Sir, my attention has not recently been called to the fact that the wreck of the *City of New York* has not been removed from Daunt's Rock, but more than a year ago the subject was mentioned by a deputation which came to the Board of Trade. The casualty referred to in the second question of the hon. Member was not reported to the Board of Trade. It is the opinion of the nautical authorities at the Board of Trade that the position of the wreck slightly increases the danger to small vessels, who might but for that pass over the rock without touching. It seems only reasonable that the owners of the *City of New York* should remove the wreck, but I am not aware that there is any law to compel them to do so. In some cases in Harbour Acts special provision is made to compel owners to remove wrecks at their own expense. In reply to the last question, whether the Government intend to take any steps to remove the wreck? I may state that, independently of there being no funds applicable to such a purpose, that it has never been held to be the duty of the Board of Trade or Trinity Corporation to undertake the removal of sunken vessels, their province being the marking of the position of such dangers, and warning mariners of their existence. However, we have had under consideration the question, whether it would not be desirable that powers should be obtained to remove wrecks dangerous to navigation when owners and other parties cannot be compelled to do so.

CHURCH RATES.—QUESTION.

Lord **JOHN MANNERS** said, he would beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he has prepared Amendments to the Bill for the Abolition of Church rates; and, if so, when he proposes to lay them on the table of the House?

The **CHANCELLOR** of the **EXCHEQUER** said, in reply, that clauses had been prepared for the purpose of embodying in a formal shape the suggestions which he had submitted to the House in an informal manner upon the second reading of the Church Rates Bill; but he should wish to have a very few days more to enable himself and his Colleagues to judge what prospect there might be of attaining a useful purpose by the production of those clauses as a Government measure, either in the form of clauses, or in the form of a Bill, whichever course might be deemed the more convenient; but he hoped on Monday to be able to give a formal answer to the Question, and as the Church Rates Bill stood for Wednesday in the week after next, he thought there would be then ample time for the consideration of the Amendments previously to the discussion on the measure.

Mr. BRIGHT said, he wished to know, whether the clauses have been prepared in consultation with the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmund's (Mr. Hardcastle), or whether the Government intend to propose them without reference to the Mover of the measure?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that it was his first endeavour to get the clauses into form, and then to submit them to his Colleagues, and he certainly should wish to have the opinion of the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmund's before committing himself by taking any steps in the House with reference to them.

ST. PANCRAS CHURCHYARD.
QUESTION.

Mr. MACEVOY said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is aware that the Midland Railway Company, having obtained an Act (27 & 28 *Vict.* c. 231) which by its twenty-third section allows them to pass a tunnel under the old churchyard of St. Pancras (a closed burying ground) are about to make an open cutting through said churchyard, thereby disturbing the tombs and bodies, and whether the Government will interfere to protect the place from such desecration?

Sir GEORGE GREY said, in reply, that he had made inquiries on the subject, and he found that by the Act the Railway Company were compelled to make a tunnel twelve feet below the surface of the churchyard. An application had been made to the Church Trustees to allow an open cutting to pass through the churchyard, but the Church Trustees had refused to sanction any deviation from the terms of the Act, and he believed the Company were prepared to acquiesce in the decision of the Church Trustees.

ARMY—QUARTERMASTERS OF MILITIA.
QUESTION.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether he has considered the position of the quartermasters of militia, particularly with a view to a revisal of the present regulations with respect to retirement?

The MARQUESS of HARTINGTON stated, in reply, that the retiring allowances of the quartermasters of militia were not provided by regulation, but by the Annual Pay and Clothing Act, and when that was introduced he would state whether he was prepared to propose any additional allowance.

THE DOCKYARD ELECTORS.
QUESTION.

Mr. FERRAND said, he rose to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will pledge himself to withdraw the sixteenth clause, disfranchising the dockyard electors, in the event of the Representation of the People Bill being read a second time?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, I am sorry to be obliged to apply in this instance a rule which it has been found necessary to apply in others. I think it would be premature, and only lead to inconvenience and confusion, if at this time, before the second reading of the Franchise Bill, I were to give any answer with respect to any particular clause. But there is the less occasion for doing that in this particular instance, as two hon. Members—if I am not mistaken, the hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. Serjeant Gaselee) and the hon. Member for Chatham (Mr. Otway)—have both been so far beforehand with the hon. Gentleman that they have given notice to raise this question at a very early stage. I would say, however, that I am extremely glad to infer from the Question of the hon. Gentleman what appears to be the natural construction of it, that if we would withdraw that clause alluded to he would have no remaining objection to vote for the second reading.

ARMY—GLOUCESTERSHIRE RIFLE VOLUNTEERS.—QUESTION.

Mr. YORKE said, he would beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, Whether he is aware that the Capitation Allowances for 1864 still remain unpaid to several companies of the 1st Administrative Battalion of the Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteers; and whether he will state who is responsible for the non-payment of these arrears, and how soon they are likely to be forthcoming?

THE MARQUESS OF **HARTINGTON** said, in reply, that the reason why the capitation allowances for 1864 to several companies of the administrative battalion of this force had remained unpaid was on account of some discrepancy as to the amount which had been calculated.

OYSTER FISHERIES.—QUESTION.

MR. **STEPHEN CAVE** said, he wished to ask the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is true that the Customs authorities of New Shoreham have strict orders to seize and destroy all oysters brought into that port from the deep sea beds between the 30th April and the 1st September, but that no such orders have been issued in respect of ports north of the North Foreland; and that, in fact, oysters taken from the same beds are landed at those ports during the above period; if so, on what principle this distinction is made, as the words of the Act 18 & 19 *Vict.* c. 101, s. 2, empower officers of the Customs to seize "any oysters imported into or landed in any port of the United Kingdom?"

MR. **MILNER GIBSON** said, in reply, that it was true that the Customs authorities of New Shoreham had strict orders to seize and destroy all oysters brought into that port from the deep-sea beds, in the seas between the United Kingdom and France, between the 1st of May and the 31st of August, as required by the Act the 18 & 19 *Vict.* c. 101, s. 2; but it was not true that no such orders had been issued in respect of ports north of the North Foreland. The Board of Trade were not aware that there was any different practice at any port north of the North Foreland, or that there was any distinction between ports on one side and ports on the other side of the North Foreland as regards enforcing the provisions of the 2nd section of the Act the 18 & 19 *Vict.* c. 101, which empowered officers of the Customs to seize any oysters taken in the seas between the United Kingdom and France imported into or landed in any port of the United Kingdom between the 1st of May and the 31st of August.

LANDED ESTATES COURT (IRELAND).

QUESTION.

MR. **WHITESIDE** said, he rose to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether,

having regard to the amount of business in the Landed Estates Court (Ireland), it is intended to fill the place of third Judge, now vacant in that Court by the death of the late Judge Hargrave?

MR. **CHICHESTER FORTESCUE** said, in reply, that the Government, after consulting the Law Officers of the Crown, had come to the decision that the vacancy should not be filled up; and his right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland thought it his duty, two months ago, to communicate his opinion that, in the event of a vacancy occurring, it should not be filled up.

RAID ON THE AUSTRIAN TERRITORY.

QUESTION.

MR. **HENRY SEYMOUR** said, he wished to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If Her Majesty's Government have received any information with regard to the alleged raid of Italian Volunteers on the Austrian territory; and whether this fact has anything to do with the temporary refusal of the Emperor of Austria to receive Count Arese and Signor Venosta?

MR. **LAYARD** replied that the Government had no reason to believe that there was any truth in the report of a raid of Italian volunteers on the Austrian territory, nor had they any reason to believe that the Emperor of Austria had refused to receive Count Arese and Signor Venosta.

THE GENERAL POST OFFICE.

QUESTION.

In reply to Mr. CRAWFORD,

MR. **CHILDERS** stated, with reference to the property required for the extension of the Post Office, that it was necessary to acquire the freehold within a limited period after the passing of the Act, but it was not necessary to acquire minor interests at once.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

MR. **MACEVOY**, who had a notice of Motion on the paper for to-morrow relative to the payment of Medical Officers of Unions in Ireland, on going into Committee of Supply, stated his readiness to give way, in the hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give him another day.

THE **CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER**: I beg, Sir, to thank the hon.

Gentleman for the great courtesy with which he made known to me his intention not to stand in the way of the adjourned debate. As to the Motion of which he has given notice, he need be under no anxiety as to whether it be brought on before or after the Financial Statement. It contains nothing vitally affecting our financial arrangements. I entirely agree with him that it is a Motion which it is perfectly right to bring under discussion. It has been discussed before, and I shall be very glad, indeed, to lend a helping hand to procure another opportunity convenient to the hon. Member for that purpose, and on as early a day as possible. I now wish to give notice, as I think it may be said to be understood by the House generally that the debate on the Representation of the People Bill is to terminate to-morrow evening—on that supposition I give notice that on Thursday next, this day week, I propose, in Committee of Ways and Means, to make the Financial Statement.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL—[Bill 68.]

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. SEVENTH NIGHT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was—

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People,"—(*Earl Grosvenor,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. LOWE said: Sir, as we are now on the second reading of the Bill for reducing the electoral franchise, it is not inopportune to ask, what is the principle of the Bill. Our information on that subject at the present moment is very meagre. We have heard from my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade that the principle of the Bill is to reduce the franchise; and we have learnt from the Solicitor General for Scotland, as I understood him, that the principle of the Bill is to fill up two blanks with figures—which the Government propose to fill up with "seven" and "fourteen" respectively; but which we may fill up with any numbers we think proper. These are the rather faded and colourless views which have been imparted to us on this important subject. I submit that they are no answer to the question at all; because the principle of a Bill does not mean the scope and tenour of a Bill. It does not mean what the Bill professes to do, but it means the grounds and reasons on which it is based; and on that subject, so far as I am aware, the Government are entirely silent. I can only imagine two grounds on which this Bill for lowering the elective franchise can be proposed to the House. The first of these grounds is, that the franchise is a thing which ought to be given for its own sake; the second is, that it is a means for obtaining some ulterior object. Which of these two is the principle of this Bill? The first principle has, at any rate, the merit of extreme simplicity. Those who profess it are very little troubled either with proof or investigation. According to that theory, all they have to do is to find a person fitted to have the elective franchise—and they are not very particular or exacting in proof of fitness, nor very strict in the presumptions they apply to it—and having found that person, the giving of the franchise to him follows as a matter of immediate and cogent necessity. According to this view, this is not a question of politics at all, but of morality—of right and wrong. It is a "debt," to use the word of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and when you find a man presumably fit for the franchise, according to this view, you are as much bound to give it to him as you are to pay your ordinary debts. To deliberate or hesitate about it is an act of injustice, just as it is to deliberate or hesitate about paying your ordinary debts. All who are not admitted to the franchise become creditors of the State, and every hour we withhold it from them is wrong accumulated upon wrong—a denial of justice, a disgrace and opprobrium to those who withhold it. Now, that is one view that may be taken. It is very important to know whether that be the view on which this Bill is brought forward, because it is a view which, whatever other merits it has, entirely eludes anything like reason or argument. It either flies so high or sinks so low that it is impossible to deal with it by argument. Those who propound it may be great philosophers—they may be inspired apostles of a new Religion of Humanity; but so far as they lay down this doctrine they are not politicians, nor do they use arguments within the range of the science or art of politics. They may, on the other hand, be victims of the most puerile fallacy. They may have mistaken the means for the end, and inferred, because we all believe, from our long experience of it, that the elective franchise is a good thing for the purpose of obtaining the end of good government, therefore it is necessarily a good thing in itself. They have this great advantage, in common with all enthusiasts and all persons believing in immediate intuition, over those who are not so fortunate, that they emancipate themselves from the necessity of looking at consequences. They are free from those complicated, embarrassing, and troublesome considerations of the collateral and future effects of measures, which perplex ordinary mortals. They avert their minds altogether from these things, and fall back on the principle that the thing is right in itself, and they disembarrass it of all consequences. That is one view that may be taken of the principle of this Bill. The second is a much humbler, but a much sounder doctrine, and that is that the franchise, like every other political expedient, is a means to an end, the end being the preservation of order in the country, the keeping a just balance of classes, and the preventing any predominance or tyranny of one class over another. Now, Sir, this principle, we have been told, is not one of the principles of the British Constitution, and I will therefore, with the permission of the House, read a few words from the preamble of a statute passed in 1429, the eighth year of Henry VI., and the first statute, as far as I am aware, that contains any declaration with regard to the electoral franchise. The words are these—

> "Whereas the elections of knights of shires have now of late been made by too great and excessive number of people, either of small substance or of no value, whereof every one of them pretended to have a voice equivalent as to making such elections with the most worthy knights and squires dwelling within the same county."

And then follow words enacting that no man shall have a vote in the election of knights of the shire, unless he have a freehold amounting to 40*s.* per annum in value. Now, look at the principles which this preamble contains. In the first place, it recites that too great a number of persons have taken part in the elections, and it thus clearly contemplates the very evil with which we are so much threatened now in many directions—namely, the too great size of electoral districts, the augmentation of constituencies to a degree that makes them unmanageable. In the next place, it clearly implies that a class may be swamped by another class, poorer, less important, and less entitled to weight in the country, because it recites that most worthy knights and esquires are overbalanced by persons of small substance, who have voices equivalent to theirs; and in the next place it establishes the principle that there ought to be a certain fitness in a man before he is allowed to vote for Members of Parliament. Now those three principles are pretty well what is embodied in the doctrine that the franchise is a means to an end, and that doctrine, as I take it, is, that the franchise, though it ought not necessarily to be given to every one fit for it, should never be given to any one who is unfit. It implies in the second place that in giving votes you should have regard not merely to the fitness of the person, but to the influence which that person or class of persons will exercise over the general well-being of the State; and, in the third place, it seems to me clearly to imply that we ought to be careful so to deal with the franchise that no one class may swamp or overpower another or the other classes. I therefore think that that ancient authority very clearly lays down this second principle, which has at any rate this advantage, that though we may differ as to the quantity of the franchise, some wishing for more and some for less, we have a common ground for argument. If the principle of expediency is conceded, we may succeed in convincing each other of our errors, or may come to some sort of compromise, whereas with persons who hold the first principle there is no common ground whatever, and it is therefore of no use attempting to reason with them, because all reasoning must proceed on something admitted on both sides if conviction is to be obtained. A man who holds the theory I do about politics—namely, that everything is to be referred to the safety and good government of the country, has no common point of departure with the man who maintains, like the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, that it is better we should be governed by large representative bodies and governed badly, than governed by small representative bodies and governed well. And now, Sir, I ask, which of these two is the principle of this Bill? and in order to ascertain that, I should wish to ascertain what the Bill will do, and what will be the number of persons who will be enfranchised under it? If I know that, and if I know also the manner in which those numbers will be distributed, I have then data in my own mind from which I can argue to my own satisfaction as to what is the ground of this Bill, and what Her Majesty's Government intend by it. But, Sir, I am met here by an immense difficulty, and a difficulty entirely created by the Government themselves, for it is impossible for me, as things stand at present, to guide the vote I am asked to give either by reference to the number of persons who will have the franchise, or by reference to the manner in which they will be distributed. The Government has that information in its hand, but it chooses, for reasons which I will consider presently, to withhold that information from the House, and to insist upon our coming to a conclusion without it.

Now, Sir, when this Bill was first brought in it was intended, I have no doubt—in fact, it was clearly apparent—to be merely a Bill for the extension of the franchise, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer very properly acted on a principle which I never heard of any Government deviating from before. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to assist our deliberations, laid before us the statistics of what would be done by the proposed change, and whether we agree to the principle or not, nothing could be more satisfactory. But then, when certain Members pressed them the Government began to slide. They slid first by saying, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer did, that they would lay a Bill for the re-distribution of seats on the table. Advancing a little further still they said they would not only lay a Bill on the table, but would proceed with it as soon as ever they could; and growing bolder the further they went, they gave us the usual formula, which now seems to apply to every act of the Government, that they were prepared to "stand or fall," by it. But now that we have got to this point the case is changed. Her Majesty's Government, when they made up their minds at any rate to bring in a Re-distribution Bill and stand or fall by it, had really but one course to pursue in common fairness to the House and to themselves, and that was to withdraw the Franchise Bill and bring in a Bill combining both measures. To downright plain common sense there was no alternative, and had the matter been resolved on at once, I have no doubt it would have been done. But it was wrung from them little by little, and self-love, and pride, and a number of other motives which I shall not stop to enumerate, induced them, while they believed themselves forced to concede a great deal, to appear to concede as little as possible, and so they clung to this shred of withholding information from us, and upon that they have made it plain that they are going to put not only their Bill, but the Administration itself, in peril. Now, Sir, I confess that I have never read of or seen any conduct on the part of any Government so utterly irrational as this. It is quite clear that till we know how these seats are to be distributed we do not know the number of electors that this Bill will bring into existence; because, suppose the seats of the small boroughs—take any you like, and there is one which people would rather take than any other—take any you please, and take Burnley or any such place, and transfer the seat from one borough to the other, and it is not merely a transfer of an amount of political power, but you call into existence several thousands of £7 voters, who had no electoral existence before. So it is right we should know what number of persons we are going to enfranchise, it is right we should also know what the re-distribution is to be. But that is not all. The hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) said the other night, and said with truth, that you might have universal suffrage established by law, but, giving the re-distribution to a person adverse to that, he could contrive completely to neutralize it and could make matters worse—that is, as the hon. Member means, less popular—than at present. Thus we are not only in ignorance of the number of people to be enfranchised, but utterly in ignorance of what is to be the effect of it. We do not know in the least what the effect will be, and yet the position of the Government is that we are to go on and read this measure a second time, while they, having this information in their possession, speaking to us, and arguing with us with all this knowledge in their hands, withhold it from us, and insist that we shall vote upon this measure without it. Now it is very common and very right for Governments, when there are matters which, on the ground of public policy, should not be made known, to call upon their supporters, and even on the Opposition in some cases, to give them so much confidence as to allow them to keep back information. But this is no matter of that kind. This is a matter, as far as I can understand, kept back through mere wantonness, a trial of power to see whether the Government can make the House of Commons pass under the yoke or not, to see whether they can exhibit us to the country as persons who are content to be treated with this degree of indignity, who before we have any opportunity of committing ourselves, of saying or doing anything which would lead the Government to suppose that we are unwilling to pass this measure, are subjected to the indignity of having the most important of its provisions concealed from us, and told to vote just as if we had them before us. Look at the language which Ministers employ in speaking of the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking to an applauding audience at Liverpool, deliberately tells them that he knows the people with whom he has to deal; that is, of course, that we—I do not speak of myself or of those hon. Members who have been exposed to so much animadversion, but the House of Commons at large—are people better known than trusted. Look, too, at the manner in which my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade speaks of us. He told us the other night that he wanted to bring the matter before us pure and simple, to get us into a corner and compel us to speak. Now, is that a respectful manner for a Minister of the Crown to speak of the House of Commons? If it was a question of a horse, and he wanted to try whether it was a roarer, I could understand his getting it into a corner of the stable and giving it a hard punch in the ribs to see whether it would grunt or not, but I really did think that the Commons of England were not exactly persons to be treated in this manner. But look at the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He said with much unction, "Some people say we have divided this Bill into two halves because we knew we could not carry the whole at once, but that we can carry it if we can cut it in two; well, that," he said, "is exactly why we did it." That is to say, the

Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade want to force us, to compel us; and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, with admirable candour, says he hopes he can take us in. He thinks we are not aware that two halves make a whole, and therefore that he can palm upon us one half and then another, the two being much larger than the whole; and he thinks we shall be willing to accept them from him, and shall not be able to see through the deceit, even when he has been so kind as elaborately to explain it. It has always been said, and more particularly by Hallam, that one of the great advantages of having the leading Members of the Government in this House is that they owe a double allegiance—one as the servants of the Crown, and another as Members of the House of Commons; so that while not wanting in their duty as servants of the Crown, they have always been anxious to maintain the dignity and privileges of this House. Hallam was a good historian, but he was no prophet. Had he had the happiness of witnessing the conduct of the present Government he would have found that, whatever their allegiance to the Crown, the main object of their action, upon which they are staking their very existence, is to humiliate and degrade the Members of this House in the eyes of their constituents. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the leader of this House, has evidently no confidence in us. If we have no confidence in him we know well enough what must happen. But although he makes a parade of a feeling of disrespect for us, while he seeks to place us in the most humiliating position, we are asked to put the most implicit confidence in him. This is not a course that the dignity and position of this House will permit you to adopt, and I might paraphrase an old epigram and say to the right hon. Gentleman—

"Whatever the pain it may cost,
  It is time we should each say adieu;
For your confidence in us is lost,
  And we've not got sufficient for two."

The position held by the right hon. Gentleman is a most remarkable one, and but few men could get into such a position twice in their lives, yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had that unapproachable felicity. When he went as high Commissioner Extraordinary under the Government of Lord Derby to the Ionian Islands the right hon. Gentleman proposed to reform the Ionian Constitution, and one of the reforms was that the powers of the Lord High Commissioner should be defined by an Act of the Assembly. They were very sweeping and arbitrary. But he said there must be an exception to the rule, and that exception must be of all the powers that Her Majesty by Order in Council chose to exempt from the operation of the Act. You need not wonder that the Act did not pass. But let us look a little further. I have shown—and I do not propose to dwell upon that point, because it has been so admirably put by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley)—that we are asked to discuss this Bill while we are shut out from the information on the subject that we ought to have. Look at the present position of the Government as shown by their own admission. They admit that before we go into Committee we ought to have the whole of the information we ask for before us. They admit that we have a right to know that the Government will proceed with the second measure immediately, and yet they say, although they know that the same process of debate can be repeated on going into Committee, as on the second reading, they will not give us the information we require until by reading the Bill a second time we have pledged ourselves to adopt the Bill, and until they have got us into a corner. It has not been attempted yet—it is a task well worthy of the subtle genius of the right hon. Gentleman—to define the relation of the information to this Bill, to show that it is information so estranged and remote from the principle of the Bill that it ought not to be laid before us on the second reading, yet that it is so intimately bound up and entwined with the principle of the Bill that it must be laid before us and well considered before we go into Committee. I cannot, of course, vouch for the truth of the rumour, because I think Government have gone quite far enough in the way of conceding things that are to be done after the second reading, while maintaining their singular policy with regard to what shall be done before the second reading, but I am told we are to have one more concession. If we will only consent to give the Chancellor of the Exchequer this victory over us by giving the Bill a second reading, while we are utterly in the dark, to please him, he will undertake that the two Bills shall advance *pari passu*, and that one shall not be passed without the other. This may meet some of the objections brought against the Bill, but it will not meet any of the objections I have suggested. Would it show you that you are properly treated by the Government—would it show that you are doing your duty to the country and to your constituencies, in sanctioning by your vote a measure the grounds and results of which are studiously and purposely concealed from you? Would it show that you are acting in a manner worthy of the dignity of this great Assembly and of the relations between this great Assembly and the executive Government, upon which the whole working power of our Constitution depends? I refer to this because it is supposed that these things may be mentioned to us at the last moment, when it is too late to reply to them. But I beg that you will consider these questions before it is too late, and I am sure that you will see that the statements should they be made do not remove the real solid objections to the Bill. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn argued with great force that the question of this proposed Re-distribution Bill must come before a House of Commons elected either by the present or by the new constituency. In the first case, the House under such circumstances would really be legislating with a halter round its neck. The measure of its compliance with the demands of the Government would be, not what it might think right, but what it might believe that the Parliament succeeding it would do. It would cease to be a free agent, and would be placed in a situation which I think no House not smitten with a most inordinate love of life would wish to occupy. The other alternative is that the matter should be decided by a House elected by the new constituency. That will be a provisional constituency in which the Government themselves profess no confidence, as they tell you that as soon as it is created they are going, by the re-distribution of seats, to alter its numbers and electoral districts. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) meets that argument of the noble Lord by saying that he is contented with the Bill as it stands. He thinks that a sufficient answer, and Member after Member gets up and says the same thing. The question, however, is not whether the hon. Member is satisfied, but whether the Government is consistent. It is an argument against the Government that if they thought this constituency was not fit to be a permanent one for the legislation of this country, it was monstrous to take such measures as would possibly throw the decision of this case into the hands of the very constituencies they had themselves treated as provisional and transitory. The argument of the noble Lord is an *argumentum ad homines* as regards the Government, and is not addressed to the individual convictions of Members. I conclude that, on the clearest ground of self-respect, of what is due to the dignity and the honour of this House, and to the traditions of centuries intrusted to us, we ought never to allow—and I never will, as far as my vote goes—any Government to attempt anything of the kind. Besides the pleasure of the victory over the House of Commons there is another motive — they want to get something they could not get if they disclosed the Seats Bill. We are not told what that something is, but we are furnished with the most pregnant grounds for conjecture, because it must be something so important that the Government prefers to stake its existence upon it rather than reveal it to the House of Commons. Every Member who has the fortune to sit for a borough which is threatened by the Seats Bill has a right to put the worst construction upon this measure. Besides, if it were only a little matter that lay behind, surely you cannot imagine Government going with their eyes open to what looks very like assured perdition, rather than let us know the details of the Redistribution Bill.

Having been headed off by the Government in my attempt to satisfy myself as to the question of the franchise, I might throw the matter up in despair, but as I am anxious to pick up all the information I can I will state what I know upon the subject. The main fault in my reasoning will be that it is not applicable to the future state of things, because that state of things is studiously concealed from us. It appears that the effect of this Bill, according to the figures of the Government, will be to introduce 144,000 £7 electors into the different boroughs, and the result will be that the working classes will have a majority in ninety-five boroughs, almost a majority in ninety-three, and more than one-third of the representation in eighty-five. This is mere matter of calculation, and an application of the rule of three sum we are asked to do. But then you must add to these figures 60,000 compound householders and non-ratepayers. You must take into consideration that the gross estimated rental is lower than the actual rental, that in thirty boroughs the Assessment Act has never come into operation at all, and that they contain one-half of the borough population. There is always a tendency in a progressive state of society for the actual rental to rise above the gross estimated rental, and therefore very considerable allowance must be made for that. Then there are a great many persons of the lodger class. All these things put together satisfy me that the majority of the 334 boroughs in England and Wales will be in the hands of the working classes immediately on the passing of the Bill. The argument of Mr. Baxter—not the Member for Montrose, but a gentleman who has written a very excellent pamphlet upon the subject—shows a state of things well worthy of attention. He shows that taking the three decades since the passing of the Reform Bill the increase in the franchise was much more rapid in the first and least prosperous decade than in the other two. It increased 43 per cent in the first decade, 27 in the second, and 20 in the third. Is not this a proof that the £10 franchise eats up the £8 and £9, which are drawn into the higher rate, while the higher fattens upon the spoil of its immediate inferiors in the world? And the same process will go on. The £7 will eat up the £6 and the £5. The £7 franchise is 2*s.* 9*d.* a week, and 2*s.* 6*d.* a week will give £6 10*s.* You see, therefore, how easy it is to ascend. The difference is merely one of 3*d.* per week, and the margin is, consequently, very small. I am now only expressing my honest conviction on this matter. I cannot pretend to give it to the House upon complete evidence, because I have not the materials for demonstrating it to you. But that I have not those materials is not my own fault, but the fault of the Government, and, therefore, in considering this matter it ought to weigh most strongly against them.

I now come to another subject, and that is the treatment of the House by the Government. Even before this House came into existence in its corporate capacity the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the noble Lord at the head of the Government set to work to devise its destruction, and the Members of this House have been treated rather as condemned criminals than as friends in council. The right hon. Gentleman in his opening speech forbore to give the House any reasons for bringing in this Bill. The policy of its introduction was challenged pretty warmly in the debate which took place at the time, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer forbore to reply. It was perfectly open to him to adopt that course, and to reserve his statement for the second reading. But what was the next thing? My noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho)—to whom the Government owe their idea of collecting statistics—took the opportunity of asking, and not unreasonably, for some further information of the kind already furnished by the Government. It was natural enough that having already information about the boroughs, hon. Members should desire to have similar information about the counties. This consideration was pressed upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer by several hon. Gentlemen, and he said, "You shall have no more statistics. Throw figures to the dogs. I'll none of them. Here you are speaking, measuring, calculating, as if the working classes were an invading army. Are they not your fellow creatures? Are they not fathers of families? Are they not taxpayers? Are they not your flesh and blood? And do you capitulate, and do you palter with them? Here are statistics enough. Take that thine is and go thy way." I do not think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was very polite to my noble Friend, who, however, is well able to take care of himself, or very respectful to the House. The Government having furnished us this statistical information ought certainly to be willing to listen to our demands, because there is no possible reason why the machinery by which the component parts of constituencies above £10 were determined should not also be employed to discover those below that figure. This conduct throws light on the question of the principle of the Bill, and appears to me to evince a foregone conclusion on the part of the Government—a determination that the thing was to be done at any hazard, and a belief that the results were of no consequence whatever. Then, again, it was not to us that the Chancellor of the Exchequer imparted his first impressions upon this matter. He went to Liverpool, and to an audience of a very different character delivered those reasons for bringing in this Bill which ought to have been laid before the House on its first reading, in reply, or on the Motion for its second reading. My right hon. Friend should have laid his reasons first of all before this House instead of imparting them to a select circle of friends assembled in that most inappropriately named Philharmonic Hall at Liverpool. And then the right hon. Gentleman and other Members of the Government between the first and second reading, and before the course which Parliament would adopt with reference to the Bill was known, set on foot a sort of Ministerial agitation. It is absurd to pretend that the influence of agitation was not resorted to, and it is not the fault of some of those who took part in that agitation that it did not develop into an influence of terrorism. Well, after these things were over, the Chancellor of the Exchequer came back to the House and favoured us with a languid *rechauffe* of the arguments he had already employed at Liverpool, and thus the baked meats of the Philharmonic Hall did coldly furnish forth the tables of the House of Commons. Well, Sir, I maintain that from first to last, from the introduction of this measure to the present moment, the treatment we have received can only be regarded as an attempt to degrade and lower the character of the House of Commons. No doubt there are some Gentlemen who do not view the matter in this light. They are probably accustomed to measures so much more drastic and more stringent that they regard as matters of small consequence those lesser indignities which, nevertheless, do touch gentlemen and men of honour. I admit the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not written a letter asking the people to come down to this House, to fill the streets, and to hoot the Members who are opposed to this Bill. I admit that he has not done a great many things of this kind, and therefore I would say with the hon. Member for Westminster—

> "Habes pretium
> non pasces in cruce corvos,"

which I much prefer to

> "Cruci non figeris."

Now let us turn to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am in an unfortunate position. I am perfectly unable to argue the case with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because when I try to argue with a man I seek for a common ground, and in the case of the Chancellor of the Exchequer I can find none. He argues in this way. Some people demand what fault is to be found in the existing state of things that it should be altered and destroyed. His reply is, "I am not bound to produce an indictment." He does not say that any fault is to be found; all he wishes to do is to make the House of Commons better, and to strengthen our institutions. But then he fails to show that the course he adopts will have that effect, nor has he, indeed, attempted at any time to prove anything of the kind. I drew out for him on a small scale, and according to the best of my humble abilities, an estimate of the House of Commons, of its good and its bad qualities, and I challenged him to show how his proposed measure would diminish the evil and increase the good. The right hon. Gentleman has taken no notice of that challenge, nor indeed has anybody attempted to meet it. He dare not, will not, put the matter upon this ground. I think the right hon. Gentleman deliberately averted his eyes from the results in this matter, and, like the hon. Member for Birmingham, has determined to regard the question as a matter of justice, with which expediency, the good of the State, and the destiny of future ages have nothing whatever to do. The right hon. Gentleman says, "I am not bound to produce an indictment. People who say that a fault should be found before a remedy is applied assume that the franchise is an evil, while I believe it is a good in itself." This brings me back to the first of the two principles to which I have alluded, and I do not think I am wrong in identifying the Chancellor of the Exchequer with it. You will find that the same train of argument pervades the whole of his speech. The right hon. Gentleman says that we ought to give the franchise to the 204,000 persons who will be affected by this Bill because they are our fellow Christians. But is that an argument for admitting them? Why, Sir, who are the people in this country who do not profess and call themselves Christians? It is an argument, if anything, for the admission of the whole of the male, and perhaps the female, population, but it is no argument whatever for admitting the 204,000 more than anybody else. So, in the same way, with the fathers of families, who are by no means peculiar to the British nation. Then, again, with regard to the taxpayers, or, as I should prefer to call them, consumers of taxable commodities, which is a very different thing. This class would include the whole of our criminals, paupers, idiots, lunatics, children, and, in fact, everybody else, and does not consist only of the 204,000 to whom this Bill refers. The argument from flesh and blood applies not only to the human race, but extends also to the animal kingdom, and if this principle were allowed we might have another "Beasts" Parliament, proposed after the pattern of the assembly commemorated in the old epic of *Reynard the Fox*. The right hon. Gentleman then maintains that it is a monstrous thing to exclude the working classes, because their income amounts to £250,000,000. But who are the people who enjoy the income of £250,000,000? Are they the 204,000 who are to receive the franchise? If so, each of these men would have £1,200 a year, and such an income would effectually disqualify them from sharing in the sympathy of the right hon. Gentleman, because they could then scarcely be regarded as belonging to the working classes. What he means is that these £250,000,000, constitute the income of the whole of the working classes; but he does not propose to admit the whole of the working classes. What I wish to show, therefore, is that this argument is good for nothing at all, or it is good for extending the franchise to the whole of the people of the country. My right hon. Friend's argument about the contributions to the revenue may be regarded in the same light. He says that the working classes contribute one-third or more of the revenue of this country; but who contribute it? Then, again, the revenue obtained from the working classes is chiefly derived from the duties on tea and sugar, and on stimulants — beer, spirits, and tobacco — and the revenue from the latter source alone has of late years increased to the enormous amount of £20,000,000. But these £20,000,000, are not contributed by the proposed 204,000 new voters. And so the thing comes round again. It may possibly be quite right that the class that only spends £1,260,000, in £10 houses while the duty on its expenditure on exciseable articles amounts to a large part of £20,000,000, should receive the franchise. But then, it is an argument for the admission of the whole class, and not of any particular portion. The House will, I think, see that I am not wasting their time in referring to these matters. I want to show that this measure is not founded upon any calculation of results, but upon broad sweeping principles, having their rise in the assumed rights of man and other figments of that kind, which, if admitted, do not prove that the present measure is a good one, but that what is needed is universal suffrage. And that is a point of view in which, being denied the information we ought to have, we are bound, in duty to ourselves and to our country, to regard it. We have been asked whether it is to be believed that the political limit of £10 is to exist for ever, and, I ask, whether the same thing cannot be said for the £7 figure as well as for the other? We had from the hon. Member for Birmingham on the first reading of this Bill a specimen of the ruinous logic by which these things are to be accomplished. He took his stand upon the fact of some right hon. Gentlemen opposite having been once in favour of an £8 franchise, and he said, "We want a £7 franchise, so that there is only a pound between us, and you won't fall out with me for a pound." So the Constitution is knocked down to the lowest bidder. I would not fall out with the hon. Member for Birmingham. I would give him a pound out of my own pocket if he wanted it; but his pound is no joke. The hon. Member for Birmingham's pound means 100,000 men, and 100,000 men of whom he may know a great deal, but of whom we—instructed in the matter only from what we learn by public documents—know nothing at all. Parenthetically, I may observe that I should be very much obliged to the hon. Member for Birmingham if he would make his soliloquies a little less dramatic. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asks, "Is it to be tolerated that in this country we are to have a narrow precinct called the Constitution, within which we have gathered some million, or 1,200,000 or 1,300,000, while outside of it we have some four-and-a-half millions?" But I want to know whether, after we have admitted within the precinct some 200,000 or 300,000 of these outsiders, the proportion of numbers upon which the right hon. Gentleman bases his argument is in any sensible degree diminished. If the argument is good for anything, it goes in not for the few hundred thousand only, but for the 4,500,000. There might have been some answer to this if the right hon. Gentleman had shown us in the speeches which he has delivered, either in the House or to the people at Liverpool, the least qualification for this principle, what limit he puts upon it, or why £7, or any other limit, should be thought of, or how he reconciles it, or how he thinks the thing will fit in with the state of our society. But he has done nothing of the kind. It is a principle the most dangerous, the most sweeping, the most democratic, that has ever been set forth by any Minister in this House. He has taken it without modification and without qualification—not to work upon our minds—for I trust there are very few educated gentlemen upon whom such views as these would make any impression whatever, but to work upon the minds of the people at large who have not had the advantage of the culture which we have enjoyed. Then there is another point. We have been, it seems, during the last few years doing something for the working classes—and here the right hon. Gentleman is exceedingly patronizing—we have done a good deal for their education, the clergy have done a great deal for their morals, and something has been done for them in sanitary matters—is it to be supposed that, after all this has been done, the franchise should not be extended to them? The right hon. Gentleman does not point to any tangible result from all this, to show that there is any reason in point of fitness for admitting to the franchise by lowering it. He merely asserts, "You have done all this for them; it must have produced a result;" he assumes that the result was good and sufficient, and he calls on you to lower the franchise accordingly. I say if he proved that the result was good and sufficient, which he does not pretend to do, it would not be an argument for lowering the franchise unless he could also show that the lowering of the franchise was on the whole likely to work for the good of society. He does not even satisfy his own condition; for he asks us to admit people of whom he knows nothing except that they contribute to the revenue, have a large aggregate income, and have had a good deal of money spent upon them by the Government in order to improve their condition; and then, speaking in a patronizing manner, he says, "We have done a good deal for them, so now, let us make them our masters." With affected ignorance, the right hon. Gentleman says, "If democracy be liberty, we have no occasion to be afraid; but if democracy be vice and ignorance, then this Government is not democratic." Who ever said it was? The question is not whether this Government is democratic, but whether the Government he asks us to make must not necessarily be democratic. Does not the right hon. Gentleman know what democracy is? Whatever we learnt at Oxford, we learnt that democracy was a form of Government in which the poor, being many, governed the whole country, including the rich, who were few, and for the benefit of the poor. The question is—Is not that the form of Government which the right hon. Gentleman is seeking to introduce? It is not, then, liberty or vice; it is the government of the rich by the poor. Why should not we call it by its right name at once? That is a very short, but for my purpose a sufficient, analysis of the argument of the Chancellor of the Exhequer at Liverpool, because I do not pretend in the least to answer it. I simply deny that justice has anything to do with the matter; it is purely a question of State policy. We are told that we are bound to forge our own fetters, while we shut our eyes to the consequences of what we do; but the essence of my theory is that you are bound to look most strictly to the results we may reasonably anticipate. From the sweeping nature of this Bill when carefully looked at, from the manner in which it has been forced upon the House, and from the arguments by which it has been supported by the right hon. Gentleman, I maintain that it is founded upon the principles I have mentioned, and I may state that not one person who has spoken on it in connection with the Government has taken a view of it different from his, or has endeavoured in the least to qualify the principle upon which it is based; and that is that the franchise is due to everyone whom you cannot show to be unfit. But that principle followed up leads straight to ruin; it asserts that the franchise is a thing we are bound to pay; and so clear is our obligation that we are desired to shut our eyes and disregard all expediency, and to leave the constituencies so created to take care of us and of themselves. We are told that we are under no more obligation to see what use they would make of the franchise than we are to inquire what use a creditor would make of a payment of money justly due to him. Anything more dangerous, more utterly subversive, I cannot conceive. We must also keep in sight the democratic influence of the re-distribution of seats, whatever it may be.

If the House will bear with me, I will call attention to another matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster has come out in a new character. I do not speak of the excellent speech which he has made, because, having known him for many years, I was quite sure that when he took the trouble to give us his best thoughts, instead of dealing in impromptus, those great abilities which are acknowledged to be his would be apparent. But my hon. Friend has taken a new stand. He has taken many positions with regard to this subject, as those who are acquainted with his works well know; but he has now come forward in the capacity of the advocate of my second principle, the doctrine of class representation. He demands the franchise for the working classes, because he says they are not sufficiently represented now, although they have a fourth of the votes in boroughs. He offers no argument in support of his assertions: I therefore pass it by, as I wish to deal with arguments and not assertions. My hon. Friend does say, however, that the working class have not so much influence as they might be supposed to have, because they are so distributed that they are usually outvoted; and thus they are in a position little better than if they had no votes at all. He regrets on their behalf that some law is not in force for giving to minorities representation. I believe that is a fair statement of my hon. Friend's argument. [Mr. J. STUART MILL was understood to assent.] Now, I think my hon. Friend ought, in passing, to have adverted to the argument which I have so frequently insisted upon in this House—namely, that if the working class have only 128,000 in the present constituencies, it is very much their own fault, because many more of them have the means if they choose to live in £10 houses. The law, therefore, is not to blame in this respect. He might have adverted to a case which I may mention as the type of many others. The Southwick glass manufactory at Sunderland is a large establishment where many workmen are employed, earning from £4 to £5 a week. It is complained that none of these persons had the franchise. But whose fault is that? These workmen are earning some £200, and some £250 a year, and yet they live in houses under £10 a year in value. Is it the fault of the law? Of course, I must not say whose fault it is. Every Gentleman is free to say anything that is complimentary of the working class in general and his own constituency in particular; but any Gentleman who says anything in the slightest degree not pleasing to them is thought to have grossly misconducted himself. But now, having adopted the theory of classes, we cannot, as my hon. Friend was inclined to do, take it up in order to make an argument in favour of the working class, and lay it down when it makes against them. His logical mind will tell him that he must follow the principle out to its legitimate conclusions, and so he is bound to show us that the extension of the franchise which he asks for the working class, though a wide extension, can be given without injury to the other classes. He must not take the theory up for the working classes alone, but for all classes. Now, he has not condescended to show us how the extension which he approves would influence the position of any other class except the working class, or rather the poor class, for I view this question not as one between working classes and those who employ them, but between those who have property and those who have not. Now, Sir, I would refer my hon. Friend and the House to the preface of the third edition of his work on *Political Economy.* It was published in 1852, so that my hon. Friend has had time to change his mind since, and he is entitled to do it. This is what he said. I am very glad that I did not—

> "The only objection to which any great importance will be found to be attached, in the present edition, is the unprepared state of mankind in general, and of the labouring classes in particular; their extreme unfitness at present for any order of things which would make any considerable demand on either their intellect or their virtue."

That was in 1852, but we have the opinion of my hon. Friend in 1861. In his work on *Representative Government,* he says—

> "I regard it as wholly inadmissible that any person should participate in the suffrage without being able to read, write, and, I will add, perform the common operations of arithmetic. Universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement. No one but those in whom an *à priori* theory has silenced common sense will maintain that power over others, over the whole community, should be given to people who have not acquired the commonest and most essential requisites for taking care of themselves."

[Mr. J. Stuart Mill: Hear, hear!] My hon. Friend himself cheers those remarks. I hope he will take some opportunity of telling us what is the process of investigation he entered on for the purpose of satisfying himself that the electors in £7 houses will be found prepared for the exercise of the franchise. I hope he will tell us what evidence he has to produce of their intellect and their virtue. I hope he will satisfy us, if he has satisfied himself, of their being able to read and write and to perform all the common operations of arithmetic, including, I suppose—though he did not state it in that passage—the rule of three. I hope he has satisfied himself that universal teaching has preceded universal enfranchisement. Of course, the word "universal" might be struck out and the sense would remain the same—namely, that instruction must precede enfranchisement. I hope he will show us how he has satisfied himself that those persons whom he proposes to enfranchise—to whom he would intrust the interests of others—are persons who have acquired the commonest and most essential requisites for taking care of themselves. If not, how can he reconcile his present position with any principle, but that *à priori* theory of which he speaks? I do not say my hon. Friend cannot do it. He can do most things, and perhaps he can do this; but I only say as things stand he has not done it, and that his own writings are against the principle which he now supports by his speech. My hon. Friend half took up the challenge which I threw out when I asked in what this Parliament—which has only just come into existence, and which was condemned before it was born—has been found wanting. He pointed out our old friend the cattle plague. I am not going to argue that question over again; but my hon. Friend said that if the working classes had been represented here they might have objected to persons being twice compensated for their cattle. Now, Sir, I cannot persuade my hon. Friend, but I think if I had the working men here I could show them that the persons to whom the hon. Member for Westminster alludes will not be compensated twice. Suppose a farmer has 100 head of cattle, which are killed to prevent the spread of the disease. He is compensated at less than their value, and then it becomes necessary for agricultural purposes that he should go into the market and buy another 100 head of cattle. The loss which he sustains is not only the difference between the value of his former cattle and the compensation which he got for them, but also the amount by which the price of cattle has been enhanced by the disease, and enhanced in some degree by the slaughter. I cannot persuade my hon. Friend, because he is a philosopher, but I think I could persuade the working men whom he seeks to bring among us that so far from being paid twice over, the farmer in that case has never been paid once. You can put a case which will be the other way. If a man has a large herd of cattle and is compensated for a few of them, he may be paid over again by the enhanced prices of the remainder. You can put the case both ways; but what I complain of is the narrowness and illiberality of saying that this is a matter which cannot admit of two aspects—that those who differ from my hon. Friend must be wrong, and that if it were not for the faulty constitution of this House we should see and judge things in the same manner as he does.

Mr. J. STUART MILL said: I wish to correct the last assertion of my right hon. Friend. I never imputed to hon. Gentlemen in this House, or to the landed interest, that they were wilfully wrong.

Mr. LOWE: I may remark that I suppose no one in this House would have any objection to working men coming here if the constituencies wished to send them. They can do so now if they like, and, therefore, we need not take up time in arguing the point, because I am sure that whenever the constituencies may think proper to send working men here, we shall receive those representatives properly, and listen to them with respect. But my hon. Friend told us of the subjects which the working classes might wish to debate here. He referred to "the right of labour." That sounds very like the right "to" labour of which we heard in 1848. Are we to have the doctrines of Fourier and St. Simon discussed here? We are told that in so doing we shall educate the working man. I protest against this. We are here to legislate for this country, and if we look after the executive Government pretty sharply—if we take care of our finance—and if we watch the Foreign Office, we shall be doing better than we should do by converting this House into an academy or a gymnasium for the instruction even of the *élite* of the working classes. My hon. Friend said that if the working classes were here they would establish a school in every parish in a few years. Well, that is a subject on which I ought to know something; and I may say that the main object I had in view in the changes which I proposed on the part of the Government in the education system was to benefit the working classes. Under the old system the poor children were not properly taught. The upper children, the children of richer parents, were examined, and the money was paid; but the lower and poorer children were neglected. The upper children had generally had some education at home; but the poor children had received no education at home, and they were not done justice to in the schools. The object of the Revised Code was to insure that education should be given to the poor just as much as to the rich; so that the object was one mainly—indeed, entirely—for the working classes. But in that object I never received the slightest assistance in any way from the working classes. The opposition to it was very much from the Members for the large towns in which the working classes form a considerable portion of the constituencies; but the working classes themselves never interfered in the matter. They did not care about it. The schoolmasters interfered, and got Members of Parliament to oppose the Code; but the working classes never entered into the matter at all. How, therefore, my hon. Friend can think that working men will deal with this question, in which they have never shown any interest, and which is very intricate and difficult, I cannot understand. Again, my hon. Friend ought to be prepared to show how he means to resist the course of what he calls false democracy. If the working classes, in addition to being a majority in the boroughs, get a re-distribution of the seats in their favour, it will follow that their influence will be enormously increased. They will then urge the House of Commons to pass another Franchise Bill, and another Re-distribution Bill to follow it. Not satisfied with these, yet another Franchise Bill and another Re-distribution of Seats will, perhaps, follow. It will be a ruinous game of see-saw. No one can tell where it will stop, and it will not be likely to stop until we get equal electoral districts and a qualification so low that it will keep out nobody.

There is another matter with which my hon. Friend has not dealt. I mean the point of combination among the working classes. To many persons there appears great danger that the machinery which at present exists for strikes and trade unions may be used for political purposes. And that this use of such machinery has not escaped the attention of thinking men, I will show you from a speech made by the hon. Member for Birmingham, in January, 1860. In that speech he said—

"Working men have associations; they can get up formidable strikes against capital—sometimes

> for things that are just, sometimes for things that are impossible. They have associations, trade societies, organizations, and I want to ask them why it is that all these various organizations throughout the country could not be made use of for the purpose of obtaining their political rights."

Why is it that those various organizations have not been so made use of? The hon. Gentleman asked that question in 1860, and I admit that hitherto he has received no answer. Why? I will tell you why. The working classes, to use his own expression, are the lever. But they must have a fulcrum before they can act. They have not got it. Give them the majority of the voters in a number of boroughs, and it is supplied to them. It is not by passing resolutions and making speeches they coerce their masters. They watch their opportunity — they wait for the time when large orders are in, and they refuse to work. That is the fulcrum they work on. Give them the majority of voters—that will be their political fulcrum; and if the hon. Gentleman repeats his advice, no doubt they will use it with avidity. I want to call the attention of the House in a few words to the condition of the trade unions, because we are all anxious to discover, if we can, the future of that democracy which, I believe, this Bill will be the first means of establishing. I take one class —the operative stonemasons, a very influential association, numbering 80,000 members, and having a large capital. Last year, after a strike of nineteen weeks, this body of masons beat the masters. Let me call the attention of the House to a letter which they sent to the employers—

> "We present you with the wishes of our trade union, requesting a reply on or before Saturday next:—Mr. Thomas and all non-society plasterers to be discharged; all non-society carpenters and improvers to be discharged; piecework to be abolished, &c.—On behalf of the United Building Trades. "JOHN BRAY, Chairman."

Mark what that is. See the power unions have of drawing men within their own circle. You say if they become political bodies, men who want to have nothing to do with politics will have nothing to do with them. Can they help themselves? They will be overborne, overawed, they are like men contending with a maelstrom into which, struggle as they may, eventually they will be sucked. This is a paragraph which I have taken from an Edinburgh paper—

> "The tailors' strike may now be considered at an end, the men having agreed to accept the London 'log,' with payment at the rate of 5½*d.* an hour, as offered by the masters. These terms the men seem to consider as highly satisfactory, entailing, as they will, an increase of from 15 to 25 per cent on their wages. We have been informed that the men have made it a condition with the masters that the 'black sheep,' or those who have continued working during the lock-out, shall not obtain employment until they become members of the society, besides paying a fine of 10*s.* each."

You will say these men do not want to join these societies—I dare say they do not; but what choice have they? The truth is—and of this I want to convince the House—that these trades unions are far more unions against the best, the most skilful, the most industrious, and most capable of the labourers themselves, than they are against their masters. Listen to another rule which is taken from the printed book of the co-operative society of masons—

> "Working overtime, tending to our general injury by keeping members out of employment, shall be abolished, excepting in case of accident or necessity."

This is your future political organization. Again—

> "It is also requested that lodges harassed by piecework or sub-contracting, do apply at a reasonable time for a grant to abolish it."

That is to say, men are first to be driven into these unions, by pressure such as I have explained to the House, and then, once they are got within the limits, whatever their necessities, whatever the pressure of their families, they are not to be allowed to eke out their income by working overtime. To do so might enable a man, a poor man, to raise himself out of that sphere of life, and furnish him with some still better occupation. But although his good conduct may have invited the confidence and attracted the notice of his master, he is not to be allowed to take a sub-contract, to make a little money in that way. The object of all these proceedings is obvious. It is to enclose as many men as can be got into these societies, and then to apply to them the strictest democratic principle, and that is to make war against all seperiority, to keep down skill, industry, and capacity, and make them the slaves of clumsiness, idleness, and ignorance. One extract more, and I have done—

> "In localities where that most obnoxious and destructive system generally known as 'chasing'

> is persisted in, lodges should use every effort to put it down. Not to take less time than that taken by an average mason in the execution of the first portion of each description of work is the practice that should be adopted among us as much as possible; and where it is plainly visible that any member or other individual is striving to overwork or 'chase' his fellow-workmen, thereby acting in a manner calculated to lead to the discharge of members, or a reduction of their wages, the party so acting shall be summoned before the lodge, and if the charge be satisfactorily proved, a fine shall be inflicted on the party implicated."

That is to say, when a poor workman, naturally quicker and more skilful than those about him, and with a wish to distinguish himself, shows his capacity, so as to oblige his fellow-workmen to exert themselves more than goes to what they please to the call time taken by an average mason in the execution of his work, he is to be fined and put down. Add to this—what does not appear in any of the rules and regulations, but what we know well—the system of terrorism that lurks behind these trades unions, and makes the lives of the "knobsticks" and "black sheep" miserable till they are driven into them. And then look at this tremendous machinery; if you only arm it with the one thing it wants—the Parliamentary vote!

It remains for us to consider—and I am sure the House will be glad to hear that this is the last branch of the subject which I shall have to treat—the results of the step that you are invited to take. I assume that this is really a very large and sweeping change in the democratic direction, giving, as I believe, the majority of votes in boroughs to the working classes. On that point we are compelled to differ, because the Government will not give us the materials necessary for making an accurate calculation. This change is to be followed by a further and very large change in the re-distribution of seats. It does not depend upon any Government, upon any Minister, perhaps upon any House of Commons to say where those changes will stop. One hon. Member speaks of this as a change that will last fifty years. He has put the matter as entirely out of his power as a man who, rolling a stone down the side of a mountain, fixes beforehand in his own mind the time it will take to reach the bottom. We have had this matter put before us from one very peculiar and invidious point of view. It seems to have been thought that the manner to discuss the probable result of a great democratic change in this country was, on the one side, to praise the working men, especially those among our own constituents, and, on the other, to remain silent, because nothing except praise, it is presumed, would be borne. I think that is not the way to approach this question. There is considerable risk that in this way the basis of our institutions may be complimented away. We are rich in experience on this subject. We have the experience of our own state and condition, which, compared with that of other countries, may be called a stationary state; we have the experience of our colonies all over the world, which may be described as in a transition state; and we have the experience of those two great democracies, France and America, where democracy may be said to have run its course and arrived at something like its ultimate limits. It is inexcusable in us if we do not apply our minds to the consideration of this subject, and draw from this rich field of observation conclusions more trustworthy and more reliable than those to be gained from our own isolated experience, particularly as this is so often contradictory. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Cardwell) began his speech the other night by telling us that if the working men had a fault in the world it was their too great reverence for authority, and then he went on to tell us that if we did not accede to their present moderate requests, it would be a question, not of how much we should give, but of how much they would take. That was the sum of the hon. Gentleman's remarks; he told us that the burden of proof would be effectually shifted, and he said, what we all understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say before he wrote his preface and made his two speeches to explain away his meaning. The working men entered the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary's speech like lambs, and they left it as lions, and so his estimate of them may be taken to answer itself. The question of peace or war has been a good deal touched upon in this debate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, at Liverpool, was very much struck with the magnificent spectacle of the strength put forth by democracy in the recent war. I would rather he had commended it for something which it had done in peace. I never doubted that democracy was a terrible warlike power. It is not the educated and reflective who are influenced by ideas, but the half educated and the unreflective; and if you show to the ignorant and poor and half educated wrong, injustice, and wickedness anywhere, their generous instincts rise within them, and nothing is easier than to get up a cry for the redress of those grievances. We feel the injustice, too, but we look not merely at the injustice itself, we look before and after, we look at the collateral circumstances, at what must happen to trade, revenue, and our own position in the world, and we look also at what must happen to those very poor persons themselves before we commit ourselves to a decided course. Persons, also, who have something to lose, are less anxious to lose it than those who have little at stake often, even though these last may by the loss be reduced to absolute poverty. At the time of the Crimean war we actually got up an enthusiasm on behalf of that most abominable and decrepit despotism—the Turkish Empire. Nothing would have been more popular in England than a war on behalf of Hungary in 1849, or one lately on behalf of Poland. Wherever cruelty or injustice exists, the feelings of the humbler class of Englishmen—to their honour be it said—revolt against it, and not possessing the quality of circumspection their impulse is to go straight at the wrong and redress it, without regard to ulterior consequences. Therefore, to suggest that in making the institutions of the country more democratic we have any security from war, that we do not greatly increase the risk of war, seems to me supremely ridiculous. What is taking place in the Australian colonies? Victoria and New South Wales are both governed by universal suffrage, and it is as much as we can do to prevent their going to war with each other. Look at America. A section of the American democracy revolted and broke up the Union, the rest fought to preserve it; the war was fought out to the bitter end, and now that the war is concluded they are almost ready to go to war again to prevent the doing of that which they took up arms to accomplish. Look at free trade. If we have a precious jewel in the world it is our free trade policy. It has been everything to us. With what eyes do democracies look at it? Let us turn to history, and not enter into particular cases of particular working men. Take the facts. Canada has raised her duties enormously, and justified them upon protectionist principles. The Prime Minister of New South Wales at this moment is a strong protectionist. The Ministry in Victoria were free traders, but by the will of the people they have been converted, and have become protectionists. So vigorously has the question been fought that destruction is threatened to the second branch of the Legislature, though equal in power to the other, in defiance of the laws of the country, and all to carry out a policy of protection. Then we come to America. America out-protects protection — there never was anything like the zeal for protection in America. With a revenue that needs recruiting by every means in their power, they persist in sacrificing the most valuable resources; with a frontier that bids defiance to any effectual attempts to guard it, they persist in maintaining duties that provoke to wholesale smuggling rather than reduce them by a single penny. And as if anxious at once to illustrate the free trade and peace proclivities of democracy they terminate the treaty with Canada, which was a step in the direction of free trade, and then seek to enforce by violence the very rights which the treaty they have put an end to secured. I will add one word as to Communism. The hon. Member for Lambeth has certainly furnished us with a very good argument in favour of the proposition of having working men to represent themselves. He has drawn such a picture of them as they would scarcely have given of themselves. What does he say? He says, in the first place, that they are entirely unable to understand that wages depend on the laws of supply and demand; that, he says, is entirely out of their conception. Then he tells us that they have no conception of any difference between the remuneration of the labour of the strong and the weak; the strong are to work for the weak, and all are to be paid alike. Then, as far as Government is concerned, the working men—so far from having a horror of a paternal and interfering Government—want us to prevent their going to public-houses, and this in the name of universal liberty, equality, and fraternity! Not only so, but they insist that the money of their fellow taxpayers ought to be spent in building houses for them to live in, because it is not for them, forsooth, to appropriate a sufficient proportion of their own incomes to pay the amount of rent required to accomplish this object on commercial principles.

I come now to the question of the representatives of the working classes. It is an old observation that every democracy is in some respect similar to a despotism. As courtiers and flatterers are worse than despots themselves, so those who flatter and fawn upon the people are generally very inferior to the people the objects of their flattery and adulation. We see in America, where the people have undisputed power, that they do not send honest, hard-working men to represent them in Congress, but traffickers in office, bankrupts, men who have lost their character and been driven from every respectable way of life, and who take up politics as a last resource. There is one subject of immense importance to a constitutional House—namely, the expenses of elections. The hon. Member for Westminster thinks this Bill will abridge the influence of wealth. Will it do so? Let us see. Those expenses are of two kinds—legitimate and illegitimate. The Bill now before the House will enormously increase the electoral districts, and in many it will double and in some treble the legitimate expense of elections. I am speaking among people who are thoroughly acquainted with this subject, and they know too well that the expenses of elections depend as much on the illegitimate as on the legitimate agencies employed. Can it be argued, then, that by admitting occupiers of houses between £10 and £7, you will diminish the illegitimate expenses of elections? Yes, it can, for it has been thus argued by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. The right hon. Gentleman—and I am happy to have his authority—says—mind, I do not—that the people in a great many of the boroughs are very corrupt. [Mr. MILNER GIBSON: I said, "some voters."] Well, some voters in some boroughs. I wish to be cautious. Some of these voters have political opinions, but their minds are so sluggish that they cannot be influenced without a certain *lene tormentum* or reminder in the shape of a £5 note; while others, who have no political opinions, are slow and procrastinating, being never able to make up their minds until about three o'clock on the day of the poll, when by some inscrutable influence they are urged on to a little activity. Others are judicial and cannot decide till they have been paid on both sides. It is said, here is a disease, cure it, dilute its poison by admitting a large number to the franchise. Well, that would be a very good argument if health was catching as well as disease. If I had half-a-dozen diseased cattle, and I turned one hundred sound cattle among them, I might infect the new ones, but I do not think that I should do much good to the sick ones. And now, let me say that I have never been answered as to the effect which the lowering of the franchise would have upon this House, and I suppose that I never shall be. One great mistake is made—it is almost a childish oversight—and that is to speak of this House as if it were merely a legislative body. The Members of this House have a position, a consideration, and a weight in this country such as no legislative body ever had in any country in the world. This is not because of any extraordinary skill in legislation; we have other functions. The House is the administrator of the public funds, but besides that it is a main part of the executive Government of the country. It can unmake the Executive and it can go a long way to make it. It is, therefore, well to consider that you are dealing with a Legislature entirely different from either the Assembly of France or the Congress of America. We all know that while our legislation has been more vigorous and better since the Reform Bill, the executive Government has shown weakness and languor. If you exaggerate, if you intensify the causes already at work, you will find it necessary to do what has been done elsewhere—to separate the functions of the executive Government from the House of Commons altogether, to break up that most salutary union which exists between them, and to have a Government which shall not depend for its existence upon a majority in this House. Now, that is a consideration the seriousness of which it is perfectly impossible to exaggerate. In the colonies they have got Democratic Assemblies. And what is the result? Way, responsible Government becomes a curse, instead of a blessing. In Australia there is no greater evil to the stability of society, to industry, to property, and to the well-being of the country, than the constant change which is taking place in the Government, and the uncertainty that it creates and the pitting of rival factions against each other. The same thing, I think, is wonderfully exemplified in Victoria, where you have a Government which is now under the influence of universal suffrage, and which is at war at once with the judicial authorities and the Upper Chamber, because neither will yield to its illegal exactions. The Supreme Court decides against the levy of taxes by resolutions of the Assembly, and the Government dissolves Parliament and appeals to universal suffrage against the decision of the Supreme Court. What does this tend to? It tends to anarchy, and from that anarchy these colonies must be relieved. They can, however, only be relieved by depriving them of that boon which in an unfortunate hour they received—that of responsible Government coupled with universal suffrage—and by placing their Government in some permanent hands, so that the Executive shall not be in a perpetual state of change. Look a little further, and see what happened in France, where there was a limited constituency in the time of Louis Philippe, and Parliamentary Government until the Revolution of 1848. Then came the Assembly elected by universal suffrage, and still with a responsible Government. But that responsible Government became weaker every day until the *coup d'etat*, and I doubt if there are many Gentlemen here who could tell me the name of the nominal Premier under whom the liberties of France were overthrown. The great men who founded the Constitution of America foresaw this, and they took means to obviate the difficulty. They knew perfectly well in what the enormous advantage of our system of government consisted. They knew that democracy required checks, and they sought to check it by various means. They, in fact, checked democracy with democracy, and elected a President. They added, too, what we have not got—the principle of federalism, which resisted the downward tendency of democracy by a lateral pressure. To use a familiar illustration, they held a piece of coal up by a pair of tongs. That has been the course adopted in America. And now let us see what has come of it. They have fought out a Civil War, and gained a great victory. But we must remember that men's opinions were divided. One side wanted to prevent the South from regaining the power it possessed before the Civil War, and the other to re-construct the Union on the principle of State rights. In this country the question would be decided by a vote displacing or retaining the Government; and those who were displaced would carry into the wilderness their offences, as the scapegoat carried off the offences of the people of Israel. But, mark what happens in America. You cannot get rid of the President, who sits for four years; nor the Congress, which sits for two years. Therefore, you have an internecine duel, and those who ought to combine and coalesce for the good of the country are in factious opposition. The whole frame of the Constitution is thus stretched till it cracks—to try, not who shall hold the supreme power, but which of the two rival institutions shall gain the victory over the other. You have seen Senators expelled in order to secure a majority of two-thirds, and things have arrived at such a pitch that no man need be surprised at seeing a second Civil War from the inability of the Constitution to solve the difficulty in which the first Civil War had placed the country. Let us apply this to our own country, We have in our Government an invaluable institution, and let us not rashly or foolishly put it in peril. I do not know whether hon. Gentlemen have read the report of the debate which took place the other day in the French Chamber between M. Thiers and M. Rouher on the subject of the introduction into France of a responsible Government. Though my sympathies as an Englishman are with M. Thiers, I confess that in my opinion the argument of M. Rouher was unanswerable, for the question was whether responsible Government could co-exist with universal suffrage? If you were to have responsible Government back, said M. Rouher, you must also have back the *pays legal*, the old constituencies containing 200,000 voters, for, without that, he argued, M. Thiers was asking for a thing without being prepared to realize the only conditions under which it could exist.

Now, Sir, democracy has yet another tendency, which it is worth while to study at the present moment. It is singularly prone to the concentration of power. Under it individual men are small, and the Government is great. That must be the character of a Government which represents the majority, and which absolutely tramples down and equalizes everything except itself. And democracy has another strong peculiarity. It looks with the utmost hostility on all institutions not of immediate popular origin, which intervene between the people and the sovereign power which the people have set up. To use the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, it likes to have everything as representative as possible, and that which is not representative it likes to have swept away. Now, look what was done in France. Democracy has left nothing in that country between the people and the Emperor except a bureaucracy which the Emperor himself has created. In America it has done almost the same thing. You have there nothing to break the shock between the two great Powers of the State. The wise men who framed the Constitution tried to provide a remedy by dividing functions as much as possible. They assigned one function to the President, another to the Senate, a third to the Congress, and a fourth to the different States. But all their efforts have been in vain, and you see how two hostile camps have arisen, and the terrible duel which is now taking place between them. Now, apply that to England, which above all countries in the world is the country of intermediate institutions. There are between the people and the Throne a vast number of institutions which our ancestors have created. Their principle in creating them seems to have been this—that they looked a great deal to equality. If there were something to be done, they sought for some existing institution which was able to do it. If some change were required, they altered things as little as they could, and were content to go on in that manner. This is a country of privileges above all other countries, but the privileges have been given, not as in other countries—as in France before the Revolution, for instance—for the benefit of the privileged classes, but because our ancestors, in all moderation, believed this to be the best way to insure order, and good government and stability. It may be difficult to prove upon theory how all this should be, because ancient Governments, as Burke finely remarks, are seldom based on abstract principles, but rather are the materials from which abstract principles are drawn. I think we should act more wisely and more worthily to the country if we were to ascertain what lessons of wisdom may be drawn from the signal success of our own Government, instead of trying to borrow from the people of America notions which lead to such results as I have been endeavouring to depict. But, Sir, have we succeeded? I will quote, not my own words, but an unexceptionable witness. "It has been our privilege," says the speaker whom I quote—

> "To see a process going forward in which the Throne has acquired broader and deeper foundations in the affections of the country; in which the law has commended itself more and more to the respect and attachment of the people; in which the various classes of the community have come into close communion the one with the other; in which the great masses of our labouring fellow-countrymen have come to be better supplied than they were in the time of their immediate forefathers, and in which upon the whole, a man desirous of the welfare of his kind, looking out on the broad surface of society, may thank his God, and say, 'Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'"

Well, those eloquent words were the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they were spoken on the 14th of September last, just two months before he began the concoction of the Bill, which has been so very successful in illustrating the manner in which brethren dwell together in unity. Now, let us suppose democracy to be established in a greater or less degree in this country. With what eyes would it look upon the institutions which I have alluded to? What would be the relation of this House with the House of Peers? I will call a witness. Eight years ago the hon. Member for Birmingham inverted his present process. He is now anxious to secure means; he was then proclaiming ends. He said then, "See what I will do for you if you will only give me Reform;" but now he says, "Give me Reform, and be assured that I will do nothing." But the Bill does not say that. The words he uttered eight years ago remain. They have never been retracted, and I have no reason to suppose that the hon. Gentleman wishes to retract, or is ashamed of any one of them. The hon. Gentleman said on one occasion—I am speaking from memory, but, though I am not sure about the words, I am about the meaning which the hon. Gentleman intended to convey—that, as far as the House of Peers was concerned, he did not believe that even the Peers themselves could suppose that they were a permanent institution in this country. What do you suppose would become of a House of Peers in America? What has become of the House of Peers in France? The name alone remains; but where is the power of that brilliant aristocracy which surrounded the throne of the Louis's and gave a glitter even to their vices? Then, what shall we say of the Church? I am speaking of it merely from a secular point of view, as a large and wealthy institution, not exactly of popular origin, nor looked upon with particular affection by persons who stand well with the masses. I call a witness again. What does the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham say? He speaks of "that portion of the public estate which is for a time permitted to remain in the hands of the Church of England." What would be the position of the Judges? Looking at the differences in this respect between the two countries, it will be seen that we have fenced round our Judges with every safeguard, and given them more and more power, until we have made them practically an irresponsible class in the country. We have been content to witness the melancholy sight of a person actually blind, and we still have a man of ninety years of age, sitting upon the judicial bench. We submit to this, not because we think it right in itself, but because we think it better to err to a small extent than to give rise to the slightest suspicion that the position of a Judge has been influenced in the least way by this House. Now, what state of things exists in America? In the great State of New York the Judges are appointed for six years only, and further west the term decreases, until in Mississippi two years is the maximum. And why? In order that they may be able to administer the law not in accordance with the law, but in accordance with the popular sentiment. That we should continue to have Judges I do not doubt, but do you think they would occupy such a position as they occupy now, and be so utterly independent of popular power?

And now let us come to ourselves. Our position, as I have remarked already, is much more honourable than that of the members of any other Legislative Assembly in the world. Do you think democracy would look with a favourable eye upon that? Would it not judge by analogy that such a state of things ought in some degree to be altered, and that we should be made to approach nearer to the level of our constituents? Now, we have a privileged class of electors who hold houses above £10. That class is a humble one, but it has discharged its duty up to the present time in a manner which almost defies criticism. But now, without any reason, but merely on account of an abstract principle of right, we have an attempt made to sweep that class away and swamp it in the class below it. Without enlarging upon this topic, I must say it is manifest to me that if the House of Commons is democratized it will not rest under such modified circumstances until it has swept away those institutions which at present stand between the people and the Throne, and has supplied the place of them, as far as it can, by institutions deriving their origin directly from the people, being, as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said, as representative as possible, and not having the *quasi*-independence which the present privileged institutions and corporations possess. You will then have face to face, with no longer anything to break the shock between them, the Monarch of the time and a great Democratic Assembly. Now, history has taught us little if we are to suppose that these two powers would go on harmoniously, and that things would continue to work as they do now. The event no one can predict. We saw what a duel there was in France in 1851, when the President and the Assembly were each grasping at the sword and endeavouring to exterminate the other. The Emperor conquered, and Cæsarianism followed. Had the Emperor failed, France would have had the very worst possible form of Government—namely, a Convention, a deliberative Assembly attempting through its committees to exercise Executive power, and endeavouring to do that which ought to be done through responsible Ministers; and such a Government would only last for a time, to be destroyed by some Cromwell or Napoleon, or to dissolve by its own vices and weakness. Look, again, on the state of things in America, where the President wields the Executive power, and where an opposition to him is raised in Congress. And then see how Congress works. It works through committees, and every officer in the Government has a corresponding committee in Congress to thwart and to overrule him. But I need follow that question no further. Probably many Gentlemen may even think that I have endeavoured to look too far into futurity. At all events, I do not base my case on mere vague conjecture. I base it upon history and experience. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has told us that England is a country totally different from America or Australia, and that no argument could be drawn from either of the two latter applicable to the position in which we stand. Well, Sir, there is, of course, no doubt that England is a country entirely different from America or Australia, but the difference is in their favour as regards the working of a democracy. They possess boundless tracts of land. In America land acts as a sedative to political passion; in England it operates as an irritant. Here land is held up by democratic leaders to their followers as a thing to be desired and secured, as the spoils in fact of political warfare; in America it is comparatively speaking of no value, it is easily obtained, and much inflammable matter is in consequence removed which would, under other circumstances, prove dangerous to the system. Everybody knows that if America was altogether governed by the great towns the result would be most disastrous, and that it is the cultivators of the land who moderate their influence, and prevent them from rushing on to their destruction. Upon this point I should like to quote the words of Lord Macaulay, one of the most able of the advocates of the principle of the Reform Bill of 1832, from which he never went back a hair's breadth. He, in replying to an American gentleman who sent him a *Life of Jefferson,* says, speaking of this country—

> "In bad years there is plenty of grumbling here, and sometimes a little rioting ; but it matters little, [for here the sufferers are not the rulers. The supreme power is in the hands of a class, numerous indeed, but select—of an educated class —of a class which is and knows itself to be deeply interested in the security of property and the maintenance of order."

Then he writes as follows—

> "It is quite plain that your Government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority, for with you the majority is the Government, and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when in the State of New York a multitude of people, not one of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a Legislature."

He adds—

> "Is it possible to doubt what sort of Legislature will be chosen? On one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. On the other is a demagogue ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers, and asking why anybody should be permitted to drink champagne and to ride in a carriage, while thousands of honest folks are in want of necessaries. Which of the two candidates is likely to be preferred by the working man who hears his children crying for more bread? I seriously apprehend that you will, in some such season of adversity as I have described, do things which will prevent prosperity from returning. Either some Cæsar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your Republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the 20th century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth ; with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country and by your own institutions."

Now, observe the argument of Lord Macaulay. It is this, "You have a democracy in America, but you have there, also, plenty of elbow-room and abundant means of subsistence for its whole population ; but when this state of things come to an end, then the institutions of the country may be tried, and a crash may follow." In England we have not a democracy, but we have a state of society in which, in the event of pressure, distress and misery must to a great extent prevail. Now, if we add here, with our hands, democracy to population, as the course of time may in America add population to democracy, we shall have done all in our power to bring about exactly the state of things which Lord Macaulay describes, and we may expect that something like the same consequences will be the result.

Sir, it appears to me we have more and more reason every day we live to regret the loss of Lord Palmerston. The remaining Members of his Government would seem, by way of a mortuary contribution, to have buried in his grave all their prudence, statesmanship, and moderation. He was scarcely withdrawn from the scene before they set to work to contravene and contradict his policy. That policy, acted upon by a statesman who perfectly understood the wants of the English people, had been crowned with unexampled success, and they, I suppose, must have thought that the best way to secure a continuance of that success was to aim at doing that which he above all other things disapproved. The noble Lord at the head of the Government, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have performed a great feat: they have taken the great mass of their supporters, who are, I believe, men of moderate views and moderate opinions, and laid them at the feet of the hon. Member for Birmingham. They have thus brought them into contact with men and with principles from which but six short months ago they would have recoiled. That is what has happened to a portion of those who sit upon these Benches. As to the rest of us, we are left like sheep in the wilderness, and after the success of this extraordinary combination — to use no harsher word—we who remain precisely what we have been are charged with inconsistency, while the bonds of political allegiance are being strained until they are ready to crack for the purpose of keeping the Liberal party together. We are told that we are bound by every tie which ought to bind mankind to act in accordance with the policy of Earl Russell ; but I, for one, Sir, dispute the justice of that proposition. I have never served under that noble Lord. I have served under two

Prime Ministers for a period—I am sorry to say—of little less than ten years. The one was Lord Aberdeen, the other Lord Palmerston. Earl Russell joined the Government of each of those Ministers; both Governments he abandoned, both he assisted to destroy. I owe the noble Lord no allegiance. I am not afraid of the people of this country. They have displayed a good sense which is remarkable, indeed, when contrasted with the harangues which have been addressed to them. But if I am not afraid of the people, neither do I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Huntingdon in fearing those by whom they are led. Demagogues are the commonplace of history. They are to be found wherever popular commotion has prevailed, and they all bear to one another a strong family likeness. Their names float lightly on the stream of time; they are in some way handed down to us, but then they are as little regarded as is the foam which rides on the crest of the stormy wave and bespatters the rock which it cannot shake. Such men, Sir, I do not fear, but I have, I confess, some misgivings when I see a number of Gentlemen of rank, of character, of property, and intelligence carried away, without being convinced or even over-persuaded, in the support of a policy which many of them in their inmost hearts detest and abhor. Monarchies exist by loyalty, aristocracies by honour, popular assemblies by political virtue and patriotism, and it is in the loss of those things, and not in comets and eclipses, that we are to look for the portents that herald the fall of States.

I have said that I am utterly unable to reason with the Chancellor of the Exchequer for want of a common principle to start from, but there is happily one common ground left to us, and that is the second book of the Æneid of Virgil. My right hon. Friend, like the moth which has singed its wings in the candle, has returned again to the poor old Trojan horse, and I shall, with the permission of the House, give them one more excerpt from the history of that noble beast, first promising that I shall then turn him out to grass, at all events for the remainder of the Session. The passage which I am about to quote is one which is, I think, worthy the attention of the House, because it contains a description not only of the invading army of which we have heard so much, but also a slight sketch of its general—

> "Arduus armatos mediis in mœnibus adstans
> Fundit equus, victorque Sinon incendia miscet
> Insultans: portis alii bipatentibus adsunt,
> Millia quot magnis nunquam venêre Mycenis."

In other words—

> "The fatal horse pours forth the human tide,
> Insulting Sinon flings his firebrands wide,
> The gates are burst; the ancient rampart falls,
> And swarming millions climb its crumbling walls."

I have now, Sir, traced as well as I can what I believe will be the natural results of a measure which, it seems to my poor imagination, is calculated, if it should pass into law, to destroy one after another those institutions which have secured for England an amount of happiness and prosperity which no country has ever reached, or is ever likely to attain. Surely the heroic work of so many centuries, the matchless achievements of so many wise heads and strong hands, deserve a nobler consummation than to be sacrificed at the shrine of revolutionary passion or the maudlin enthusiasm of humanity? But if we do fall, we shall fall deservedly. Uncoerced by any external force, not borne down by any internal calamity, but in the full plethora of our wealth and the surfeit of our too exuberant prosperity, with our own rash and inconsiderate hands, we are about to pluck down on our own heads the venerable temple of our liberty and our glory. History may tell of other acts as signally disastrous, but of none more wanton, none more disgraceful.

Mr. HODGKINSON said, that if the Amendment moved by the noble Lord the Member for Chester were judged of simply by its natural meaning, it might be presumed to proceed from a section of the advanced Liberal party, disappointed to find that the Government Bill only embraced one branch of the subject; but judging from the arguments by which it was supported, the conclusion seemed irresistible that it had been cunningly framed for the purpose of catching the votes of the waverers, and likewise of that class of Reformers who obtained seats in Parliament on the faith of their pledges with respect to this question, but yet who were so lukewarm in their allegiance that they were perfectly prepared to "break the word of promise to the hope" if any means could be devised by which they could "keep it to the ear." He could, nevertheless, tell this latter class of persons that, however much they might compound with their consciences and delude themselves, they were greatly mistaken if they thought they could delude others. What did the supporters of the Amendment really require? A Bill had been brought forward for the purpose of extending the franchise so fair and so moderate that it was well known that, if left to sink or float on its own merits, it would float. But hon. Members opposite did not like the Bill, as they would not like any Bill of a similar nature. They did not dare to meet it by a direct negative —they hesitated to meet their enemy face to face, and therefore they sought to accomplish by stratagem what they could not accomplish by force, and they therefore endeavoured to tie a millstone about the Bill in the shape of another branch of the question, with respect to which there existed great difference of opinion in that House. He had always doubted the prudence and sincerity of previous attempts at legislation where the Bills were made to embrace too many subjects, and therefore he hailed this measure with satisfaction because it dealt simply with the franchise. It was perfectly true that there was a successful precedent in the Reform Bill of 1832 for mixing up the two subjects of the franchise and the re-distribution of seats; but there was no analogy between the circumstances of that time and of the present day. In the former period the great grievance consisted in rotten boroughs or nomination boroughs, and it was impossible to disfranchise a large number of boroughs and allot the seats to other places without settling the question of the franchise, because at that time there existed no uniform franchise in the boroughs. It was well known that the question of re-distribution was one always attended with the greatest difficulty. They had had some experience to that effect in 1861, when the late Government attempted, in a very small way, to re-distribute the four seats which the disfranchisement of Sudbury and St. Albans placed at the disposal of Parliament. What happened then would happen again in a larger degree if a larger re-distribution were to take place. A considerable amount of time was wasted, and nine divisions took place in reference to the re-distribution of four seats. On the present occasion, however, we should have to settle, not only the relative claims of the three parts of the United Kingdom, but also the question between the counties and the boroughs, and the pretensions of the metropolis. He had always failed to discover any affinity between the two branches of the question—the franchise and the re-distribution of seats; and he did not see how the question of the qualification to be possessed by individual electors was necessarily mixed up with the question of the particular constituencies which should return Members. The best test of the Bill was to ask its results—was it possible or probable that the re-distribution of seats when it took place would render the proposed reduction of the franchise impolitic or improper? He had put this question frequently to himself and others, and it had not yet been satisfactorily answered. The arguments against the present Bill were identical with those used against the measures of the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King) and of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines), and were based on a distrust of that class of the population who lived in houses of a less rental than £10. Those arguments rested on the assumption that the amount of rent which a man paid constituted his qualification to vote, whereas that was not the real qualification itself, but the test of another qualification. A rental qualification was fixed on for the purpose of obtaining a constituency which might be supposed to possess the benefits of education, and the intelligence which accompanied education. The object of the fixed rental qualification, and the object of the educational franchise of the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Clay) were in fact the same. This Bill adopted a more rough-and-ready mode of arriving at the same end. The object of both was the same—to get a constituency composed of the educated portions of the community. In 1832 the amount fixed for the rental qualification was £10, it was believed that those who paid a £10 rental possessed the benefits of education. Since that period thirty-four years had elapsed, and there never had been a like period in the history of the world in which education had made so much progress; and there could be no doubt they would get a better educated constituency at £7 rental under this Bill than was had in the £10 votes of 1832. With reference to the electoral statistics, of which so much had been said, he wished to make a short explanation, more immediately affecting the borough he had the honour to represent (Newark). The statistics were described as exceedingly illusory and unsatisfactory because they had been sent back twice or three times for correction. The hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) said the other night that the Returns of the working men contained the name of a county magistrate:—now the fact was that the list contained the names of three borough magistrates. At present Newark had 711 electors. The first Return of the constituency to the Statistical Department of the Poor Law Board, made on the 16th of January, comprised 711 voters, of whom 648 were represented as belonging to the working classes. This was considered so palpably absurd that the Return was sent back on the 22nd of January, and on the 30th of that month it was received in a corrected form. Of the 711 voters, 356 then appeared as belonging to the working classes. That Return was again sent back, with a request that trades and occupations should be attached to the names; and by means of this process, the 356 had been reduced to 279. Still, the use of such general designations as "tailor," "butcher," "miller," "joiner," left it altogether uncertain whether the persons so described were masters or only journeymen; and in fact all those so designated were left as belonging to the working classes. In one instance he knew of a voter who was left on the revised list as belonging to the working classes who paid a rent of over £100 a year. Some of his constituents had taken great trouble in going carefully through the register, when they found that in Newark, instead of 30 per cent only 68 out of 632, or less than 10 per cent, belonged to the working classes—indeed, excluding the old scot and lot voters, the proportion was only 3 per cent. He imputed no blame to the Government or to the Poor Law Board for these inaccuracies; for he believed they had done all they could to obtain correct Returns. But in all probability the case he had mentioned was not a solitary one. To hear some hon. Gentlemen talk of the danger of admitting the working classes to a voice in the representation one would imagine that we owed the greatness and renown of the country to a £50 county and a £10 borough franchise. Now the fact was that up to 1832 the borough franchise was much more extensive than it would be under this Bill. The borough he represented before the Reform Bill had 1,700 electors, and the number on the register had now dwindled down to 711. At that time any person who paid rates—it might be for a garden or a pigstye—had a vote; but did they necessarily elect very democratic representatives? When the Reform Bill was introduced their representatives were Michael Thomas Sadleir and Mr. Serjeant Wilde, afterwards Lord Chancellor Truro, and he was not sure whether it was just before the passing of the Reform Bill, or just after it, at all events when the constituency was 1,700 in number, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer was returned. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: The number was 1,600.] At all events, he knew that it was when the constituency was numerous. Eight years afterwards the noble Lord the Member for Leicestershire (Lord John Manners), a member of the Cabinet of Lord Derby, was also returned for Newark. Well, this did not show the danger of admitting the working people to the franchise. In fact, this assumed fear was a perfect bugbear. Only once had there been any charge of bribery, and then, instead of petitioning that House, the parties were prosecuted at the assizes, and, being convicted, were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment—a mode of dealing with offenders which might be adopted with excellent effect in some very recent instances.

MR. YORKE said, it appeared to be the tactics of the other side of the House to represent the Conservatives as enemies of the working classes, and to invent sounding phrases disparaging to the working classes, and to impute them to the Conservatives. He (Mr. Yorke) utterly repudiated such imputations. It was said they altogether objected to the enfranchisement of the working classes. Now, although they objected to their admission on conditions which were inexpedient, it did not follow that they were opposed to their admission on proper and sufficient grounds. It seemed to be thought by some that Parliament had not done its duty towards the working classes, because it had not fed, housed, and educated them; but he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) that, whatever could be fairly expected of the Legislature had been done: and as to what had been said by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Stuart Mill), and by the hon. Member for Lambeth and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as to the necessity that the wants and interests of the working classes should be directly represented in that House, he thought the eloquent speech of the right hon. Gentleman had given them a sufficient answer. Nor did he think that any modification of the franchise would be followed by any perceptible alteration in that respect. There was no crying national grievance which it required a Reform Bill to remedy. Cases of individual grievance always obtained a ready hearing, and, if well founded, adequate redress. The House appeared to him to be tolerant to a degree in regard to the statement of any individual grievance, and to be not unwilling, where sufficient grounds were made out, to grant proper redress. There was, therefore, no general demand for any measure like that before the House. Notwithstanding that Ministers high in office had gone down among their constituents, and in language of an inflammatory character endeavoured to rouse a strong feeling on that subject, no sooner did they return to their proper employment on the Benches of that House, than all the excitement died away; and at that moment there was scarcely a vestige of the strong feeling to which hon. Gentlemen opposite were so fond of alluding a short time since. The excuse offered for bringing in that Bill was that they were pledged to it. He was not careful to enter into the question of those pledges, because he had not the honour of belonging to any of the Parliaments which were said to have so pledged themselves. But he differed altogether from the doctrine put forward on that point. It appeared to him that a man's pledges perished with the Parliament in which he had pledged himself; and if he went before his constituency again and solicited their suffrages on other grounds, it was for them to say whether they would give him their renewed confidence. Were pledges to be held valid when made under a mistake? Surely, if they pledged themselves to carry out opinions which they saw on a future occasion to be erroneous, it would be better to incur the charge of inconsistency than to act contrary to their maturer convictions. Another excuse put forward for the hasty introduction of this Bill was that the theoretical anomalies of the Constitution were so great as to cry out for redress. If that were so, was there any prospect of those theoretical anomalies being reduced as they went lower in the scale? Would they not be confronted by equal anomalies, whether they chose £8, £7, or £5 as the limit of the franchise? Moreover, this Bill did not deal with the greatest anomaly that could be alleged against the present system—namely, the inequality in the size and importance of the various constituencies, and the very defective representation of the counties as compared with the representation of boroughs. He held in his hand a statement based on Parliamentary documents, which showed that the population of the counties of England and Wales (exclusive of cities and boroughs) was 11,427,755, and that the number of inhabited houses was 2,290,061. The population of the Parliamentary cities and boroughs in England and Wales in 1861 was 8,638,469, and the number of houses was 1,449,444. The gross annual value of property assessed to the income tax, under Schedule A, was, in counties, £66,208,505, and in Parliamentary cities and boroughs £47,850,033. The number of voters in the counties was 519,348, and in cities and boroughs 467,563; the number of Members returned for counties 160, and for boroughs 338. The obvious result of that was, that if they wanted to deal with the greatest theoretical anomaly in the representation they would find it in the very small representation of the counties as compared with the boroughs. What was the anomaly of the working classes being only 26 per cent of the borough constituencies, in comparison with the gigantic anomaly he had just mentioned? Surely, if they were about to correct such anomalies they should begin with the greater and then go on to the less. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the franchise Bill, he talked about the supplemental Bills that were to follow. It seemed that the very last measure he proposed to lay on the table was one to remedy the evil of corruption in boroughs and at elections generally. With all deference to the right hon. Gentleman, that appeared to him (Mr. Yorke) to be the most pressing matter of all; and the revelations lately made before the Election Committees bore out that opinion. It was not the very small boroughs as a rule—though he admitted there were unsavoury exceptions—which figured most largely in the petition list, but the boroughs intermediate between them and those which were so vast as almost to preclude the possibility of extensive corruption. A short time ago the borough he had the honour to represent (Tewkesbury) had been calumniated in *The Times*, but it now appeared that there was scarcely a vestige of truth in the statement. Having made the writings of the hon. Member for Westminster his study, he had expected that they (the Opposition) would have had the benefit of that hon. Gentleman's support on that occasion, because they might collect from his works that he had as great a horror as the most orthodox Conservative of anything like democratic measures. They knew that that hon. Member was liberal, and even eccentric on some points—as, for example, upon female suffrage; but when a general lowering of the electoral franchise was proposed, it might have been anticipated that he would have stepped forward to advocate with his powerful voice some of those safeguards, such as an educational test and the representation of the minority, which they read of in his works. In his book on *Representative Government*, the hon. Member for Westminster said—

> "All trust in Constitutions is grounded on the assurance they may afford, not that the depositories of power will not, but that they cannot mis-employ it. Democracy is not the ideally best form of Government, unless this weak side of it can be strengthened, unless it can be so organized that no class, not even the most numerous, shall be able to reduce all but itself to political insignificance, and direct the course of legislation and administration by its exclusive class interest."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer differed from that, because he had told them, speaking individually, that he would not hesitate to trust the working classes with a preponderance of power.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER was understood to dissent, and to explain that he had said he should have no fear if that class were in a majority in the boroughs.

Mr. YORKE said, that such a majority seemed to be much the same thing as a preponderance; but he had no desire to misquote the right hon. Gentleman. But in the passage to which he had just referred, the hon. Member for Westminster continued—

> "The problem is to find the means of preventing this abuse without sacrificing the characteristic advantages of popular Government."

In the same work, the hon. Member said—

> "Legislative attempts to raise wages, limitation of competition in the labour-market, taxes or restrictions on machinery, and on improvements of all kinds tending to dispense with any of the existing labour, even, perhaps, protection of the home produce against foreign industry, are very natural (I do not venture to say whether probable) results of a feeling of class interest in a governing majority of manual labourers."

He thought the House would agree that these would be not only "very natural" but exceedingly probable results. But the lowering of the franchise was to be the panacea for all existing evils—poverty, ignorance, and crime were to disappear before it. That rather reminded him of what was said in America when anybody expressed surprise at seeing a railway being made in a vast prairie where there was neither population nor merchandise to be conveyed along it. "Oh!" it was replied, "don't be afraid; a railway will always create a traffic." The error was of an analogous character when it was said that the lowering of the franchise would create the fitness for its exercise. In searching further into the hon. Member for Westminster's works, he found another passage which it was surprising that the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) had not quoted that evening, because it was exceedingly appropriate as a retort in respect to certain words for which that right hon. Gentleman had been rather severely censured by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In his book on *Parliamentary Reform* the hon. Member for Westminster said—

> "There are few points in which the English as a people are entitled to the moral pre-eminence with which they are accustomed to compliment themselves at the expense of other nations; but of these points perhaps the one of greatest importance is that the higher classes do not lie, and the lower classes, though mostly habitual liars, are ashamed of lying."

David said, in his haste, "All men are liars;" but the hon. Member said the same thing in his leisure and in the retirement of his closet. If this was what fell from a friend of the working classes, what might not be expected from their enemies? If the right hon. Member for Calne chastised the working classes with whips, the hon. Member for Westminster, their own devoted advocate, chastised them with scorpions. He trusted the House would not commit itself to the vista of legislation which that Bill opened up before them. The programme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would probably not be got through without three dissolutions—one on the Re-distribution Bill, another on the Boundaries Bill, and a third, perhaps, on some of the other measures. The position of the Government had been compared by some to that of the *Northumberland*, and perhaps they had taken courage by the ultimate success of the attempt to launch that great vessel; but he did not believe the tide of public approbation would ever rise high enough to float the Bill, or that all the leverage of the hon. Member for Birmingham, or the hydraulic pressure of the hon. Member for Lewes, would ever be able to move it down the ways. He believed rather that it would remain immovable, a monument to future times of the rashness and incapacity of its authors.

Mr. LEEMAN said, as one of those to whom pertained the promises made to new Members the other evening, he asked the indulgence of the House while he stated the reasons which would induce him to give his support to the second reading of the Bill. In return for that indulgence, and in consideration for other new Members who were also desirous to address the House, he would promise to observe the utmost possible brevity. He had listened with close attention to all the speeches of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen, and the only conclusion to which he could arrive was that the object of the Amendment moved by the noble Lord (Earl Grosvenor) was clearly to shunt the question of Reform off the main line altogether, and to land it in a siding somewhere between Chester and King's Lynn. He had listened with pleasure to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne that night; but he was old enough to remember the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, and he was struck with the similarity of the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman with those which were then put forward by Lord Eldon and other noble Lords who foresaw in a franchise of £10 the destruction of the Monarchy, the House of Lords, and the Church, and all the other evils which the vivid imagination of the right hon. Gentleman had conjured up against the present Bill. Let them consider the class of persons who would be practically enfranchised by the measure. Hon. Gentlemen need not alarm themselves that it would have the effect of enfranchising the class of persons whom they saw at the corners of the streets of the Seven Dials; nor the stalwart navvies with red handkerchiefs and nailed boots who made our railways; nor the miners of Cornwall, Stafford, and Durham; nor the hordes of Irish labourers who were to be found on the quays of Liverpool and Glasgow, and in all the great seaports and towns; nor, in a word, any of that class which, in common Parliamentary language, was designated as the dangerous class. On the contrary, it would admit the best of the skilled workmen—men who had distinguished themselves by great ingenuity, by great skill, by the most unshaken loyalty to the Throne, by the greatest self-command under circumstances of deprivation and distress, but who, in point of fact, had not existed at the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. He asked the House to consider for a moment the extraordinary changes which had come over our artizan population within the last thirty-three years. In the year 1832 there were substantially no railways in the country; but it was well-known that their extension—and they now traversed the length and breadth of the land—had created industries which gave employment to thousands of the most skilled and intelligent handicraftsmen. At that period the Liverpool and Manchester Railway had only just been opened, but the lines which now intersected the country had called into existence an immense variety of manufactures which would not otherwise have come into being, and these manufactures again had created a new class of artificers and handicraftsmen. To a certain extent the development and general application of steam power had created a like state of things in several of the agricultural districts, in that class of machinery for which they were indebted to the men employed by the large agricultural implement makers strewn over the kingdom. It was impossible to walk through the long lanes of splendid machinery in the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862 without feeling proud, not only of the genius and capital, but also of the industry and skilled labour which had contributed so largely towards its production. It was the class of men who were engaged in those industries, and not the supposed dangerous classes whom he had particularized, who would practically be admitted to the franchise under the Bill. Let them look at the aggregate results which were achieved through the labour of these men. In 1832 our exports were not more than £50,000,000 or £60,000,000, now they were £180,000,000. That great increase in trade re-acted not only on the commercial classes but also on the agricultural. He was sure that hon. Gentlemen would admit that there was not a county in England which had not largely partaken in that increase of wealth, and he put it to hon. Members whether the men who had contributed to such a result were not worthy of their confidence and gratitude. It was said that there was a danger in the admission of such a class because of their numbers. He had listened in vain for a justification of such an apprehension, and he denied that our past experience of the working classes furnished any reason for it. If hon. Members looked to the various character of the trades in which those classes were employed, it would be seen that their interests were not essentially nor practically identical, and that no real combination amongst them was possible which would operate to any extent upon the representation of the House. The large employers of labour had no fear of the working classes, as they had been told in that House by the hon. Baronet the Member for the West Riding, who had truly stated that not less than 50,000 workmen were employed by hon. Members on that side the House. He had himself been brought extensively into contact with large classes of artificers in the counties of York and Durham, and most cordially endorsed that view. He had seen those men in their prosperity and in their adversity, and he felt it to be his duty to stand up in that House on their behalf, and to express his conviction that nothing in the past history of the country justified the alarm that the admission of the working classes in the degree contemplated by this measure would in any way imperil the institutions of the country. He believed it would strengthen them. The interests of the working classes were the interests of the country, and no one practically acquainted with them could for a moment suppose that any such combination among them was possible as would make them dangerous to the rest of the community. They were not enemies to the Throne, as alleged by some hon. Gentlemen opposite, for he believed that in no class was there a deeper feeling of loyalty. Remarks had been made in that House in disparagement of the petitions which had been presented in favour of the Bill. He could only say that the petition from the West Riding was agreed upon at a most numerous meeting, convened by a requisition to the Lord Lieutenant, which put the genuineness of the petition altogether beyond doubt. As to the feeling in the city of York, he could state that a very large and enthusiastic meeting had been held in favour of the Government Bill, convened by requisition to and presided over by the Lord Mayor, at which the resolutions were unanimous, and his hon. Colleague was requested to support the prayer of the petition. A petition has also been signed by 3,000 tradesmen and principal inhabitants of the city. It was said that the working men were apathetic on this subject, but he had also presented not less than fifteen petitions, signed by 2,500 artizans, comprising almost every handicraft trade in the city. For these reasons, and thanking the House for the kindness with which they had listened to him, he should follow the Government into the lobby and tender to them, not the grudging, hesitating, and sulky allegiance indicated by the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), but a cheerful, a hearty, and, he would add, a consistent support.

Viscount ROYSTON said, he should state his opinion frankly on this question of Reform, although by doing so he might expose himself to the taunts of hon. Members on the Ministerial side. He would, in the first place, enter his protest against the cry too often raised against Gentlemen who sat on his side of the House, and belonged to the great Conservative party, that they were adverse to popular freedom. Speaking for the first time, and as a young man, no one could charge him with any dislike or fear of the working classes. Considering how much those in high station tried to serve the working classes, he thought it was an unfair—an ignoble—cry to raise that the gentry of England were in any sense adverse to the working classes. In his opinion the great object of Reform in this country was, or ought to be, to make the House of Commons a more perfect representation of the English people. The question was, would the present Bill have that effect? Some hon. Members thought that a reduction of the franchise to £7 in boroughs and £14 in counties would bring about that object—others thought not. It was a point upon which difference of opinion might well exist. He did not say that those who opposed the Bill would oppose all measures of Parliamentary Reform; but it was a curious fact that every measure of Reform brought in during the last fourteen years had either died out or been thrown out by the wish of the great majority of the House. It would not be uninstructive to inquire whether this question of Reform had not been usually raised up for certain objects—such as keeping Government in office, or retaining them in office, or for some party or personal use or consideration. He believed that on the present occasion the sole object of raising the question was for the purpose of propping up the Ministerial Bench, and keeping in office those who, feeling the loss they had sustained in the death of the great and excellent statesman lately at the head of the Government, were obliged to bring this question before the country, so as to excite popular feeling on their behalf. With a majority of more than sixty in their favour at the beginning of the Session they brought forward a measure of Reform, which, if Reform were necessary, was no doubt a moderate measure; and yet, at the present protracted stage of the debate, they were shivering in their shoes as to what would happen to-morrow. How was it that the Government were, by the desertion of their party, placed in this ignominious position? Because the House of Commons did not wish for any change in the popular representation of the country which would effect the constitutional character of the House. He was not adverse to Reform. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Members might laugh, but it was clear that they looked at the question of Reform in the most narrow-minded manner. There were different senses in which Reform might be used. Men might reform their conduct, and he had no objection to this. The conduct of political parties might need reformation, and he could not oppose it; but the Reform of the principles on which the Government had been founded since 1832 with such glorious results was a different matter. It had been urged in favour of this Bill that the condition of the country had immensely improved since 1832. This country must improve and would improve; he had no fear of it; for the feelings of the country were intent on it. But this was a different matter; the Bill proposed to break down the first principles of the Constitution, and he saw no reason for this. It was a degradation of the franchise to bring it down to £7, when working men were raising themselves to the standard of £10. Lord Macaulay had been already quoted that evening by the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), and therefore he trusted he might be excused for again quoting so excellent an authority. In his speech upon the Reform Bill of 1832, Lord Macaulay said—

> "I bring, I say, no accusation against the working classes. I would withhold from them nothing which it might be for their good to possess. I see with pleasure that by the provisions of the Reform Bill the most industrious and respectable of our labourers will be admitted to a share in the Government of the State. If I would refuse to the working people that larger share of power which some of them have demanded, I would refuse it because I am convinced that by giving it I should only increase their distress. I admit that the end of Government is their happiness—but that they may be governed for their happiness, they must not be governed according to the doctrines which they have learnt from their illiterate, incapable, low-minded flatterers."

Those were the words of one of the most liberal-minded statesmen that the country had produced in modern times. Who were the flatterers of the people at the present time? Who was it that went about the country making yearly three or four addresses for the purpose of raising up, as it were, the dormant spirit of the working classes? The hon. Member for Birmingham had made it his yearly amusement to make one or two great speeches, which certainly when they appeared made *The Times* and the other newspapers more interesting than usual. He had carefully studied the speeches of the hon. Gentleman, whom he regarded with great respect, as he believed in his sincerity: still he did not regard himself as bound to be over-ruled by the high-flown language and the advanced Liberal sentiments expressed by the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman appear to have a mania for Reform, and doubtless every night the ghost of Reform haunted his bedside. It was no wonder, therefore, that he excited the people when he addressed them on the subject. The hon. Gentleman could not even let their dress alone. The proposition of the hon. Gentleman to alter the style of their attire when dining with the Speaker put him in mind of the lines—

> "Oh ye gods and little fishes,
> What's a man without his breeches?"

He might say of the hon. Gentleman in the words of Cassius—

> "He doth bestride the narrow world like a
> Colossus,
> And we petty men walk under his huge legs,
> And peep about and find ourselves dishonourable
> graves."

Turning to the figures laid upon the table of the House by the Government, he found that out of the 488,000 existing electors, 128,000 belonged to the working classes; that in 8 boroughs returning 14 Members the working classes had an undoubted majority; in 20 boroughs returning 35 Members they had 45 per cent of the representation; in 30 boroughs returning 68 Members they had between 30 and 40 per cent; in 83 boroughs returning 139 Members they had from 15 to 30 per cent; and that in 50 boroughs returning 78 Members they had less than 15 per cent. According to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the present measure would raise the number of the working-class electors to 330,000 against 362,000 of the middle and higher classes; the present annual increase of the £10 voters was about 10,000, and with the £7 qualification the yearly increase might be taken at double that number. So that taking the rate of increase in the £7 householders at 20,000 per annum the small majority of 32,000 possessed by the middle and upper classes would soon be swept away, and the working class would have the majority of votes in the constituency. Yet the right hon. Gentleman who had introduced the Bill had told them that to place the working classes in a clear majority in the representation had never been the intention of any Bill brought into the House, and that he did not believe Parliament would adopt such a principle. The question for the House to decide was whether they were prepared for the governing power of the country to be thrown into the hands of the democracy. Although he had no fear of the horrors which it had been predicted would follow such a result, yet he certainly could not see, if they once reduced the franchise, where they were to stop. For his own part, he would rather give his vote to extend the franchise to every householder in the kingdom who paid taxes, because there would be some finality in that principle, than support this Bill, which laid down no basis for a final settlement. He sincerely trusted that if the result of the division were adverse to the present Government, whatever party came in would not regard it as necessary to again bring forward this question of Reform. With the greatest respect and deference to the Gentlemen who sat on the front Opposition Benches, he must say that the most suicidal act of the Conservative party had been the endeavour to bring in a Reform Bill. He hoped that they had now learnt wisdom by experience, and would not again fall into a similar error. And upon that point he could not help quoting a rather remarkable passage from a speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman), which was a warning to Lord John Russell when he sat in that House in 1859. The right hon. Gentleman, on the Motion for the second reading of the Reform Bill of Lord Derby, said—

> "If the Ministry have to go out upon Reform, we (the Opposition) should have to construct our new Government upon that question. We should have to propose a larger measure of Reform; but can we carry it? Nothing, as I said before, can justify a Minister proposing a large measure of Reform except the certainty that he has the strength to carry it. Has the noble Lord that certainty? Popular support failed him in 1854. Has he more assurance of that popular support in 1859?"—[3 *Hansard*, cliii. 467.]

He might ask, had the noble Lord more assurances of that support in 1866? The right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "And, be it remembered, he will have before him a more compact and formidable Opposition, the contest will be embittered by the contemptuous rejection of this Bill, and the Opposition, if it chose to use Parliamentary Reform as an instrument of embarrassment, may allege that you have furnished them both with a precedent and provocation."—[3 *Hansard*, cliii. 467.]

Well, that time had come. The noble Lord and his party refused to accept the measure, which, however ill-advised it might have been, would, at all events, have settled the question for a considerable time to come. The Government, with a majority of sixty, was trembling on its very base to know whether they would have a majority of five on the division tomorrow. Now, that was an absurd state of things. What was the natural conclusion that the country would come to? It was that this question was a farce, that it was got up solely for the benefit of hon. Gentlemen opposite, who wanted a bait to induce people to send them to the House of Commons, and who, when they got there, felt that the subject of Reform ought to be shut out, as it had been for the last thirty years. He thanked hon. Gentlemen for the kindness with which they had heard him.

Mr. ALLEN said, he was desirous of saying a few words upon the measure before the House, because he believed that he had a better claim to the title of a working man's representative than any other hon. Member, for the working men formed a principal portion of the constituency of the borough he had the honour to represent (Newcastle-under-Lyne). He quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) that the House of Commons was at present admirably constituted—he would go further, and say it was the first representative assembly in the world. But what was the reason it could claim that high distinction? It was because it was in the main the correct representative of the feelings and opinions of the nation. He held it necessary, if it was to maintain that high position, that it should reform itself, and become more fully than it was now the reflex of the opinions of the people. The great principle to be arrived at in this question of Reform was to adapt the House of Commons more fully to the present times. He also felt that it was a question no longer to be trifled with; and he therefore could not agree with the Amendment, which he considered was nothing but a plausible attempt to shelve it. The Bill was objected to because it was partial and fragmentary; but although the question would undoubtedly not be settled by its passing, the first step towards that settlement would have been made. He highly approved the wisdom which had characterized the course pursued by the Government, because many Members who would be compelled to oppose a Bill for the re-distribution of seats, from the fact of their own boroughs being included, would be able to vote for an extension of the franchise, while others who objected to the extension of the franchise might still support a measure for the re-distribution of seats. No one was more opposed to universal suffrage than he was, but he denied that the present Bill was a step in that direction. There were many men who were still unfit to exercise electoral privileges; but, though that was undoubtedly the case, they ought from time to time to admit the more industrious and intelligent of the working population. Unless they did this they would sooner or later give rise to a combination which might lead to that universal suffrage of which they were so afraid. The Bill naturally divided itself into two parts — one affecting the county franchise, the other the franchise of boroughs. The county franchise had hardly been alluded to at all — probably because hon. Members on both sides of the House were agreed in the opinion that £50 was too high for the county franchise; and the discussion on that branch of the subject, being simply one of amount, seemed to be postponed for the Committee. The opposition to the reduction of the franchise appeared, therefore, to be confined to the boroughs. Those who opposed this reduction, however, seemed to overlook the fact that the £7 franchise did not really put the constituency lower than the Act of 1832, as far as the intelligence and education of the people were concerned. The occupier of a £7 house represented a man who earned at least 25*s.* per week wages, and therefore the class of skilled artizans. All, then, that was proposed was to admit a few of the best of the working men, and thereby to place our representative system on a broader basis and a surer foundation.

Mr. DAVENPORT BROMLEY said, he should have been happy to give a silent vote on this occasion, but the constituency which he had the honour to represent (North Warwickshire) was far too much interested in the question to allow him to do so. First, he would say he disagreed entirely with many on his own (the Opposition) side of the House, and with some on the Ministerial side who considered that there was no necessity for Reform. The question had been too long tossed about as the foot-ball of party, and Parliament might be said to be now fully pledged to Reform. The time had arrived when the lease granted in 1832 had to be renewed. Concurring with much that had been said by the hon. Member for Westminster, who deplored the poverty and pauperism of this wealthy country, and should be glad to see amongst them direct representatives of the working men if they could give the House any hint how this deplorable state of things could be remedied, he believed that no country would be properly governed which contained more than a million of paupers. In dealing with a measure of this sort, the first consideration should be that of justice. If it were just and fair that a large borough should overshadow and obliterate the county constituency around it, he, as a county Member, and his hon. Colleague, would retire to that insignificance for which nature, perhaps, designed them. But was that just? He was aware that the time for statistics had gone by, but he must quote just three lines to prove what he was stating. The borough of Birmingham had considerable influence in North Warwickshire; but this Bill, if it passed into law, would add to its power in the county by adding 5,000 leaseholders: the consequence would be that if all the other electors in the county were to unite they would hardly be able to defeat this one portion of their body; the Birminghams would completely overwhelm the rural constituency, and the county would be put under the thumb of the borough. He could adduce other statistics, but he dared not do so at that stage of the debate. He must here allude to an hon. Gentleman who had been frequently alluded to already in the course of this debate—he meant the hon. Member for Birmingham. He was sorry to be obliged to follow an example so general, but as the county Member, and considering the influence of the hon. Member in the county, he thought he might be allowed to do so. He did not agree with the hon. Member for Southwark in referring to the hon. Gentleman as "Snug, the joiner;" he did not think that was a very reverend phrase, and it was not a happy one, for the hon. Gentleman had been anything but successful in his capacity as a joiner. He wished to ask the attention of the House while he referred to a speech made by the hon. Member at his election for Birmingham in July last. It was a speech he made to an admiring audience in the Town Hall—an audience, by the way, which was far larger than the one that met to consider the Reform Bill; for the people of Birmingham came to hear their Member, they do not care to hear about Reform. He then said, "as you are spared the trouble of a contested election here, you will have more leisure, and I am sure you will not have less enthusiasm, to give your assistance to the county; and I hope you will secure at least one of the seats from that party who always send two men to say 'No' whenever Mr. Davenport Scholefield and I say 'Aye.'" The people of Birmingham, he had no doubt, took his advice, which contributed greatly to the animation, at least, of his (Mr. Davenport Bromley's) election. But this Bill would do more—it would reverse the election, for it would add 5,000 electors in the borough to the county voters. Now, he had many good friends in Birmingham, but still he had no wish to see them swamp the county electors. The hon. Member's standard of right and wrong appeared to be agreement or disagreement with himself. That might be; but if the question were propounded whether the hon. Gentleman's recent letter to the people of Birmingham were a wise, temperate, and statesmanlike production, it was very probable that the hon. Member himself would say "Aye," but he (Mr. Davenport Bromley) would most unhesitatingly say "No," although he might, perhaps, be called a conspirator or something of the kind for saying so. The fact was, the Government considered they must produce this Bill, and that everybody must agree with them, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was backed up by the hon. Member for Birmingham, who seconded him effectively in the House and in the country. The hon. Member had been very severe on the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), and had quoted words which the right hon. Gentleman had used with terrific emphasis in the most menacious manner, and in a sense in which the right hon. Gentleman never intended to use them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had used words at Liverpool quite as strong in regard to those who disagreed with the course of the Government—"they were weak, cowardly, selfish." These were words easily remembered, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself said of words used by the right hon. Member for Calne. How were they weak, cowardly, and selfish? He supposed they were weak as regarded the noble Member for Chester, selfish as regarded the right hon. Member for Calne, cowardly as regarded the right hon. Member for Stroud. He could not, however, conceive words more misapplied. The Bill was called an honest Bill. He never believed it to be honest, and thought it was quite the reverse. What would they think of a dramatic author who in the introduction of a new piece offended the boxes, failed to appreciate the sound good common sense of the pit, and appealed solely to the gallery? Yet, this was what the Bill did. Though he respected this "longing after immortality" on the part of the Government, he did not see why they should always be administering a political dram, a tonic, a restorative, a "pick-me-up" to the worn-out frame of the noble Lord at the head of the Government. He, for one, would certainly vote for the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Chester, because though the Chancellor of the Exchequer might go bill-posting through the country, and the hon. Member for Birmingham might call upon Baal after his manner, he thought the Bill was unsatisfactory and dishonest, and that Parliament would stultify itself if it passed such a measure.

Mr. OTWAY said, he should have been content to give a silent vote on the present occasion, but that the constituency which he had the honour to represent (Chatham) was injuriously affected by its 10th clause; and if he did not succeed in securing the rejection of that clause in Committee, if the Bill even reached that stage, the Motion for the third reading of the Bill would have his most strenuous and determined opposition. The noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) had been careful to announce that his Amendment did not proceed from Tory hands, but would the noble Lord say that he did not count on Tory support? On the contrary, it seemed to him that the Amendment had been concocted with a view to gain the support of the greatest number of persons professing the most diverse opinions possible, and to combine them in one common opposition to the Bill; and the result had shown that those who wished for an extreme measure and those who wished for no measure at all, were all alike willing to support him. The Motion suited those who, like the noble Lord, objected to a reduction of the franchise, but did not object to the Government; and it was eminently satisfactory to those who, like the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Oxfordshire and Cambridge University, though not objecting to a reduction of the franchise, desired very much to get rid of the Government. It suited a third section, led by the right hon. and gallant Member for Huntingdon (General Peel), who praised the good old times of George III., and who were opposed both to the Government and their Bill. It suited those who wished for a more comprehensive measure, and it pleased the Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), who never spoke but he raised the spectre of democracy in the House. Perhaps it would be profitable to the House, under the circumstances, to hear something which fell from the right hon. Member for Calne on former occasions. It was natural that the views of youth should be changed in mature years; but the opinions he adverted to were the views of a Gentleman who boasted that he had given a Constitution to a country. The right hon. Gentleman, speaking on a former occasion, had described property as resting on antiquated charters and musty parchments; and, speaking of Lord Derby and the right hon. Member for Bucks, said—

> "It is one of my gravest charges that they have deceived their friends, falsified their pledges, and libelled the people of England."

That he commended to hon. Gentlemen opposite, and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman who had libelled the people of England during the present debate? On another occasion, at a dinner given by his constituents at Kidderminster, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I will go even further, and say not only is it the duty of the Government to refrain from a perverse opposition to public opinion, but that they are unable to read the signs of the times and unfit to be intrusted with the Government of the country if they cannot perceive that by the permission of Divine Providence the evident tendency of this country is towards democracy."

Those were statements made by the right hon. Gentleman six weeks before he resumed his seat on the Treasury Bench. [An hon. MEMBER: When?] An hon. Gentleman asked "When?" He replied, at a banquet which was given to the right hon. Gentleman by his enthusiastic supporters, the Democrats of Kidderminster, because of the ability with which he advocated their views when seeking a seat in Parliament. He was reminded by an hon. Gentleman that it was an after-dinner speech. He could only say that he preferred it to some of his speeches before dinner. But whatever the different opinions of hon. Gentlemen, the motive of most seemed to be a pretty strong determination to keep the working classes from enjoying the franchise of the country. ["No, no!"] If it were not so, why all those arguments as to checks and balances of power? What did it all mean but an apprehension that if the working men acquired that to which they had a just right—namely, a fair share in the election of Members of the House of Commons—they would elect men bent on carrying measures prejudicial to the true interests of the country? The Bill introduced by Lord Derby's Government was rejected because it did not provide for an extension of the borough franchise; and the Government which succeeded them, having led the opposition to that Bill, were bound to bring in a measure for the accomplishment of that object. The Government, in like manner, had a right to ask the House to confirm the principle of reduction of the franchise, and to say that, if hon. Members were not satisfied with the distribution scheme, afterwards to be produced, it was for the House to decline to go into Committee on the Franchise Bill. That seemed to him to be a most rational proceeding, and, indeed, almost the only one open to the Government, considering the pledges given by its Members. One other argument he felt bound to advert to. The probable action of the working classes was one of the important points involved in the consideration of this question. He would not give any opinion as to the virtues or vices of those classes; and he believed they had already heard more than enough upon both sides of that matter. But he should observe that they were not altogether without experience of the mode in which the working classes were likely to exercise the franchise. In the borough of Stafford, which he had formerly had the honour to represent, these classes were not only predominant, but all-powerful; and yet since the days of Sheridan they had—he did not of course presume to include himself—returned to that House many men of ability and eminence. Then, again, the city of Westminster, in which household suffrage had in past times existed, and which had not less than 25,000 electors, had been represented by some of the most distinguished statesmen this country had ever produced. The working classes, as it appeared from the statistics lately published, constituted about 26 per cent of the borough constituencies, and yet no one could say that they had done anything which would contribute to destroy the character of that House. The fact was, that in that House truth and argument might force their way, but no mere political spouter had a chance of obtaining any power in that Assembly, and that was no arena for the declamation of the demagogue, or the rant of the Republican. Why, then, should not the working classes have their special representatives in that House as well as the army, the navy, the bar, land, commerce, and manufactures? But they had heard from the Member for Westminster, the Member for Brighton, and the Member for Southwark, that even they did not consider themselves to be representatives of the working class. The right hon. and gallant General the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel), who made an animated speech the other evening, told them that if the late Mr. Hume were to revisit that House the first question he would ask would no doubt be what was the amount of their Army and their Navy Estimates. But he (Mr. Otway) could not help thinking that he would ask other questions. The first thing that would strike that shrewd friend of the people was the great increase which had of late years taken place in the wealth of the country under the financial and commercial legislation proposed by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer; and that on looking round that House he would at once be tempted to address himself to hon. Gentlemen opposite and to say, "What, are you still in opposition? Have you not yet succeeded in bringing yourselves into harmony with the great body of your fellow-countrymen? Are you still endeavouring to ensure your return to office by the adoption of a policy which if it should bring you back to these Benches would inevitably prevent you from remaining there?" He believed it was for the interest of the Conservative party that the question of Reform should as soon as possible be settled. The heart of the country was set upon its settlement. He had no particular affection for the present Government. Though he respected them as men of great ability and great honesty, he did not much differ in opinion from a gentleman who had said to him a few days ago that he had no particular fault to find with the Government, but thought they were in that position in which a gentleman sometimes found himself as a guest at a country house—they had overstayed their time. He hoped, however, that the Government would not be put out on this Bill, because he thought they had taken the only course open to them in placing a Reform Bill before the House; he should, therefore, give the Bill his cordial support, not that he considered it a perfect measure, for he had already alluded to what he regarded as one great blot in it. He had no doubt, however, that in Committee he should be able to show the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the mischievous clause to which he referred ought to be taken out. A noble Lord opposite (Viscount Royston), who spoke with considerable ability, stated, somewhat to his (Mr. Otway's) surprise, that every moderate Conservative was in favour of household suffrage. He agreed, however, with the noble Lord that that was the franchise to which we should ultimately come. He did not say that we were ripe for it yet, but it was the ancient franchise of the country, and if it were accompanied with a good residential qualification it was the best one we could adopt. He should vote for the original Motion, and against the Amendment, because he believed that the Bill was an honest and a sincere measure, and the very smallest instalment of freedom that could be offered to a patient but expectant people.

MR. R. W. DUFF said, he thought that those Members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House who, like himself, did not intend to support the Government on the second reading of this Bill, owed it to their constituents, and after what had taken place in the course of the debate owed it to themselves, that they should state the reasons which induced them to adopt that line of conduct. The Government had introduced a Franchise Bill, and the noble Lord the Member for Chester had proposed an Amendment to the effect that it was not expedient to deal with that question by instalments. Under those circumstances it appeared to him that the point they had to consider was, not the amount of Reform they should sanction, but the manner in which they were asked to deal with the subject. The Government had announced that if the House agreed to the Amendment they would treat such an expression of opinion as a Vote of Want of Confidence in the present Administration. He was sorry that they had come to that conclusion, because it necessarily involved one of two evils—either a breach in the ranks of the Liberal party, or, what he should still more regret, a sacrifice of independence and an abandonment of honest convictions on the part of many Members of that party. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department and other speakers from the Treasury Bench had told the House that the Amendment was aimed against all Reform; and they said that in proof of this one had only to look to the turn which the debate had taken. He must say he thought that that was rather due to the supporters of the Bill, for in the course of the debate very copious and very good reasons had been given for Reform; but those reasons went to show the necessity for the Amendment. The expediency of granting Reform was acknowledged in the Amendment; and he, for one, should enter his humble protest against the manner in which the Government proposed to attain their object. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had threatened the House with a dissolution. ["No, no!" *from the Treasury Bench.*] Well, what was the meaning of the passage about cutting away the bridges and burning the boats? He had understood that—and he ventured to think it had been so understood by the public—as a threat of a dissolution. ["No!" *from the Treasury Bench.*] He was glad to hear it was not so—he was glad to have been the humble instrument of clearing up the mystery; but he protested against the assumption that all those who supported the Amendment must of necessity be opposed to Reform. If this Bill had only been accompanied by a re-distribution of seats, though he might not approve all its provisions, he would have been ready to go into Committee; but he could not undertake to hand over to the Government the power which they wished to take into their hands. He knew he might be told that in offering opposition to the Bill he was opposing it on mere matter of detail. He contended, however, that this matter now in dispute was not one of detail, but of principle. They had been told on high authority that the advice of the hon. Member for Birmingham was that the Government should in the first instance proceed with a Franchise Bill, and, having got it, should in a new Parliament deal with the re-distribution of seats. ["No, no!"] Well, that was generally understood to be the purport of the language used at the meeting held at Lord Russell's official residence; but if the Government said they did not adopt that course on that advice, he was perfectly willing to believe them; but it was certain they had brought in a Franchise Bill without dealing with the question of re-distribution. He could not regard as immaterial the period at which a re-distribution of seats would take place, bearing in mind that 400,000 electors were previously to be added to one end of the scale. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department told the House that the Cabinet, in shaping their policy, naturally looked to the pledges given by Liberal Members at the hustings upon this subject of Reform. The right hon. Gentleman apparently had omitted to refer to his own address; and, indeed, he seemed rather to have studied the addresses of hon. Members below the gangway than of those sitting either upon the Treasury Bench or immediately behind it. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in the course of his able and conciliatory speech—for which, no doubt, his Colleagues were much indebted to him—said he would offer a word of remark—

> "Upon an argument used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), that a Member who makes pledges on the hustings to his constituents, if, on coming to Parliament, he finds the promises he has given prejudicial to the public good, ought not to feel bound by those pledges."

That appeared to him a most mischievous and demoralizing doctrine. [Mr. LOWE: It is his duty to resign.] He (Mr. R. W. Duff) willingly accepted the correction of the right hon. Gentleman, and would therefore say it was the duty of many Members of that House to resign at once. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: "Hear, hear!"] That argument was now endorsed, it seemed, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary went on to say—

> "That a person was returned as representing a certain set of principles, and if he deserted those principles it must have a mischievous and demoralizing effect upon the country, and must lower the confidence and trust the constituencies ought to have in their representatives in Parliament."

To what conclusion did these doctrines of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary lead? Last year, when the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) was before the House, he voted against the £6 franchise, and justified that vote to his constituents, telling them that he was opposed to all piecemeal legislation. But was not this piecemeal legislation? If, therefore, he were now to accept the doctrine of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs two courses only were open to him—either to resign his seat or vote against the Government. He need not say that he intended to adopt the latter alternative. He could not forget that he took his seat in that House as a supporter of Lord Palmerston, whose last expression of opinion on the Reform Question had been delivered on the Motion of the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Locke King) on the 13th of April, 1864. Many other Members being anxious to speak, he would not trouble the House with quotations, but would shortly state that the policy then enunciated was very different from that adopted by Her Majesty's present Government. ["Hear, hear!"] Of course, if Gentlemen wished him to read the passage he would do so. Lord Palmerston said on that occasion—

> "It appears to me that the object we ought all to have in view is to form a legislative machine in which all interests in the country shall be fairly represented. The two leading interests of this country are, on the one hand, the trading and the commercial interests, and on the other the agricultural interest; and any alteration of our system which tends to introduce too largely the trading and commercial, or the town, element into the agricultural, or country element, would, I think, injuriously disturb the balance which it is essential for the interests of the country that we should maintain. . . . . . It is plain to every man, I think, who attends at all to the indications of public opinion in this House and in the country, that there does not exist at the present moment in this House or out of it the same interest in such changes as existed some time since. The fact is that organic changes have been looked to not as a mere end so much as a means to an end. They were looked to as a means of effecting great alterations and improvements in our internal system, our commercial system, our laws, procedure, and other matters. Many of those improvements have been made. Commerce has been freed from its shackles, the industry of the country has been encouraged by liberty, and many of those alterations and improvements which were to be the result of organic changes have been accomplished by the Legislature as it stands; and therefore there is a less ardent desire for change than existed before those improvements were made."—[3 *Hansard*, clxxiv. 953.]

The present Government, with an unbecoming haste, set to work entirely to change the line of policy which the majority of the House had been returned to support; acknowledging that they had not time sufficient to prepare a complete measure, they appeared to have gone on the principle that a bad Reform Bill was better than no Reform Bill at all. The line which they had adopted was altogether unparalleled. Their original programme of getting Members whose constituencies were to be disfranchised to pass an enfranchising Bill was a policy which might not, perhaps, have commanded his support, but was at least intelligible. But since then the Government, while they had conceded too much to enable them to rely on the support of those Members whose seats might be jeopardized, conceded too little to satisfy the just and reasonable demands of their legitimate supporters. For five years he had given a consistent support to Lord Palmerston's Government, and if he now took a course opposed to that which the majority of those with whom he was then associated sought to carry out, he did so because he preferred his own honest convictions to the guidance of a leader who in general he was proud to support, but who on this particular question of Reform had forfeited every claim to his confidence.

Mr. JAMES said, that considering the constituency he represented (Manchester), and the course he had adopted with regard to this Bill, he could not refrain from justifying himself in the eyes of the House and of his constituents. He had, on a previous occasion, made observations unfavourable to the course which it had pleased Her Majesty's Ministers to adopt with respect to the Reform measure, and he had done so because it seemed to him that the course adopted was not likely to promote the interests of the country or to settle this question. Not that he was unfavourable to Reform—much the other way. Manchester was, perhaps, as warmly interested in the passing of the Reform Bill as any other constituency in the country; and with the fact before him that a petition signed, or alleged to have been signed, by upwards of 70,000 persons in that city, in favour of this measure had been presented to the House, it might seem strange that he, the representative of a populous constituency, should have expressed such opinions. His right hon. and learned Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Whiteside) in referring the other night to the opinion of Manchester ought to have appealed to his hon. Colleague in the representation of that city, from whom he would doubtless receive a more positive answer than he was in a position to give.

His hon. Colleague was present at a meeting, largely attended by the constituency of Manchester, who expressed strong approbation of this measure, and were desirous that it should be passed into a law as soon as possible. From that meeting he himself had been absent, and his reasons were not kept to himself, but publicly avowed, and those reasons were that he did not approve the mode in which the Government were bringing forward the Bill. Whether or not those sentiments conveyed the feeling of the constituency at the present moment it was not for him to say; but he would state facts from which the House might draw their own conclusions. In July last there were three candidates before that great constituency, all of them entertaining extreme opinions on the question of Reform. A fourth candidate went down two days only before the nomination. He expressed opinions different from those of the other candidates with regard to the question of Reform; and in reply to questions put to him, that candidate stated that it seemed to him that all parties were agreed that Reform should take place; that in his judgment the suffrage should be extended to intelligence, to education, and to position, and that it should be extended as widely as possible so as to be consistent with a due balance with respect to all portions of the community, but that no power should be given to one part of the community which would outbalance the rest. The candidate was interrogated as to a £6 Franchise Bill; and his answer was that a £6 Franchise Bill, unless accompanied with other measures, would not be a satisfactory measure. Upon these questions the constituency of Manchester returned that candidate to Parliament by a majority of upwards of 1,100 over gentlemen whose extreme opinions did not meet with the approbation of the community. He (Mr. James) had the honour to be that person who was returned to the House of Commons for Manchester. Much had been said about pledges given to the constituencies; but that which he gave to the constituency was that he would support Reform, that he would support an extension of the franchise; but that in his judgment there ought to be measures taken to prevent that extension of the franchise giving undue power to any one class of the community. Much had also been said about class interest. Class legislation ought to be avoided in that House; but it was a very different thing to regard classes and to regard communities of interests, and no one who was acquainted with the progress of this Constitution and country could fail to have seen that, although classes might not be regarded, interests were very much regarded. It was fair that agriculture, commerce, and manufactures should have their different representatives; and he thought it was likewise due to the labouring classes that they should be represented; but no class of the community ought to claim more than its fair share in the representation. A transfer of power from the present possessors of it with the influence which they now exercise, would be revolution; but to give the labouring classes their fair share in the representation would not be revolution, but a just measure of Reform. To his mind the present Bill could not be satisfactory for the simple reason that, taken by itself, it could not be ascertained to what extent the admission of the artizan class would control the representation. He looked upon the extension of the franchise as a means to an end—which was not that certain classes might enjoy the right of voting, but that they might have an opportunity of being heard in the House of Commons by those whom they might think proper to return as their legitimate representatives; and unless he could tell to what degree the extension of the suffrage might be carried, it was utterly impossible that he could fulfil the pledges which he gave to the constituents who returned him, and who by that very act showed that they did not claim to have an undue share in the representation. The hon. Member for Birmingham said he could devise such a scheme as would render the most complete extension of the suffrage a mere sham by a re-distribution of the seats; and there could be no doubt about it. If, then, he could do it, he might, if he had the power, devise such a scheme as would render this acquisition of power by the working classes mischievous and dangerous to the country. It was for that reason that he objected to the measure which Government had brought forward, and because full information had not been given as to the extent of the change which would be made by it. Some years ago, in a speech made at Bradford, which attracted attention throughout the country, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham brought forward what he called his scheme of Reform; and in his speech he insisted that no measure of Reform could be accepted which did not, in the first instance, direct its attention to the distribution of seats. The hon. Gentleman proposed, in the first instance, to deprive a number of constituencies of the power which they now possessed of sending Members to Parliament. Of the 125 seats which he said would thus be at the disposal of the House, he proposed to give 107 to the populous manufacturing and commercial towns principally situate in the North of England, and the remaining eighteen to the counties. Two of these eighteen were to be given to the West Riding of Yorkshire and two to Lancashire. Now these counties were as much town, commercial and manufacturing constituencies as the places to which he had previously referred. Now, had the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed such a scheme on the present occasion, it would have been deemed mischievous, because its effect would be to give the power—although it might not, except under very extraordinary circumstances, be exercised—to one interest to control the rest of the interests of the country. There were two prominent principles to be observed in managing this matter of the re-distribution of seats. There was what might be characterized as the agricultural constituency proper; and there was likewise the town constituency proper. There was also another class which partook neither altogether of the character of the one or the other, forming a sort of middle term between the agricultural and the town constituencies; and it might be deserving of consideration hereafter whether it would not be wise to retain those constituencies, not in their present corrupt state, but by combining a number together, so as to retain this element in the Constitution. When the Bill for the extension of the franchise was brought forward it was not stated that it was to be accompanied by any other measure; and if that had been the case he should certainly have opposed it. But since then the Government had intimated that they intended to bring forward a measure by which their scheme of Reform would be clearly indicated. In the first position of affairs an Amendment had been moved, in the terms of which he (Mr. James) fully concurred; but now he must look further. He believed that the noble Earl who moved the Amendment had done so with perfect sincerity and without any sinister object in view; but no one could have listened to the debate without perceiving that the Amendment, if carried, would have a very different effect from the expectations of many of those who originally supported it. If the effect would simply be to induce Her Majesty's Government to bow to the decision of the House, and bring forward the whole measure in deference to those who sat behind them, he would vote for it; but if the effect would be to delay the settlement of the question, and increase the excitement throughout the country, if it were to be left to agitators to go into the country and stir up among the people great dissensions, differences, and unpleasantness, then he could not give his adhesion to the Amendment. He look upon this Bill being read a second time in no other light than he had looked upon the Resolution brought forward by Earl Russell on the Bill introduced by the Government of Lord Derby—namely, simply as an assertion on the part of the House that in any Reform measure it was necessary that there should be an extension of the suffrage. Looking at it in that point of view only he should give to the Government his most cordial support. In doing that he conceived he should best fulfil the pledges he had given to his constituents. [*Cheers and Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen might think differently; but every one was at liberty to entertain his own opinions, and as he respected the opinions of others he expected the like respect to be given to his own. He had pledged himself to his constituents to vote for an extension of the suffrage, and to take care, as far as was in his power, that that extension should not be mischievous. Having mentioned that, he had now to state that he should vote for the second reading of the Bill; but he likewise stipulated for the right of opposing this measure at any future stage, if the Bills which were to be laid upon the table did not give him satisfaction. He should give them a fair and honest consideration, for he only sought to promote the interests of the community, and to protect one class, or a variety of classes from the dominance of the rest. Her Majesty's Government had already made considerable concessions in undertaking to introduce, on the passing of the second reading of this Bill, another for the re-distribution of seats, and he sincerely trusted that either by proceeding with both Bills *pari passu*, or by inserting clauses in the present Bill to effect the object of both, they would enable the country to have a full measure of Reform.

MR. SCHREIBER said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had added a new terror to the task, already sufficiently formidable, of those who ventured to address the House on the subject of Reform. Speaking at the Liberal banquet at Liverpool the right hon. Gentleman had described those hon. Members who, sitting on that side the House, had taken part in the discussion on the first reading, as either most ungovernable, or as being the most exuberant spirits from Ireland. He hoped the Irish Members would appreciate the compliment, and recognize the superior self-respect which was given by a Scotch extraction. He merely mentioned it in order that he might establish some claim to the attention of the House. Next to the portentous length of the speeches in this debate, nothing had struck him so much as the unanimity with which all hon. Gentlemen desired in the vexed and weary question of Parliamentary Reform a comprehensive and equitable settlement as between the various interests and classes of the country. He trusted, therefore, it was not too much to hope that the majority of the House would be equally agreed in rejecting a measure which unsettled everything, which was fragmentary in its form, and which he should endeavour to prove would be most inequitable in its effects. As long as the boroughs of England and Wales returned a clear majority of the House of Commons, the chief interest of Reform must centre in the borough franchise. He might, perhaps, be permitted to offer the tribute of his humble admiration to the ingenuity which could devise a fresh act of injustice to the counties. With a larger population, with more numerous constituencies and a greater rental, they returned to this House less than half the number of the borough Members. It was now proposed to subject still further the rural to the urban interests, and then, in the scramble for the re-distribution of seats, to leave the counties dependent upon the charity of the towns. In this matter the counties seemed to be experiencing the proverbial treatment of the man who "has no friends." This Bill had been recommended by Her Majesty's Government and supported by the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) on the ground of its being a measure of working man enfranchisement. Now, he begged to call attention to the area of its operations. In the first place, Her Majesty's Government deliberately excluded from the scope of the measure, regarded as one of working class enfranchisement, the population of the counties, amounting to 11,500,000. That of course was a resolution to which it might be perfectly competent for them to arrive; but he contended that it was not competent for them to make up in the boroughs what they had advisedly foregone in the counties, or to accomplish what they argue as an act of justice to the working class throughout the country by an act of injustice to the other classes resident in the boroughs. If they thought that a Dorsetshire labourer should be enfranchised, by all means let them lay upon the table a Bill that had that object; but if they would forego that enfranchisement it was not competent for them, by any method of reasoning with which he was familiar, to go to the boroughs and attempt there to restore the balance and redress the inequalities. He would show the House how the franchise was extended already in the boroughs. He did not remember that the hon. Member for Birmingham in his loftiest flight of enfranchisement ever suggested a wider extension than a household suffrage for boroughs, and he found that the total number of male occupiers borne upon the borough rate books was 1,350,000. Would it be credited, after all that has been said and written on the subject, that nearly one-half of the male occupiers, amounting to 640,000 persons, lived in houses ranging above £10, and, with freemen and voters of that class resident in houses of less than £10 rental, quite one-half of the male occupiers of boroughs were, as the phrase went, "within the pale of the Constitution?" How many illusions disappeared before the simple statement of the simple fact!" What became of the "invading army" of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? The insinuation, no doubt, was an adroit one, but the army which occupied was at least as numerous as the unemancipated millions of the hon. Member for Birmingham. He (Mr. Schreiber) thought the hon. Member would do well to remember in his speeches that exclusion from the franchise was not the only thing by which the intelligence of the working classes might be insulted. The most cursory inspection of the blue book would show that the general system of averages did not fairly exhibit the electoral statistics of the boroughs. For instance, when they saw that 26 per cent of the electors were working men it did not follow that there was 26 per cent of working men in the constituency of every borough:—but, on the other hand, he did not think any one could have looked at the Government Returns without observing in how many boroughs one-third and upwards of the constituencies were composed of working men. The hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. J. Stuart Mill) stated with much ability on the second night of this debate that in some constituencies the claims of labour were already equitably recognized. Now of the three classes of society the working class was one; and whatever might be their income—whether they put it with the Chancellor of the Exchequer at £250,000,000 a year, or with Mr. Baxter at £150,000,000—no one pretended that they contributed more than one-third to the revenue of the country—he (Mr. Schreiber) believed they paid less—and the hon. Member for Westminster did not attempt to show that their position was worse than that of either the upper or the middle classes, with each of whom the right of voting meant the right of being outvoted, unless it were argued that the upper and middle classes always combined against the working men, whereas the fact was invariably otherwise. Or did he mean to say that in the constituencies the majority of the electors live in closer sympathy and contact with the upper than the working class? In his own constituency of 2,800 electors (Cheltenham) the proportion of residents of independent means was perhaps larger than in any other borough, and there the political system balanced exactly at £20, the electors who lived below the amount being as numerous as those who lived above. In addition to that there was in that constituency a neutral class who were natural allies of the working men, whose existence they must take into account if they wished to estimate the real proportion of the representation. In the city of Bath, with a population somewhat analogous, he found, out of 2,960 electors, more than 1,700 living in houses of less than £10 a year. What the effect of a £7 rental would be there, he was not aware; but in Cheltenham it would reduce the centre of gravity from £20 to £15, and the occupiers living in houses between £15 and £7, and paying an aggregate rental of £23,000 a year, while the electors, who paid an aggregate rental of £230,000 a year, would only be in the proportion of one in ten. He should view that as a very serious disturbance of the present equilibrium. Next in order to the boroughs in which the working classes are one-third and upwards of the constituency, and in which the quantity of any reduction of the franchise had yet to be established, came the small boroughs of the Totnes type, in which no reduction of the franchise could be a measure of working man enfranchisement. The hon. Member for Westminster gave them to understand that he wished to curtail the influence of money in the selection of Members for this House; but he (Mr. Schreiber) knew of no method so certain to increase it as the reduction of franchise in the manner proposed. In a borough so small a manageable number of electors of the poorer class would be created, who would be exposed to temptations which it was hardly in human nature to withstand. In these boroughs, then, neither as a measure of working-class enfranchisement, nor as leading to purity of election, could any reduction of the franchise be adopted. He would say nothing of the obvious absurdity of enfranchising men to-day whom the re-distribution of seats might deprive of political life to-morrow. There only remained for consideration that class of boroughs, chiefly manufacturing boroughs, in which he admitted that the number of working men upon the register was disproportionately small; but in those boroughs with very few exceptions, the equity of the case would be met by a reduction of the franchise to an £8 rental, and that to his mind conclusively disposed of the proposal of the Government. In one class of boroughs, those in which the working classes had already a third of the representation, he hoped he had shown that this measure was unnecessary; in a second class, that it would be delusive; and in a third class, that it would be excessive. His strongest objection to the Bill, however, was founded upon the dangerous addition to be made to the taxing power of those who did not pay direct taxation. The property and income tax were already limited to a small minority of the existing constituencies; that number would become comparatively smaller, and he believed six months would not elapse after this Bill became law, before the cry would be raised in the constituencies of "Down with the Customs; down with the Excise; and up with the Income Tax!" If direct taxation, with its inevitable exemptions, was already bad enough, when levied by the votes of those who did not pay it themselves, it would become simply intolerable, and would infallibly give birth to exasperation and class bitterness to be followed by convulsions to which we hitherto have happily been strangers. It was quite clear that in introducing such a measure Her Majesty's Government seem to have forgotten that—

> "Just experience tells in every soil
> That those who think must govern those
> who toil;
> And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach
> Is but to lay proportioned load on each."

An hon. Member, who should be nameless, had charged the great party who sat on that (the Opposition) side of the House, with unlimited stupidity. That hon. Gentleman would find that in this matter of the re-distribution of seats they would not be so fatuous as to draw a cheque on the bank for the hon. Member to fill in; nor could this House forget the pledge which made it due to its own honour to reject this Bill. They owed it to themselves to show to foreign nations that they suffered no man to play the Bismarck to an English House of Commons, and they owed it to their fellow-countrymen to let them see that, whether against the adroit insinuations of a Minister or the rude menaces of a demagogue, this House still stood firm the guardian of the Constitution and of the liberties of the people.

MR. CHILDERS: I hope that I need not apologize to the House for intruding myself upon them in the present discussion. I have only once previously spoken upon questions of popular representation, but I may, I think, be excused if I do so in the present instance; because not only the county from which I come, and where I represent a borough (Pontefract), containing a considerable number of the working classes, has expressed itself more strongly, I believe, than any other county on the subject, but also because I spent several years of my life in one of the most flourishing of our colonies—I mean Victoria—which has been alluded to both this evening and in previous debates. I trust that, as one who took some share in the Government of that colony, and who had a part in the preparation of the Constitutional Act under which her Government is now regulated, I may be allowed to set the House right with respect to some erroneous statements which have never yet received an answer. I shall have to speak of the Australian colonies generally, but I wish to allude specially to the colony of Victoria, of which I have the greatest personal knowledge. My right hon. Friend the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), in alluding to that colony, said that he himself, to whom the colonies owe so much in the shape of responsible Government, would wish that responsible Government could be taken away, relegating these free communities back to that former state of things of which he himself was one of the most indefatigable denouncers. In the debate last year he also said, "Look at Australia. There universal suffrage was conceded suddenly, and the working classes immediately availing themselves of it became masters of the situation. Nobody else has a shadow of power." Since then he has told the House that "at last the system turned out so badly that in Australia they had been driven to appoint the Executive for a number of years certain." [MR. LOWE: No, no!] If my right hon. Friend repudiates the last statement which I am reading from the published report of his speech, I shall of course dwell upon it no further; but as to none but working men having a shadow of power, I must call his attention to the real facts. The two colonies to which he referred have had at their head very able men during the last ten years. The Prime Minister of New South Wales is Mr. Charles Cowper. [MR. LOWE: No, no!] I may correct myself by saying that the Government of that colony has within the last month or two undergone a change; but at its head, for by far the greater portion of the last ten years, has been Mr. Charles Cowper. Again, the virtual head of the Government of Victoria is the Minister of Justice, Mr. Archibald Michie. When my right hon. Friend was a public man in Australia, Mr. Michie and Mr. Charles Cowper were his intimate political allies. I will now turn to the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Gregory) who, in calling the attention of the House last year to the condition of the Australian colonies, said—

> "So determined are they in Victoria to maintain a protective system that they would not allow a Bill to pass intended to remedy the inequality of the sexes;"

which meant that they were such determined Protectionists as even to protect servant girls against cheaper labour. The answer to that statement, however, is that this Democratic Legislature has passed a law under which a fixed proportion of the land revenue is annually appropriated to the purposes of immigration. My hon. Friend also read the following letter:—

> "You know what sort of men Haines, Sladen, Farie, Sturt, Stawell, Macknight, and others of the same stamp are. Well, under vote by ballot and universal suffrage there is not one of these, except Haines (and some men always get in), that would have a ghost of a chance with the lowest ruffian, and he appealed to the hon. Member for Salisbury whether that was a correct representation of the facts. [Mr. Marsh: Hear, hear!]"

Well, Sir, I happen to know both the writer and the receiver of the letter, and I am sure my hon. Friend quoted it in good faith, but what are the facts. My lamented friend Mr. Haines was long a Member of the Legislative Assembly under the present suffrage, and died a Member of the Council. Mr. Sladen also was a Colleague of mine and a Member of the Assembly, and is now a Member of the Council. The two gentlemen next named had been holding, before and since the establishment of responsible government, offices disqualifying them from becoming Members of the Legislature. Sir William Stawell, the fifth named, is the present Chief Justice of the colony, and when a Colleague of mine in 1856 was returned at the head of the poll, under household suffrage, by the constituency of Melbourne, then the most democratic in Victoria. Indeed, I have no doubt that if he ceased to be Chief Justice he would be returned again now. The last-named gentleman is a country farmer, whom I have never heard of as ambitious of public life. When this sort of statement is made in this House, and extracts from newspapers or anonymous letters are produced as proofs of the state of the colonies, I think the House should pause before giving credence to them. My hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Marsh) said last year in reference to Australia—

> "In Australia it is sought to have the rules of trade enforced by law. Recent intelligence stated that a deputation from the iron trade had urged upon the Government the desirability of adopting the eight hours' movement among those engaged in that trade at Melbourne. . . . . Looking, on the other hand, to Australia, where he had many very dear friends, with a beautiful country and an unrivalled climate, what did he find to be the case? Corruption of the grossest kind prevailed in the political system. At one time certain persons in the colony wished to carry a particular point, they accordingly raised a large sum and went round to those Members of the Assembly who they heard were determined to vote against the project, and to some of them they gave £10, while the greatest patriot of all found his patriotism oozing out of his fingers' ends on being offered a sum of £750. Again, a scene in the House was thus described:—'While all Melbourne was absorbed in a cricket match a furious debate was taking place in the House on the Motion of Mr. Barton, that a sum of money should be placed on the Estimates for the payment of Members.' 'All disguise,' the narrative went on to state, 'as to the motives of the Mover and his friends was cast off. It was explicitly declared that the popular Members could not live without appropriating the public money.'"

I have made inquiries as to these allegations, and I find that in Victoria no such thing can happen as an attempt to enforce the rules of trade by law, or systematically to bribe Members. It is true that a proposal was made that Members should be paid as in Canada; but, unfortunately for those popular Members who are described as unable to live without public money, it was not successful. I do not pretend for a moment to say that all the legislation of the colony and parts of its constitution are such as I should have chosen. I used to belong to a political party which has not always had its way since, and some parts of our successors' policy have been very different from ours; but I most distinctly state that the finance of the colony stands as high as that of any country in the world; that the colony has never borrowed one shilling of money except for reproductive public works; and that the only operation applied to the debt is the same as the Chancellor of the Exchequer is anxious to apply to the debt of this country—namely, the operation of paying it off as rapidly as possible. I have heard it stated that the interests of religion are neglected; but the fact is that an ample and liberal provision is made by that democratic colony for public worship. Then it is said that education is neglected. Why, the votes for public education in the colony would shame this House. The right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) who has done so much for education, will remember the opposition his educational proposals met with in Australia, and no doubt he will be glad to know that, under the Constitution of which he spoke to-night, his views have been carried out to the utmost, and that a thorough and complete system of common schools supported by payments for results is in force in Victoria. Then it must be borne in mind that these colonies do not cost this country one shilling for their defence; and, as the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) will be glad to hear, they have established a most admirable Volunteer force, far larger in proportion to population than that at home. But I have heard to-night that these democratic colonies commit one great atrocity—they have abandoned the great palladium of free trade, which has been the glory and salvation of this country. Well, it is a bold thing to talk in this House of free trade being the glory of the country, when it is remembered that a little more than twenty years ago there was a great majority in the Parliament of this country in favour of protection, and that when my right hon. Friend was in Australia one of the horrors of democratic institutions here was that they would bring about free trade. But there is, in fact, by no means a uniform opinion on the part of the working men in these colonies in favour of protection. No doubt at the last election in Victoria a protectionist majority was returned, and I am told that about 51,000 electors voted—28,000 in favour of protection, and 23,000 in favour of free trade candidates. But democratic Melbourne returned six Members, and its principal suburb, St. Kilda, two, and six of these eight Members are free traders. To a large extent the Protectionist Members were returned by agricultural constituencies. It is true that a certain portion of the working classes have imbibed Protectionist doctrines; but it is also true that the great majority, or almost the whole of the agricultural classes, have adhered to protection, and it is to this combination with the farming interest that the protectionist success is due. I therefore do not think that there is much force in the attack on that democratic colony on the ground of its being in favour of protection. I trust I have not wearied the House by saying these few words on behalf of a colony which I believe to be firmly attached to the British Crown, and which had always been foremost to give assistance to the mother country, when assistance such as they could give was required. Let it be remembered that these democratic colonies contributed more to the Patriotic and Mutiny Funds than Scotland and Ireland and all the rest of the world together.

Having said this much in reference to the colonies, I will proceed to say a few words on the arguments against the Bill before the House. Two questions have been much mixed up in the course of the debate—they are, indeed, perfectly distinct questions, yet they have been so intermingled that it is extremely difficult to separate them. The first question is, whether the Bill is in itself a good one, and such as ought to be accepted? and the second is, whether, in the words of the Amendment, something more ought not to be done at the same time? So that the supporters of this Bill are in this difficulty, that hon. Members can vote for the Amendment either on the ground that they do not like the Bill, or, because liking it they also approve of the Amendment. The noble Lord who moved the Amendment directed his observations almost entirely to the faults of the Bill, the noble Lord who followed him almost entirely to the virtues of the Amendment. My right hon. Friend addressed himself to the fitness of the present and future electors; and the hon. and learned Member for Belfast made it a question of the figures of the Returns which he analyzed for a whole hour. According to one, electoral qualification is a mere means to an end; according to another, it is all a question of fitness to be determined by some complicated method such as is proposed by the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Clay). Some speakers have spoken as if it was all a question of mere consistency; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud (Mr. Horsman) has defied any one to say that he had ever changed any of his opinions during the last thirty years. That, certainly, is rather a bold challenge, and I dare say some one will take it up. But, after all, what is it worth? What is the value of this great doctrine of consistency? In my humble view the science of politics would be at the lowest ebb if we were to reduce everything to this formula—what were any man's opinions when he was a lad of twenty? What did I think thirty years ago, and if I can prove I never varied from that then, forsooth, I am a great statesman. That is not the way in which Englishmen treat a great question. Instead of that being the rule, the reverse is the rule. We endeavour to learn by experience. Those who learn day by day, and have the courage to say so, are the greatest statesmen. Why does the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire lead 300 Gentlemen on the other side of the House? Because he has had the wisdom to allow his opinions to be moulded by experience. Why does my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer lead 300 Gentlemen on this side of the House? Because he has had the courage to follow his convictions. And why does the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud lead his party of only two? Because he never has had the courage to change his mind, and his greatest boast is that he still entertains the opinions he held thirty years ago. But we have had another episode on consistency. The right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), it is said, has always been consistent; and the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho) has produced himself as a sort of witness to character. On the subject of the right hon. Gentleman's consistency, the noble Lord has told us a very curious story. He said that in 1854, when Lord Aberdeen's Reform Bill was before the House, his right hon. Friend and himself used to walk home from their offices and discuss the £6 borough franchise, and they arrived at this strange conclusion—that, holding office under Lord Aberdeen, they would vote in favour of the second reading, but that, if the Bill went into Committee, they would throw up their offices and vote against the clause. This is a most curious way of proving consistency; because two Gentlemen had determined, without notice to their Colleagues, to leave office and break up the Government if the Bill they supported on the second reading got into Committee, their conduct is to be held up to the admiration of that House. But I must ask my noble Friend why they are not both prepared to go through the same operation at the present moment? Why not vote for the second reading of this Bill, and when the Bill goes into Committee, if they have not offices to throw up, they might at all events vote against the £7 franchise? But if they were consistent in 1854 and in 1865, when they voted against the Bill of the hon. Member for Leeds, they seem to forget what they have done in the interim. In 1859 the noble Lord voted for the second reading of Lord Derby's Bill; but the right hon. Gentleman, though not in office, voted against the second reading, and in favour of a Resolution declaring that it was necessary to reduce the borough franchise. After that I think my noble Friend ought not to have come into court to give the right hon. Gentleman a character for consistency. On this great question of consistency, while I would be very tolerant of change, I think that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who change their opinions ought to do so subject to two conditions; in the first place, they ought to be very frank and candid about them, not maintaining that they have always been consistent; and, secondly, they ought to be more tender and considerate to the feelings of those who do not happen to find it necessary, with the results of their experience, to change their opinions. Take, for instance, my right hon. Friend (Mr. Lowe). He was so anxious to prove his consistency that he endeavoured to convince the House a few nights since that he had only advocated a £10 suffrage in Australia. I will, however, quote a great speech of his at Sydney—

"After the citizens of Sydney had done him the honour to elect him as their representative, he had stated that he should always be ready to seek for an extension of the franchise. . . . He could not bring his mind to the belief that universal suffrage would be beneficial. . . . They (the meeting) did not ask for universal suffrage, and in all that they did ask he most cordially agreed, for he thought their demands very moderate. They did not even go so far as what was asked by their fellow-countrymen at home. A great and growing feeling in favour of household suffrage was spreading in Great Britain, and was warmly advocated in Parliament by Hume and Cobden, and by many other Members of great weight and influence. . . . When he was elected he told them that he wished to see the working class powerful. . . . If he thought that the franchise could enable the working classes to saddle any of their burdens on the necks of the people at large he would oppose it. . . . . He should say nothing about the effect of universal suffrage in France, although he could not agree that universal suffrage had altogether failed in France. The disasters which had befallen France had not arisen from universal suffrage. . . . He wished to give all classes power to make each dependent on the other, so that they might work together for the common good."

I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not think that in quoting these sayings of his I am doing him any injustice. The right hon. Gentleman has quoted several speeches of statesmen in this country of many years ago. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman in this respect does justice to himself or to those from whom he now differs. Having in times past held very strong opinions, he now speaks of similar opinions held by the hon. Member for Birmingham—I will not say with a sneer, that would be un-Parliamentary—the right hon. Gentleman never speaks with a sneer—but with derision. What were his opinions on the subject of our army? I am about to refer to a speech in which he made a most determined and unflinching attack on Lord Grey, to whose opinions he now appears to attach so much weight, and on Lord Russell's first Government; the speech in which he advised his fellow-citizens to look to America. He said, "Allusion to America on this question has been deprecated." [Mr. Lowe: When was that?] On the 18th June, 1849—

> " . . . He could respect the feeling which induced such a remark, but he could not agree with it. He would not ask them to be rash, but he must remind them that they were in the beginning of a great struggle, and, in order that they should go through that struggle successfuly, he would have the example of America constantly in their minds. The injustice that was forced on the Americans was not half so great as that forced on this colony, and he, therefore, felt it his duty to tell them, if they would succeed at all, they must assure the Colonial Office continually that they had the example of America before them."

And then, going to the question of military affairs, he said—

> "The parade of military protection was kept up, because it provided berths for the sons and dependents of great men at home."

I do not blame my right hon. Friend for changing his mind [Mr. LOWE : I have not changed my mind at all.] If so, my right hon. Friend still thinks that military parade is kept up to provide berths for the sons of great men. But in any case, having himself made use of such language he ought not to speak as he does of the opinions held by the hon. Member for Birmingham. My right hon. Friend has spoken to-night of the importance and high character of this House ; and I myself agree in every word that he has used on that point. My right hon. Friend has also spoken almost with contempt of the character and conduct of legislative bodies elsewhere ; and he has described, not quite correctly, the Legislature of America, while he has expressed a wish to see responsible Government swept away in our colonies. Well, what was the language held formerly by my right hon. Friend with respect to the British House of Commons? He said this of it—

> "It was the *vis inertiæ*—the blind, ignorant, besotted, stupidity of the large majorities of the English Parliament that had rendered the superior intelligence of a portion of no avail. What was it but this besotted stupidity, this adherence, for the sake of adherence, to the solemn wisdom of our ancestors, that had retarded the progress of measures of enlightenment and humanity, which the higher intelligence of England had long ago decided on? Long after the minds of the British people were made up, this benighted majority resisted all improvement, and years—ten, twenty years—elapsed before the Corn Law Repeal Bill could be passed in the British Parliament, although out of doors public opinion was almost unanimously decisive about it."

It was the Reformed Parliament, which is now described as such a paragon of virtue, and whose great merit it is that it

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repealed the Corn Laws, that my right hon. Friend characterized as "blind, ignorant, besotted, and stupid." After quoting these former opinions of my right hon. Friend, I am entitled to say that he ought now to speak a little more tenderly of others who may also have changed theirs, or who have here or there used language no more violent than his own. I listened to my right hon. Friend's speech this evening with very great interest, as an intellectual effort; because, although long, it seemed to me to be a speech of great power, and one in which was concentrated during two hours everything that had been said at any time against the progress of constitutional principles. But let any one quietly analyze that very elaborate speech, which must, no doubt, have taken my right hon. Friend many anxious hours for its preparation. ["Oh!"] I hope I am not saying anything disrespectful of that speech, which I honestly admire, and which I followed with sincere attention, never interrupting it for a moment. But let me just remind the House of one or two of the principles which my right hon. Friend enunciated. One of them was—and I took the words down—that "the franchise should be so arranged as never to be given to any one not fit for it." But my right hon. Friend has altogether omitted to explain how it would be possible to frame such a franchise as would exclude everybody who might be unfit to exercise it? My right hon. Friend himself admitted that a very large portion of the existing constituency—namely, the occupiers between £10 and £20, whom he knew so well and called by such hard names—includes a mass of people who are unfit to exercise the franchise ; and therefore if the suffrage is to be "so arranged as never to be given to any one not fit for it" we must not stop at £10, but must go higher, and revise the Reform Act of 1832, with a view to eliminate those unfit persons. It would be only fair to give my right hon. Friend, who, not being in office, has plenty of time on his hands, an opportunity of elaborating an amended Reform Bill, embodying his own avowed principles ; and if he ever succeeds in submitting to us such a perfectly Utopian plan, the House will no doubt be ready to vote for it. Without entering further into my right hon. Friend's argument to-night, all I would say is that the broaching of so visionary a theory as this should suffice to convince practical men that my right hon. Friend's reasoning rests upon a radically unsound basis.

I now come to the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley), whose argument has been described as unanswerable. I think, however, that it can be answered in a few words by an authority which the noble Lord will accept—by the noble Lord himself on a former occasion. The noble Lord said, the Bill of the Government seemed to be founded upon a distrust of the House of Commons. And, speaking of the Government, he added—

> "They think that if two measures were brought forward at the same time, one of two things would happen—that the scheme for the re-distribution of seats, through not being sufficiently comprehensive, would disappoint and disgust some of the warmest supporters of the Government, and make them indifferent to the fate of the whole Bill; or, that if the scheme for disfranchisement were a large one, the Members of those constituencies affected by it would be inclined to vote against both divisions of the Bill, and thus the whole measure might be defeated."

He said, further—

> "For my part, I only wonder that a device so transparent should have been deemed to be worth the trouble of adopting. It seems to me to be, after all, very artless art."

What does this amount to, but that the Government has brought forward a Bill which is not a complete Bill—that they have something else behind—that they think they can pass that incomplete Bill, and by that means get to the something else that is behind? Now, there was a measure brought forward in 1859 by Lord Derby's Government which was supposed to have been elaborated by, and to owe a great deal of its character to, one Member who usually sits on the front Bench opposite; and it may be as well to read to the House how that Member, whose authority will not be disputed, described the nature of the measure of 1859. After speaking of the large number of boroughs which it had been proposed at different times and by different Governments to affect in some way, either by taking away some of their Members or by grouping them together, he said—

> "I am not going to enter upon the argument whether these small boroughs (fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty), whatever incidental advantages they may possess, ought or ought not to form a permanent part of our political system. I admit that it appears to me difficult, if not impossible, to defend them on grounds of principle as part of our Constitution. But I look at the matter in a practical point of view, and I ask if a larger measure of disfranchisement had been contemplated in the present Bill, what would have been the result? There would have been arrayed naturally against this Bill the representatives of those fifty or sixty small boroughs, who, combining with other opponents, would undoubtedly have insured its rejection. I believe that the practical difficulty arising from that opposition would have been fatal to the success of the Bill, and as the object of the Government"—

I beg particular attention to this—

> "was not to make the best Bill that could be framed, but the best that had a chance of passing this House, I contend that that fact is in itself a sufficient vindication of the course we have followed."

The Member who used those words went on to explain the character of that plan of a uniform franchise in counties and boroughs which led to the secession of two right hon. Gentlemen opposite from Lord Derby's Cabinet, and he illustrated that at some length, concluding as follows:—

> "But there is another point of view from which the question of identical suffrage in counties and boroughs may be considered. By adopting it as a principle the disfranchisement of small and decayed boroughs — ultimately inevitable as new towns arise to be represented—becomes at once less important and less difficult. Under a system of uniform suffrage the only result of disfranchisement is to transfer the votes of the boroughs disfranchised into the county. Both the demand for enfranchisement would be greatly diminished and the fear of disfranchisement greatly decreased, and thus a partial solution would be offered of a question which has given, and may again give, rise to a great deal of agitation."

That is to say, a Member of Lord Derby's Government, who had so much to do with that Bill, characterized it as having this effect—that there would be a nominal disfranchisement of small boroughs, whereas the disfranchisement ought to have extended to fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty, but that still the plan of an identical suffrage with a nominal re-distribution of fifteen seats, would render the future disfranchisement of these fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty places less difficult. And who was the authority that spoke thus? Why, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn himself. But the noble Lord the other night also stated that the course now taken by the Government is opposed to the analogy of financial matters—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer never divides his financial measures into distinct parts. The noble Lord was there quite in error. In some other countries, indeed, when the Finance Minister introduces his Budget, he puts it before the Legislature as a whole. He places all the revenue he expects to receive on the one side and all the probable expenditure on the other, and he brings down the Budget to the Chamber and defends it entirely as one proposal. But that is not the English practice. Here the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of the Admiralty, and the Secretary of the Treasury each bring down their different Budgets of expenditure, quite independently of the Budget of receipts, and these are gone through without any question being raised as to what will be the probable receipt from the malt tax, the spirit duty, or any other source of income. After the expenditure has been settled, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer comes down to the House with the Budget of Revenue, and asks us to provide the means which he thinks necessary. So far, then, from the analogy of finance being opposed to the course taken by the Government in regard to the present Bill, it is distinctly in accordance with it. There is, indeed, one principle which I undertake to say is an English principle, as opposed to a foreign principle. All the Constitutions of foreign countries have been conferred in the shape of complete codes, and it seems to be the principle of their legislation to think about everything when they make a single alteration; but the English principle is just the reverse. If there is one principle dearer to English legislation than another it is simply this—that it is best to do one thing at a time. On the question of time, let me remind the House how long it took to carry the great Reform Bill. I have referred to the debates in the years 1831 and 1832, and I find that to pass the three Bills occupied 111 nights; and that in addition to those 111 nights eighty more were partly taken up in subsidiary discussions on the subject—in other words, 191 discussions took place upon the Reform Bill in this House and the House of Lords before it became law. The present measure has been said to-night to be of equal importance; but is any Member prepared to say that, before the Bill can pass, this House and the House of Lords are to be occupied 191 nights upon it? There was another argument used by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir Bulwer Lytton) which I will touch upon. The right hon. Baronet, speaking of his own county, said, that in it the tenant farmers could carry an election, though they did not appear by the books to be much more than a third of the constituency, and that a class that had a third of a constituency had an election in its power. Now, this argument is altogether opposed to experience. How many tenant farmers, I would ask, sit in this House? And I will ask further, if in any case the interests of the tenant farmers and of the landowners were opposed, how many votes of county Members would be given on behalf of the former? I will undertake to say that if the tenant farmers and the owners of land should find themselves in opposition on any great public question, the support of tenant farmers would come from the borough Members, especially from those on this side of the House, and that the county Members on the other side would, with very few exceptions indeed, be found in the lobby of those who supported the views of the owners of land. I think it is an undoubted axiom that no class can have predominance in this House unless it is able to return Members of its own class; and this is the practical answer to those who argue that the giving a third of the borough constituencies to the labouring class will give them a predominant power in that House.

I think, also, that we have had a great deal too much of prophecy as to the inevitable results of this or that legislation. There are two ways of dealing with a great public question: you may argue from fact, and you may argue by prophecy. The argument from fact is somewhat dull at the moment, and it has this disadvantage—that it is easy to refute it if wrong; but it has also the advantage that it remains. The argument from prophecy, on the other hand, has the advantage of being amusing, for we are all very much amused at hearing of the terrible things that are coming; and it has the second advantage, that it is impossible to refute it, though perhaps it has the disadvantage that it is not remembered much afterwards. Now, I will remind the House of the prophecies that were indulged in as to the result of the constitutional changes of 1832, and I may be allowed to call the opponents of the Reform Act of 1832 the Greater Prophets, while I am sure hon. Gentlemen opposite will not be offended if I call them the Sons of the Prophets, or the Lesser Prophets, for they have given abundance of prophecies to justify that title. I will read two or three of the prophecies on the Reform Bill of 1832. Lord Ashburton, then

Mr. Baring, made these remarks on that measure—

"He objected to the Bill because of its democratic tendency; for if once it were carried into effect, they would have a King by name with less influence than a President of the United States; and a House of Lords so intimidated as that they would lose the whole of that wholesome influence to which their rank, their wealth, and inheritance so justly entitled them. When the Peerage once lost its influence, then would a democracy decidedly prevail."

Sir James Scarlett said—

"If the Bill were allowed to become law then the present form of Government could not long exist, it must necessarily pass, and that by hasty strides, into a republic, and the transit would be accompanied with the most calamitous consequences to the country. Year after year you would have some new inroad—first on the Church, then property, then the funds. How could you get law officers? A man of such a mind could not stoop to the artifices of the hustings. How could he engage in an unpopular prosecution?"

Lord Wynford gave the following opinion:—

"If this Bill passed into law, it would destroy the landed interest entirely, and with the landed interest it would destroy also the interest of the Church."

And Mr. Praed said—

"The House of Commons to be elected by the new measure would possess prerogatives without power and privileges, without daring to exercise them. Sovereignty would be an empty name; good order and Government, and an organized state of society unmeaning sounds."

I will not quote any more of these individual expressions of opinions used in debate, but will read the solemn Protest, which was signed by seventy-four Peers, against the second reading—for these were not mere words, but writing which remained. This was what they said of the Reform Bill—

"A preponderating influence in the election of the House of Commons is conferred upon the lowest class of inhabitants in towns. . . The metropolis is virtually consigned to universal suffrage. . . . The Government cannot fail to become a mere democracy—or if the name and form of a monarchy be preserved, all that could give independence to the Sovereign, or protection to the subject, will be really excluded."

Is it possible to read again such language as this without a smile? I, on the other hand, will say that in spite of all the prophecies which have been uttered with regard to the present Bill, I believe that it is the only real measure which can be expected to pass the House of Commons, or at any rate the only real measure which, if it passes the House, we can expect to be cheerfully accepted by those for whose benefit it is intended. I am aware that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire has suggested that this more democratic representation should be given to a certain number of large constituencies, and that the others should be left with their present suffrages, and that this is supposed to have been Sir James Mackintosh's opinion, but that position has been entirely disposed of by the hon. and learned Member for Belfast, to whose speech in the debate on Lord Derby's Bill in 1859 I would refer the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire. Let me also remind the House that the intelligence of the country is not where it was. When the Reform Act was passed newspapers were only read by thousands or tens of thousands where millions read them now, and after having deliberately taken off the taxes on the press in order that knowledge might be more generally diffused throughout the country, you cannot avoid following that up by an extension of electoral privileges. I will go further, and say that after having been for thirty years expending annually on the education of the people a sum which now amounts to between a million and a million and a half, you will have been throwing that money away if, when education reaches the point it has, you turn round and say, "We have educated the people, we have given them every opportunity of improvement, and now we deny them the smallest increase of political power." The late Sir Robert Peel clearly foresaw the necessity of some such course as this Bill proposes, for in the debate on the Reform Bill in 1831 he used these very strong expressions—

"Its great defect, in my opinion, is this—that it severs all connection between the lower classes of the community and the direct representation in this House. I think it a fatal objection that every link between the representative and the constituent body should be separated as far as regards the lower classes. What will be the effect of cutting off altogether the communication between this House and all that class of society which is above pauperism and below the arbitrary and impassable line of £10 rental? Even if you were establishing a perfectly new system of representation, and were unfettered by the recollections of the past, and by existing modes of society, would it be wise to exclude altogether the sympathy of this class? To subject a great, powerful, jealous, and intelligent mass of your population to the injury, aye, and to the stigma of exclusion."

Let me remind the House, in conclusion, of what will happen when this debate comes to an end. We are not acting merely for the moment, and in giving our votes we do not take "after me the deluge" as our motto. I will suppose for a moment that the combination which has taken place against the Bill proves successful, and that the second reading is negatived. You, Mr. Speaker, will then put as a substantive Motion the Amendment, the terms of which are to the effect—"that this House is ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform." Now what do these words mean? If they mean anything they mean that the House is ready to pass a comprehensive Reform Bill. But how can my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) vote for such a Resolution when he has been denying the expediency of any extension of the suffrage, and when the very borough for which he sits is one of the greatest difficulties in dealing with a re-distribution of seats? How, again, can the right hon. and gallant General the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel), after praising the good old times of George III., declare by his vote that the House is ready to pass a comprehensive measure? And how can those hon. Gentlemen opposite, who have cheered every sentiment hostile to Reform, vote with any consistency not against the Bill, but in favour of a comprehensive measure? Four Cabinets, consisting of the statesmen who represented every political party in the country, have failed in an attempt to pass a Reform Bill, and now, when for the first time there is a chance of such a Bill passing through Parliament —now, when for the first time the Government have pledged their existence on carrying such a Bill—is it to be defeated by a combination which will fall to pieces in the very moment of its victory? Such a result would be a great misfortune to this House and to the country. The desire of the country is that the question shall be settled. What the country is prepared to accept now as a settlement of the question is a much more moderate measure than what may be acceptable at a future time. If cheerfully given now it will be as cheerfully accepted. But if the Bill is to be upset by a combination which must fall to pieces at the moment of victory, the country may require at a future time a measure of a very different character to that now before the House. In such a case time is invaluable. The hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford (Sir Stafford Northcote) concluded his speech with a motto. He said, of the Reform Bill, *Sat cito si sat bene*—a good old motto of Lord Eldon—which I will cap with another, and I hope the House will take it to heart—*Bis dat qui cito dat.*

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE, in rising to move the adjournment of the debate, said, he must protest against the elaborate misconstruction [*Cries of* "Order!"] of the meaning of the Amendment of the noble Earl ["Order!"] by the Secretary to the Treasury. ["Order!"] He would not have such an interpretation go forth uncontradicted for an hour. Having made that protest, he begged to move the adjournment of the debate.

CAPTAIN VIVIAN protested against this important debate being adjourned at twelve o'clock. On Monday night the debate was adjourned at half past eleven; on that occasion an hon. Member protested against the sort of Herodian principle of the "Massacre of the Innocents" which was adhered to. The debate was to close tomorrow, and at every opportunity the side of the House on which he sat rose almost to a man; and therefore he could not see how the great majority of those anxious to speak upon the subject could attain their object if the debate was to close at so early an hour. On the occasion of the Repeal of the Corn Laws they sat until three or four o'clock in the morning, and he did not see that the Members of the present House of Commons were more degenerate than those who sat there twenty or thirty years ago. He, therefore, hoped that the debate would not be adjourned at so early an hour.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he did not see how, under the present arrangement, he should have an opportunity of addressing the House, as he desired to do. He would take that opportunity of preventing an erroneous impression which his Colleague had unfortunately created with respect to the conduct of both. The hon. Member had said that such would be the effect of this Bill upon the constituencies they represented that if it passed they would retire. It was perfectly true that the leasehold clause would create 5,000 new electors in the county, and the reduction of the franchise would add 3,500 to a constituency of 6,700. No doubt that was a large addition; but having so long represented North Warwickshire, and having polled a majority in Birmingham, he was not prepared to endorse the observation of his Colleague. He should certainly present himself for re-election.

MR. WYLD, as one of the Members whose boroughs were scheduled in every

Bill for the re-distribution of seats, trusted that the Government would give him and others in the same situation an opportunity of protesting against their receiving "the happy despatch."

Captain GROSVENOR also protested against the debate being closed at so early an hour.

Mr. E. P. BOUVERIE said, that there was one consideration which he thought ought not to be lost sight of, and that was the health of the Speaker. Many hon. Gentlemen were anxious to speak on this debate, but many of them must be contented to forego the temptation. The country must not be kept in suspense for an unlimited time in order that hon. Members might indulge their private feelings. He saw himself a whole "covey" of hon. Members get up during the evening, both below and above the gangway, each one endeavouring to catch the Speaker's eye. Well, those hon. Members must content themselves with waiting for another opportunity of addressing the House in a future stage of the Bill. He trusted that in any case the House would not be prevented from coming to a conclusion on the following night.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, it was not any part of the duty of Government to take upon themselves to say whether or not the debate should be adjourned at that hour. That was a matter for the House to judge of. The right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had apparently expressed the general feeling of the House in the remarks he had made, which came from him with greater propriety than they would have done from any Member of the Government. He agreed in the fullest manner with the hon. Members who had just spoken that it was a great hardship—but an unavoidable hardship—that so many Gentlemen who were desirous to address the House should not have an opportunity of doing so in the course of this protracted debate. As far as the Government were concerned he begged the House to notice that the Secretary to the Treasury, instead of speaking immediately after the right hon. Member for Calne, did not rise until a late hour, so that the greater portion of that evening had been at the disposal of hon. Members. Of course, it could scarcely be expected that the Government would permit the speech of the right hon. Gentleman to pass unanswered. Under any other circumstances the Government would have opposed no obstacle to the debate being continued; but it was evidently the desire of the House that it should then be adjourned. The noble Lord (Viscount Cranbourne) in moving the adjournment of the debate, took the opportunity of protesting against what he called the misrepresentation of the meaning of the Amendment by the Secretary to the Treasury. By so doing he believed that the noble Lord had lost his title to speak again in the debate. ["Hear, hear!" "No, no!"] It was not in the power of an hon. Member to make two speeches by tacking on at the end of the first a Motion for the adjournment of the debate. However, he trusted that the rule would not be enforced against the noble Lord; although it was not a fair proceeding on his part to make such a charge in making the ordinary and formal Motion for adjournment. The offence of his right hon. Friend consisted in simply placing his own construction upon a document of a few lines, which was in the hands and in the memory of every Member of the House.

Mr. GRANT rose to protest against the way in which the debate had been conducted. There were 180 new Members in the present House of Commons, only four or five of whom had addressed the House. It seemed to be understood that the debate was to close to-morrow night, and he supposed that none but official speakers would address the House to-morrow. Some hon. Members had addressed the House for two or three hours at a stretch, and this was not treating fairly those independent Members who had an equal right to express their sentiments.

Mr. WATKIN suggested that the Motion of adjournment should be to twelve o'clock on Friday, and that if the health of the Speaker would not allow him to take the chair at that time, his place might be filled by the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Reference having been made to myself, I may be permitted to say that I am extremely obliged to the House for its consideration; but my health is now so much restored that I am perfectly ready to go on with the debate if that should be the wish of the House.

Mr. SANDFORD would remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the rules of debate were not laid down by him, but by the right hon. Gentleman in the chair. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had thought proper to say that his noble Friend (Viscount Cranbourne) had no right to speak again, because he had already spoken in moving the adjournment. Well, if that applied to his noble Friend, it equally applied to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If his noble Friend had spoken on the adjournment, so, on the same principle, had the right hon. Gentleman. He thought that his noble Friend had a perfect right to say what he had to say, subject, of course, to the approval of the Chair. He believed that his noble Friend was quite in order in making his observations upon the separate Question of the adjournment. [*Cries of* "Question!"] The hon. Member for London was always ready to cry "Question!" [Mr. CRAWFORD: I did not say one single word. I did not open my lips.] All he (Mr. Sandford) had to say was that if the noble Lord was out of order, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was equally out of order. If one was wrong so was the other.

SIR GEORGE GREY said, the hon. Gentleman was quite in error. If the question of adjournment had been put from the Chair the noble Lord was entitled to speak upon that Question, and to speak again in the debate. But if an hon. Member rose to move the adjournment of the debate, and prefaced that Motion by a speech upon the Main Question, then his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was right in saying that he had no right to speak again. If his hon. Friend the Secretary for the Treasury, for example, had moved the adjournment of the debate when he sat down, would it be contended that it would be competent to him to resume the debate at five o'clock to-morrow? The noble Lord had objected to certain statements made by his hon. Friend, and had concluded by moving the adjournment. It must therefore be regarded that the noble Lord has made his speech, and has no right to begin the debate to-morrow evening.

MR. HUNT thought it a great compliment to his noble Friend (Viscount Cranbourne) that the Treasury Bench appeared to be so exceedingly anxious to shut out his speech.

LORD JOHN MANNERS would not undertake to lay down any rule, but would simply appeal to the Speaker to say whether his noble Friend was out of order or not. There was, however, no practical question at issue, for as far as he understood, the Government had no serious intention of precluding his noble Friend from speaking to-morrow evening. He presumed that the House would not feel inclined to adopt the proposal to meet to-morrow at noon, and notwithstanding Mr. Speaker had gallantly declared that he was well enough to go on, he humbly submitted that the best thing they could do was to agree to the adjournment and allow the right hon. Gentleman to "go home."

On Motion of Viscount CRANBOURNE, Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS AMENDMENT BILL—[BILL 119.]

(*Sir George Grey, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

SIR GEORGE GREY moved that the Lords' Amendments to this Bill be agreed to. The Amendments made in the Preamble, and in the first and sixth clauses, were perfectly harmless, and the House would do well to agree to them. He must express his satisfaction that by this Bill all distinction of religious creeds in that House was henceforth abolished. Members could now come to the table and take one single oath, that of allegiance to the Sovereign, without any distinction of religion. His satisfaction was increased when he remembered that this Act would be passed by the general concurrence of both Houses, and of both the great parties in the State.

MR. WHALLEY moved an Amendment to insert after the words "heirs and successors," the words "being Protestant." The Bill, as at present framed, attested Her Majesty's supremacy, and the House of Commons had no power to deal with it. Upon the marriage of Her Majesty, the Duke of Wellington caused these words to be inserted in the settlement; but on the marriage of the Prince of Wales, Lord Palmerston stated that the Protestantism of the Crown would not be affected.

The Amendment, not being seconded, was not put.

Lords' Amendments *agreed to.*

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (*re-committed*) BILL—[BILL 116.]—COMMITTEE.

(*Lord Clarence Paget, Mr. Childers.*)

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 to 14 *agreed to.*

Clause 15

Mr. AYRTON said, that two years ago he opposed the Bill brought forward by the Government, because while that measure ministered to vice, it made no provision for the reclamation of the unfortunate women who were to be made subject to the operation of the Act. He was glad to find that the Government had profited by his advice, and that many of those unfortunate women had been reclaimed and restored to their friends. He objected, however, strongly to the appointment of stipendiary officers, who were by this measure to grant certificates of health to immoral women, and thus to sanction and promote the practices of debauchery in the towns which were to be favoured by the protection afforded by the Act, among which he noticed were the names of Windsor and Eton. He attributed the present measure entirely to the action of the medical officers of the army and navy, who strongly objected to the present mode of inspection. He proposed to amend the clause which related to women submitting themselves voluntarily to periodical medical examination by requiring them to make a declaration that they were persons which the law recognizes only to punish.

Amendment proposed, in line 18, after the word "prostitute," to insert the words "and affected with a contagious disease." —(*Mr. Ayrton.*)

Lord CLARENCE PAGET said, he should decline to follow the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets, who appeared to be ignorant of the care taken to preserve the health of the men in both services. He protested against the statement that there was anything in the Bill which could be tortured to mean that women were to be certificated.

Mr. HENLEY seriously asked the Home Secretary why the Bill, which was very different from the last, was not to be general in its application? If it was to be extended to Windsor, why not to Westminster? [Sir George Grey: There are troops at Windsor.] There were troops in Westminster, which also contained a public school, and he asked for a certain explanation.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, the only question for the Committee was, whether the existence of disease in the services justified exceptional legislation, that the Bill applied to places where either of the services constituted a considerable portion of the population, that a radius of five miles was necessary to prevent such evasion as might be practised otherwise by those living in the villages that surrounded Aldershot, and that the five mile radius did not apply to Woolwich, because it would include a large portion of London.

Mr. HENLEY instanced Staines and Egham as within five miles of Windsor, and not containing soldiers or sailors.

Mr. PERCY WYNDHAM said, he had understood that the Bill was not to be publicly discussed—a decision which would not have been creditable to the modesty or common sense of the House. He had understood that it was to be referred to a Select Committee. The hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets had made statements which ought not to be allowed to go uncontradicted. It must be clear to everyone that the effect of the operation of the Bill would be to diminish expenditure considerably by reducing the number of men in hospital.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 5; Noes 76: Majority 71.

Mr. WHALLEY moved that the following addition be made to the clause:—

> "Further provided that the justices before whom such information shall be made shall in all cases require corroborative testimony and support thereof, other than that of the members of the police force."

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Remaining clauses *agreed to.*

On Motion that the Schedule stand part of the Bill,

Mr. OTWAY expressed a hope that the police of those boroughs to which the Bill applied would be ordered to exercise extreme caution; and that any laxity on their part would be visited with the severest punishment.

Motion *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

CONFERENCES.

Lords Message [24th April] *considered.*

Resolved, That the Commons are willing to send to the Lords by Message, without a Conference, any Communication desiring the concurrence of The Lords to any Address to Her Majesty, under the provisions of the Act fifteenth and sixteenth Victoria, chapter fifty-seven, to which the Commons may have agreed, unless at any time the Lords should desire to receive the same at a Conference.

Message to be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships, that this House, having considered their Lordships' Message, has agreed to the following Resolution:

"That the Commons are willing to send to the Lords by Message, without a Conference, any Communication desiring the Concurrence of The Lords to any Address to Her Majesty, under the provisions of the Act fifteenth and sixteenth Victoria, chapter fifty-seven, to which the Commons may have agreed, unless at any time The Lords should desire to receive the same at a Conference."

HOP TRADE BILL—[BILL 36.]

(*Mr. Huddleston, Sir Brook Bridges, Sir Edward Dering.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at Two o'clock.

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APPENDIX.

FELLOWS OF COLLEGES DECLARATION BILL

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 1866.

Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day six months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Walpole,*)—instead thereof.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*; Ayes 208, Noes 186; Majority 22.—[*See page* 2061.]

AYES.

Acland, T. D.
Adam, W. P.
Agar-Ellis, hon. L.G.F.
Agnew, Sir A.
Allen, W. S.
Andover, Viscount
Anstruther, Sir R.
Antrobus, E.
Armstrong, R.
Ayrton, A. S.
Aytoun, R. S.
Bagwell, J.
Baines, E.
Barclay, A. C.
Baring, hon. T. G.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Barry, C. R.
Bass, A.
Bass, M. T.
Baxter, W. E.
Bazley, T.
Beaumont, W. B.
Brady, J.
Brand, hon. H.
Brecknock, Earl of
Bright, J.
Browne, Lord J. T.
Bruce, Lord C.
Bruce, rt. hon. H. A.
Buxton, C.
Buxton, Sir T. F.
Calthorpe, hn. F. H. W. G.
Candlish, J.
Cavendish, Lord E.
Cavendish, Lord F. C.
Cavendish, Lord G.
Chambers, T.
Cheetham, J.
Clay, J.
Clinton, Lord E. P.
Clive, G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collier, Sir R. P.
Colthurst, Sir. G. C.
Cowen, J.
Cowper, hon. H. F.
Craufurd, E. H. J.
Davey, R.
Dawson, hon. Capt. V.
Denman, hon. G.
Dent, J. D.
Dering, Sir E. C.
Dilke, Sir W.
Dillon, J. B.
Duff, M. E. G.
Dundas, rt. hon. Sir D.
Dunkellin, Lord
Dunlop, A. M.
Ellice, E.
Erskine, Vice-Adm. J. E
Evans, T. W.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, H. E. Crum-
Fawcett, H.
Fildes, J.
FitzPatrick, rt. hon. J. W.
Fitzwilliam, hn. C. W. W.
Foley, H. W.
Foljambe, F. J. S.
Forster, C.
Forster, W. E.
Foster, W. O.
Fortescue, rt. hon. C. P.
Gaselee, Serjeant S.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gilpin, C.
Glyn, G. C.
Glyn, G. G.
Goldsmid, Sir F. H.
Goldsmid, J.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gower, hon. F. L.
Gregory, W. H.
Gray, Sir J.
Gridley, Captain H. G.
Grosvenor, Capt. R. W.
Hadfield, G.
Hanbury, R. C.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, J. D.
Hay, Lord J.
Hay, Lord W. M.
Hayter, Captain A. D.
Headlam, rt. hon. T. E.
Henderson, J.
Heneage, E.
Henley, Lord
Hibbert, J. T.
Hoare, Sir H. A.
Hodgkinson, G.
Hodgson, K. D.
Holden, I.
Holland, E.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Hughes, W. B.
Hutt, rt. hon. Sir W.
Jackson, W.
James, E.
Jervoise, Sir J. C.
Kearsley, Captain R.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Kinglake, J. A.
Kingscote, Colonel
Knatchbull-Hugessen, E
Laing, S.
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Explanation of the Abbreviations.

In Bills, Read 1°, 2°, 3°, or 1^a, 2^a, 3^a, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches, 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—*1st. Div.*, *2nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

☞ When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

When in the Index a † is prefixed to a Name or an Office (the Member having accepted or vacated office during the Session) and to Subjects of Debate thereunder, it indicates that the Speeches on those Subjects were delivered in the speaker's private or official character, as the case may be.

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House informed, that the Committee had determined, That William Forsyth, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Cambridge. That the last Election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of the said William Forsyth, esquire, is a void Election *April* 16, 1357

Camoys, Lord
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 6, 1623

Campbell, Lord
Electoral Returns, Comm. moved for, 1492

Cardwell, Right Hon. E. (Secretary of State for the Colonies), *Oxford City*
British North America—Fishermen on the Coast of, 1122
Fenians, The, and the British American Colonies, 1990
New Zealand—Bishopric of Nelson, 1988, 1989;—Division of, 1989
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Carnarvon, Earl of
Cattle Diseases Act—Extension of Time, 572, 1762
Cattle Plague Returns, 119
Ireland—State of, Comm. moved for, 404
Poor Law—Strand Union Workhouse, 1868
Railway Bills affecting the City of London, 1640
West Middlesex Water, Comm. 1979

Cattle Assurance Bill
(*Mr. Baring, Sir George Grey*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 22 [Bill 90]
Read 2°* *April* 9
Committee*; Report *April* 19
Considered as amended* *April* 20
Read 3°* *April* 23
l. Read 1ª* (*The Lord President*) *April* 24 (No. 83)

Cattle Disease
Question, Colonel Edwards; Answer, Sir George Grey *Mar* 15, 285
Cattle Diseases Act—Treatment of Diseased Animals, Questions, The Duke of Buckingham; Answer, Earl Granville *April* 20, 1760
—*Extension of Time*, Question, The Duke of Montrose; Answer, Earl Granville; debate thereon *Mar* 20, 569; Question, Mr. Read; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 9, 891
Cattle, Insurance of, Question, Lord George Manners; Answer, Mr. Baring *Mar* 22, 732
Compensation for Slaughtered Cattle, Question, Mr. Dent; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 15, 283; Questions, Lord Robert Montagu; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 10, 972
Fresh Outbreak in London, Question, The Earl of Lichfield; Answer, Earl Granville *Mar* 22, 727
Hides and Skins, Removal of, Question, Mr. Freville Surtees; Answer, Mr. Baring *Mar* 15, 286

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Importation of Diseased Dutch Cattle, Question, Mr. Du Cane; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 13, 1227

Orders in Council, Question, The Earl of Ellenborough; Answer, The Lord Chancellor *Mar* 15, 277; Observations, The Earl of Lichfield; Reply, Earl Granville *Mar* 16, 357; Question, Mr. Hunt; Answer, Sir George Grey; discussion thereon *Mar* 19, 492; Observations, The Earl of Derby; Reply, Earl Granville *April* 23, 1865

Questions (*various*), Question, Mr. Gathorne Hardy; Answer, Sir George Grey; short debate thereon *Mar* 23, 848; Question, Mr. M'Lagan; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 12, 1121; Observations, Sir George Grey *April* 16, 1359; Question, Mr. Leslie; Answer, The Lord Advocate *April* 17, 1507

Removal of Cattle, Question, Admiral Duncombe; Answer, Sir George Grey *Mar* 15, 283; Question, Mr. Read; Answer, Sir George Grey *Mar* 20, 580

Returns, Observations, The Earl of Carnarvon; Reply, Earl Granville *Mar* 13, 119

Statistics, Question, Admiral Duncombe; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson *Mar* 12, 15

(See *Sheep, Diseases in*)

Cattle, &c., Contagious Diseases Bill
(*Sir George Grey, Mr. Baring*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 21 [Bill 86]
Read 2° * *April* 9
Committee *; Report *April* 10
Committee *; Report *April* 11
Considered as amended * *April* 12
Read 3° * *April* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*The Lord President*) *April* 16
Read 2ª * *April* 17 (No. 70)
Committee *; Report *April* 19
Read 3ª * *April* 19
Royal Assent *April* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 15]

Cattle Plague Bill
(*Mr. Hunt, Mr. Holland, Mr. Banks Stanhope, Sir James Fergusson*)
Consideration of Lords' Amendments—Moved, "That the said Amendments be now taken into consideration" (*Mr. Hunt*) *Mar* 14, 263
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Sir George Grey*)
After long debate, Question, "That 'now,' &c." negatived; words added; main Question, as amended, agreed to; consideration of Lords' Amendments, put off for six months

Cattle Sheds in Burghs (Scotland) Bill
(*Mr. Waldegrave-Leslie, Mr. M'Laren, Sir G. Montgomery, Mr. M'Lagan*)
c. Ordered; read 1° *Mar* 15, 356 [Bill 72]
Read 2° * *Mar* 20
Committee *; Report *April* 11
Considered as amended * *April* 12
Read 3° * *April* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*The Lord President*) *April* 16
Read 2ª * *April* 17 (No. 71)
Committee *; Report *April* 19
Read 3ª * *April* 19
Royal Assent *April* 30 [29 *Vict.* c. 17]

CAVE, Mr. S., *New Shoreham*
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Oyster Fisheries, 2075

CECIL, Lord E. H. B. G., *Essex, S.*
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CHAMBERS, Mr. T., *Marylebone*
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- Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, 2R. 1344, 1352; Comm. *cl.* 1, 1621; *cl.* 6, Amendt. 1622, 1625

Childers, Mr. H. C. E. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Pontefract*
- Court of Probate, 890, 1505
- Crown Lands Acts, Comm. Res. 3, 962
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- Drainage Maintenance (Ireland), Leave, 966
- East India communications, Comm. 1974
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- Ireland—Law of Charities, 579;—Registry of Deeds, 848;—Records, 1773
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- Supply—Patent Office, 947, 949, 951;—New Courts of Justice, 1113
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Children, Employment of
- Question, The Earl of Shaftesbury; Answer, Earl Russell *April* 17, 1503
- *Factory Acts*, Question, Lord John Manners; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 16, 1359; Question, Mr. Fawcett; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 17, 1505

China
- *Mortality of Troops in*, Moved, That a Select Committee be appointed "to inquire into the mortality in the Troops in China, the causes which led to it, and into the conduct of those Departments of the Government whose duty it has been to administer to the wants of those troops" (*Colonel North*) *Mar* 20, 644; after debate, Motion agreed to; List of the Committee, 649; Sir H. Verney, General Dunne *added April* 12
- *Rebels in*, Question, Colonel Sykes; Answer, Mr. Layard *April* 12, 1119

Cholera, The
- Question, Sir Jervoise Jervoise; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce *April* 19, 1644

Church Rates
- Question, Lord John Manners; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 26, 2072
- *Church Rate Returns*, Question, Mr. Read; Answer, Sir George Grey *Mar* 16, 419
- *Church Rates Abolition Bill*, Question, Mr. Beresford Hope; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 15, 288

Clanricarde, Marquess of
- Attorneys and Solicitors (Ireland), 2R. 1115
- Ireland—State of, Comm. moved for, 405;—Court of Queen's Bench, 1628, 1629, 1635, 1637;—Chief Justice Lefroy—Explanation, 1751
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Clarendon, Earl of (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)
- Abyssinia—British Prisoners in, 1867

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Clerks of Customs
- Question, Mr. Treeby; Answer, Mr. Childers *Mar* 16, 420

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- Question, Mr. Biddulph; Answer, Mr. Baring *Mar* 14, 489

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Coal Fields, Duration of the
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Cochrane, Mr. A. D. Baillie, *Honiton*
Business, Order of, 839
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Cogan, Mr. W. H. F., *Kildare Co.*
Cattle Disease—Importation of Sheep into Ireland, 421
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Coinage, International
Question, Mr. Watkin; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 23, 840

Coleridge, Mr. J. D., *Exeter*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1830
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Collier, Sir R. P., *see* Solicitor General, The

Commons (Metropolis) Bill
(*Mr. Cowper, Mr. Childers*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. Cowper*), 623
Ordered, after long debate *Mar* 20
Read 1° * *Mar* 21 [Bill 84]

Consolidated Fund (£1,137,772) Bill
(*The Earl Russell*)
l. Read 3ª * *Mar* 12
Royal Assent *Mar* 13 [29 *Vict.* c. 6]

Consolidated Fund (19,000,000) Bill
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 15
Read 2° * *Mar* 16
Committee * Report *Mar* 19
Read 3° * *Mar* 20
l. Read 1ª * (*The Earl Russell*) *Mar* 20
Read 2ª * *Mar* 22
Read 3ª * *Mar* 22
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 13]

Contagious Diseases Prevention Bill
(*Lord Clarence Paget, Mr. Childers*)
c. Ordered * *Mar* 15; read 1° * *Mar* 16 [Bill 78]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Lord Clarence Paget*) *Mar* 22, 814; after short debate, read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee; Committee nominated *April* 9; List of the Committee, 967; Lord Hotham *disch.*, Sir C. Russell *added April* 13
Special Report *April* 20 (No. 200)
Committee (*on re-comm.*); Report *April* 26, 2176 [Bill 116]

Contagious Diseases [*Expenses*]
c. Resolution in Committee * *April* 24
Report * *April* 25

Convicts' Property Bill
(*Mr. Attorney General, Sir G. Grey*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 16 [Bill 105]
Read 2° * *April* 23

Coolies — Emigration to the French Colonies
Question, Mr. Baillie Cochrane; Answer, Mr. Layard *April* 24, 1989

Copyhold and Leasehold Franchise
Question, Sir F. Heygate; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 16, 422

County Courts Bill
(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 12 [Bill 47]
Committee *; Report *Mar* 19
Considered as amended * *Mar* 20
Read 3° * *Mar* 21
l. Read 1ª * (*The Lord Chancellor*) *Mar* 22
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *April* 12; read 2ª after short debate, and committed
Committee; Report *April* 16, 1355
Read 3ª * *April* 17 (No. 55)
Royal Assent *April* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 14]

County Infirmaries (Ireland) Bill [Bill 14]
(*Mr. Pollard-Urquhart, Mr. O'Reilly*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Pollard-Urquhart*) *Mar* 14, 241
After short debate, Motion negatived

Court of Chancery (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland*)
c. Second reading * *Mar* 16; debate adjourned
Debate resumed *Mar* 19, 564 [Bill 19]
Moved, "That the debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Whiteside*); A. 55, N. 99; M. 44
Question again proposed
Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Lord Claud Hamilton*); after short debate, Motion withdrawn; Debate adjourned

Courtown, Earl of
Sea Fisheries, Report of Commissioners, 1757

Courts of Justice, New
Amendt. on Committee of Supply *Mar* 22, To leave out from "That," and add "in the opinion of this House, it is not expedient that the competition for the building of the New Courts of Justice should be limited to six architects only" (*Mr. Bentinck*), 775
After long debate, Question, "That the words, &c.;" A. 70; N. 101; M. 31; words added; Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

[*cont.*

Courts of Justice New—cont.
  Courts of Justice, New; and the National Gallery, Question, Mr. Bentinck; Answer, Mr. Cowper *Mar* 12, 17; Question, Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens; Answer, Mr. Cowper *Mar* 20, 576
  Increase of Judges, Question, Mr. Horsfall; Answer, The Attorney General *April* 17, 1507

COWEN, Mr. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
  France—Commercial Treaty with, 1647

COWPER, Right Hon. W. F. (Chief Commissioner of Works), *Hertford*
  Board of Trade—Marine Department, 1225
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  Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 650, 651, 652, 657

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  Cattle Plague, 495
  Electoral Statistics, 874
  Representation of the People, Leave, 224, 227; 2R. Adj. moved, 2172
  Tests Abolition (Oxford), 2R. 706, 712
  Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 654

CRANWORTH, Lord *see* CHANCELLOR, The Lord

CRAUFURD, Mr. E. H. J., *Ayr, &c.*
  Exchequer and Audit Departments, Comm. *cl.* 1, 1862; *cl.* 4, Amendt. 1863; *cl.* 8, 1864; *cl.* 18, 2009; Amendt. 2010
  Writs Registration (Scotland), 422

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  Cattle Disease—Orders in Council, 851
  Drivers of Hackney Carriages, 840
  East India communications, Comm. Instruction, 1974
  Metropolitan District Railway, 1646
  Post Office, General, 2076
  Representation of the People, Leave, 71; 2R. 2175

CROSSLEY, Sir F., *Yorkshire, W.R.—N.*
  Representation of the People, Leave, 70; 2R. 1404
  Supply—Patent Office, 950

Crown Lands Acts
  (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers*)
c. Resolutions in Committee *April* 9, 958
  Resolutions reported
  Bill ordered; read 1° *April* 10, 1075 [Bill 98]
  Read 2°* *April* 19

CUBITT, Mr. G., *Surrey, W.*
  Hop Trade, 2R. 1597

Customs Duties (Isle of Man) Bill
  (*Mr. Dodson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers*)
c. Resolution in Committee *Mar* 15, 354
  Bill ordered* *Mar* 16
  Read 1°* *Mar* 23 [Bill 91]
  Read 2°* *April* 16
  Committee* R.P. *April* 17
  Committee*; Report *April* 19
  Considered as amended* *April* 20
  Read 3°* *April* 23
l. Read 1ª* (*Lord Stanley of Alderley*) *April* 24 (No. 82)

Customs Duties (*Isle of Man*) [*Harbour Dues*]
c. Resolution in Committee *April* 17

Customs Officers, Outdoor
  Question, Mr. Blake; Answer, Mr. Childers *Mar* 13, 140

DALGLISH, Mr. R., *Glasgow*
  Navy Estimates—Naval Stores, 353

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  Question, Mr. Sandford; Answer, Mr. Layard *April* 20, 1772
  Roumania, Affairs of, Question, Mr. Darby Griffith; Answer, Mr. Layard *April* 20, 1774

DAWSON, Mr. R. Peel, *Londonderry Co.*
  Ireland—Established Church, Res. 1022
  Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland), Comm. 1578
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  Malt Tax, Res. 1548
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  Government Property, Rates on, Res. 1998
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DERRY, Bishop of,
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DICKSON, Major A. G., *Dover*
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DILKE, Sir W., *Wallingford*
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DILLON, Mr. J. B., *Tipperary Co.*
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, Comm. 292; *cl.* 7, 312

DISRAELI, Right Hon. B., *Buckinghamshire*
Army—Military Savings Banks, 736, 739
Business, Order of, 855
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Ireland—Escape of Stephens, Papers moved for, 762
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, Comm. 297; *cl.* 1, Amendt. *ib.* 300, 307
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Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Chancellor*)
c. Read 1° * *April* 13 [Bill 102]
Read 2° * *April* 23

Divorce Bills
Select Committee on Divorce Bills nominated; List of the Committee *Mar* 20, 649

Dockyard Extensions Act Amendment Bill (*Lord Clarence Paget, Mr. Childers*)
c. Ordered * *Mar* 15
Read 1° * *Mar* 16 [Bill 77]
Read 2° * *Mar* 19
Committee *; Report *Mar* 20
Read 3° * *Mar* 21
l. Read 1ª * (*The Duke of Somerset*) *Mar* 22 (No. 56)

DODSON, Mr. J. G. (Chairman of the Committees of Ways and Means:—sat as Deputy Speaker on several occasions), *Sussex, E.*
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DOULTON, Mr. F., *Lambeth*
Commons (Metropolis), Leave, 631, 633
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Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) (*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*)
c. Ordered *April* 17
Read 1° * *April* 20 [Bill 117]
Read 2° * *April* 23
Committee *; Report *April* 24
Read 3° * *April* 26

Drainage Maintenance (Ireland) Bill (*Mr. Childers, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*)
c. Ordered; read 1° *April* 9, 966 [Bill 95]

DU CANE, Mr. C., *Essex, N.*
Cattle Plague—Importation of Diseased Dutch Cattle, 1226
County Voters, 581
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DUFF, Mr. R. W., *Banffshire*
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DUFFERIN, Lord (Under Secretary of State for War)
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DUNKELLIN, Lord, *Galway Co.*
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DUNLOP, Mr. A. M., *Greenock*
Valuation of Lands, &c. (Scotland), 2R. 1083, 1092

DUNNE, Major-Gen. F. P., *Queen's Co.*
Army Chaplains, 1768
Grand Juries Presentment (Ireland), 2R. 1577
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Navy—Turret Ships, Address moved, 1, 13

DUTTON, Hon. R. H., *Cirencester*
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East India Communications—Select Committee
After short debate, Instruction to the Select Committee on East India Communications, that they be empowered to extend their inquiry to China and Japan and Australia and the Mauritius (*Mr. Crawford*) ; Mr. Marsh and Mr. Brooks added to the Committee *April* 23, 1974

East India Military, &c., Funds Transfer Bill (*Mr. Dodson, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Baring*)
c. Resolution in Committee *Mar* 15
Bill ordered ; read 1°* *Mar* 16 [Bill 75]
Read 2°* *Mar* 19
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(*Mr. Huddleston, Sir B. Bridges, Sir E. Dering*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Huddleston*) *April* 18, 1584
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Beresford Hope*); Question, "That 'now,' &c.;" after debate, Amendt. withdrawn; Main Question put, and agreed to; Read 2° *April* 18 [Bill 36]
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(*Sir G. Bowyer, Mr. Denman*)
c. Ordered* *Mar* 20
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Ireland
Armagh Roman Catholic Cathedral, Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland *Mar* 23, 847
Cattle Disease—Importation of Sheep and Cattle into, Question, Mr. Cogan; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland *Mar* 16, 421
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Daunt's Rock—Cork Harbour, Question, The Earl of Bandon; Answer, The Duke of Somerset *April* 24, 1986; Question, Mr. Maguire; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson, *April* 26, 2071
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Record of Title Office, Motion for papers (*The Earl of Belmore*) *Mar* 22, 718; after short debate, Motion withdrawn; Copy of Memorial from the Registration of Title Association, ordered (*The Earl of Belmore*)
Registry of Deeds, Dublin, Question, Mr. Serjeant Armstrong; Answer, Mr. Childers *Mar* 23, 48
Shannon River, Select Committee appointed *Mar* 19, "to inquire into the manner in which the Drainage and Navigation of the River Shannon has been carried out under the direction of Her Majesty's Government, and to report what steps should be taken to complete the works for which a compulsory levy of £300,000 has been made on the adjoining counties;" List of the Committee, 569
State of, Moved, "That the House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the State of Ireland" (*Earl Grey*) *Mar* 16, 368; after long debate, resolved in the negative

Irish and Scotch Reform Bills
Question, Major Stuart Knox; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 19, 1647

Irish Records
Question, General Dunne; Answer, Mr. Childers *April* 20, 1773

Italy, Brigandage in the Papal States
Question, Mr. O'Reilly; Answer, Mr. Layard *Mar* 23, 841
(see *Austria, Prussia, and Italy*)

Jamaica Government Bill
(*Earl Russell*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a" *Mar* 13, 120
Read 2a after debate *Mar* 13 (No. 29)
Committee*; Report *Mar* 15
Read 3a* *Mar* 16
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 12

JAMES, Mr. E., *Manchester*
Representation of the People, 2R. 2146

JERVOISE, Sir J. C., *Hampshire, S.*
Cholera, The, 1644
Postmaster General, 2R. 1081
Vaccination, Comm. 1110

JOLLIFFE, Right Hon. Sir W. G. H., *Petersfield*
Army Estimates—Administration of the Army, 804
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, Comm. *cl.* 8, 813, 814
Public Companies, 2R. 1580
Supply—Public Buildings, 909
Turnpike Roads, 2R. 2062

KEKEWICH, Mr. S. T., *Devonshire, S.*
Ashford, Mary, Execution of, 1508

KELLY, Sir FITZROY, *Suffolk, E.*
Court of Chancery (Ireland), 2R. 564
Financial Statement, The, 139
Fire Insurance, 491
Malt Duty, 1358, 1359; Res. 1509, 1561

KER, Mr. D. S., *Downpatrick*
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, 3R. 517
Transubstantiation, &c. Declaration Abolition, Leave, 642, 643

KING, Hon. P. J. Locke, *Surrey, E.*
Members' Appropriation of Seats in the House, 1765
Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 657

KINGLAKE, Mr. A. W., *Bridgwater*
Business, Order of, 853
Representation of the People, 2R. 1212

KINNAIRD, Hon. A. F., *Perth*
Crown Lands Acts, Comm. Res. 3, 962
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, 2R. 117
London Gas, Comm. 888
Supply—New Houses of Parliament, 916; Report, 1075

KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, Mr. E. H. (Lord of the Treasury), *Sandwich*
Ireland—The Constabulary, 419

KNIGHT, Mr. F. W., *Worcestershire, W.*
Hop Trade, 2R. 1597
Poor Law Expenditure, Res. 2002, 2006

Knightley, Sir R., *Northamptonshire, S.*
Cattle Plague, 498
Representation of the People, Leave, Adj. moved, 239, 240 ; 2R. 1972

Knox, Hon. Major W. Stuart, *Dungannon*
Army—Royal Military College, Comm. moved for, 430
Members' Appropriation of Seats in the House, 1764
Reform Bills—Irish and Scotch, 1647

Labouring Classes' Dwellings Bill
(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Bruce*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Childers*) *Mar* 12, 115
Read 2° after short debate [Bill 9]
Committee * ; Report *Mar* 13
Committee ; Report *Mar* 22, 809 [Bill 67]
Considered as amended * *April* 9
Read 3° * *April* 10
l. Read 1ª * (*The Lord Stanley of Alderley*) *April* 12 (No. 68)

Labouring Classes' Dwellings (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° *April* 9, 966 [Bill 94]

Laing, Mr. S., *Wick, &c.*
Representation of the People, Leave ; 75, 2R. 1306, 1318

Laird, Mr. J., *Birkenhead*
Board of Trade—Marine Department, 1224
Merchant Service—Qualification of Masters and Mates, 842
Navy Estimates—Naval Stores, 325, 326, 342, 344
Navy—The "Lord Warden," 842
Wreck Register, 285

Lamont, Mr. J., *Buteshire*
Tests Abolition (Oxford), 2R. 687

Lancaster Borough Election
House informed, That Edward Matthew Fenwick, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Lancaster. That Henry William Schneider, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Lancaster. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election *April* 23, 1871

Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) [Advances] Bill
(*Mr. Dodson, Mr. Childers, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)
c. Resolution in Committee *April* 19
Report *April* 20
Bill ordered ; read 1° * *April* 20 [Bill 118]

Land Tax Commissioners' Names Bill
(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)
c. Ordered * *Mar* 12
Read 1° * *Mar* 15 [Bill 71]
Read 2° * *Mar* 22

Land Tenure and Improvement (Ireland), 1866, Bill [H.L.]
(*The Marquess of Clanricarde*)
l. Presented ; read 1ª *Mar* 23, 833 (No. 64)

Lansdowne, Marquess of
Railway Companies—Financial Arrangements, 830

Law of Capital Punishment Amendment Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented ; read 1ª * *Mar* 23 (No. 61)

Lawrence, Mr. Alderman W., *London*
London Gas, Comm. 888, 889

Lawson, Right Hon. J. C. (Attorney General for Ireland), *Portarlington*
Cattle Disease—Importation of Sheep into Ireland, 421
County Infirmaries (Ireland), 2R. 242
Court of Chancery (Ireland), 2R. 564, 568
Ireland—Queen's University, 138 ; Explanation, 288 ;—Fenian Prisoners, 444, 733 ;—Drilling of Tenants, 488 ;—Escape of Stephens, Papers moved for, 751, 754 ;—Probate Court, Dublin, 847 ;—Armagh Roman Catholic Cathedral, 847

Layard, Mr. A. H. (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), *Southwark*
Austrian Territory, Raid on the, 2076
China—Rebels in, 1119
Coolies, Emigration of, to the French Colonies, 1989
Danubian Principalities, The, 1772, 1775
Egypt—Suez Canal, 135
India—Russian March upon Bokhara, 421
Papal States—Brigandage in the, 841
Prussia and Italy, 1506
Representation of the People, 2R. 1423, 1671
Spain, Chili, and Peru, War between, 420
Vienna—Treaty of, 1645
Wreck of the Ship "St. Abbs," 970

Leatham, Mr. W. H., *Wakefield*
Representation of the People, Leave, 178

Leeds Bankruptcy Court
Question, Mr. Ferrand ; Answer, The Attorney General *Mar* 15, 281

Leeman, Mr. G., *York City*
Representation of the People, 2R. 2127
Supply—New Houses of Parliament, 928

Lefevre, Mr. G. J. Shaw, *Reading*
Commons (Metropolis), Leave, 637

Lefroy, Mr. A., *Dublin University*
Ireland—Law of Charities, 579
Railway Travelling (Ireland), 2R. 258

Lennox, Lord H. G. C. G., *Chichester*
British Museum, 730, 731

Leslie, Colonel C. P., *Monaghan Co.*
Cattle Plague, 1507

Lewis, Mr. H., *Marylebone*
Superannuation (Officers Metropolitan Vestries, &c.) 2R. 1076
Vaccination, Comm. Amendt. 1109

Lichfield, Earl of
Cattle Diseases Act—Extension of Time, 575
Cattle Plague—Orders in Council, 357;—Fresh Outbreak in London, 727

Liddell, Hon. H. G., *Northumberland, S.*
Coal Fields, Exhaustion of the, 1768, 1873
Representation of the People, 2R. 1263

Lifford, Viscount
Army—Artillery—Breech-loading Small Arms, 1638
Ireland—Court of Queen's Bench, 1636

Local Government Supplemental Bill
(*Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir G. Grey*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *April* 16 [Bill 107]
Read 2°* *April* 19
Committee*; Report *April* 20
Read 3°* *April* 23
l. Read 1ª* *April* 24 (No. 84)

Local Officers Superannuation (Ireland) Bill (*Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Sir J. Gray*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *April* 9 [Bill 92]

Locke, Mr. J., *Southwark*
Army—Barracks at Nottingham, 972
Commons (Metropolis), Leave, 632, 635
Courts of Justice, Res. 792
Court of Probate, 889
Fire Insurance Duty, 1873
Hop Trade, 2R. 1593
Inns of Court, 2R. 1093
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, 2R. 118
London Gas, Comm. 888
Supply—Public Buildings, 897
Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 656
Thames Navigation, 2R. 1615

London Gas Bill (*Lords*)
c. Read 2° *April* 9; Moved, "That the Bill be committed to the Select Committee on the London (City) Corporation Gas Bill" (*Mr. Alderman Lawrence*), 888; after short debate, A. 73, N. 36; M. 37

"*London*," *Loss of the*
Observations, Sir John Pakington; Reply, Mr. Milner Gibson *Mar* 19, 524; Question, Mr. Grant; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson *Mar* 22, 734

Long, Mr. R. P., *Wiltshire, N.*
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, 3R. 517
Representation of the People, Leave, 185
Sheep, Rinderpest among, 137, 138

Longford, Earl of
Army—Artillery—Breech-loading Small Arms, 1640
Ireland—Court of Queen's Bench, 1638
Jamaica Government, 2R. 133
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, Report, 1760

Lowe, Right Hon. R., *Calne*
Cattle Disease—Orders in Council, 850
Representation of the People, Leave, Adj. moved, 114, 141, 150, 153, 166; 2R. 1149, 1152, 1368, 1369, 1429; Adj. moved, 1971, 2077, 2099, 2163
Tests Abolition (Oxford), 2R. 696

Lowther, Mr. J. *York City*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1401

Lunacy Acts Amendment (Scotland) Bill
(*Mr. Adam, Lord Advocate, Sir George Grey*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 21 [Bill 85]
Read 2°* *April* 16

Lusk, Mr. Alderman A., *Finsbury*
Hop Trade, 2R. 1597
Postmaster General, 2R. 1081

Lyttelton, Lord
Jamaica Government, 2R. 133

Lytton, Right Hon. Sir E. Bulwer, *Hertfordshire*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1237

Lyveden, Lord
East India Military, &c. Funds Transfer, Comm. 1753
Ireland—State of, Comm. moved for, 409

MacEvoy, Mr. E., *Meath Co.*
Financial Statement, 2076
Metropolis—St. Pancras Churchyard, 2073

McKenna, Mr. J. N., *Youghal*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1395

Mackie, Mr. J., *Kirkcudbright*
Valuation of Lands, &c. (Scotland), 2R. 1092

McLagan, Mr. P., *Linlithgowshire*
Cattle Disease Prevention Act, 1121

McLaren, Mr. D., *Edinburgh*
Electoral Statistics, 864
Malt Tax, Res. 1553
Railway Travelling (Ireland), 2R. 249

Maguire, Mr. J. F., *Cork City*
Army—Civil Officers of Royal Engineers, 1645
Ireland—Fenian Prisoners in Waterford, 444, 447;—Daunt's Rock, 2071
"London," Loss of the, 548
Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland), Comm. 1578
Representation of the People, 2R. Adj. moved, 1321, 1362, 1369

Maidstone Election
House informed, that William Lee, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone. That James Whatman, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone *April* 23, 1870

Malt Duty, The
Question, The Chancellor of the Exchequer; Answer, Sir FitzRoy Kelly *April* 16, 1358
Moved, "That upon any future remission of indirect taxation, this House will take into consideration the Duty upon Malt, with a view to its immediate reduction and ultimate repeal" (*Sir FitzRoy Kelly*) *April* 17, 1509
Amendt. to leave out from "That" and add "in the present state of the taxation and resources of the Country, it is the duty of Parliament to make provision for the systematic reduction of the National Debt, and not to sanction any proposal for any repeal or change of taxes which is likely to be attended with a diminution of the Revenue" (*Mr. Neate*); Question, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Amendt. withdrawn; Main Question put, A. 150, N. 234; M. 84; Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1574

Manners, Right Hon. Lord J. J. R., *Leicestershire, N.*
Cattle Plague, Lords Amendts. 275, 497
Church Rates, 2072
Day of Humiliation—Committees, 504
Factory Acts, 1359
Representation of the People, 2R. 2175

Manners, Lord G. J., *Cambridgeshire*
Cattle, Insurance of, 732

Marine Mutiny Bill
l. Read 1^{a}* *Mar* 12
Read 2^{a}* *Mar* 13
Committee*; Report *Mar* 15
Read 3^{a}* *Mar* 16
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 10]

Marlborough, Duke of
Cattle Diseases Act—Extension of time, 571, 574
Ecclesiastical Commission—Augmentation of Benefices, Returns moved for, 575

Marriages (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Serjeant Armstrong, Mr. Bryan*)
c. Ordered; read 1^{o}* *April* 10 [Bill 99]
Bill withdrawn *April* 25

Marriages (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Serjeant Armstrong, Mr. Bryan*)
c. Ordered; read 1^{o}* *April* 25 [Bill 123]

Marsh, Mr. M. H., *Salisbury*
Public Money—Standing Orders, 597
Redistribution of Seats, 1357
Representation of the People, Leave, 60
Victoria, Colony of—Papers moved for, 614

Martin, Mr. P. Wykeham, *Rochester*
Government Property, Rates on, Res. 1994
Representation of the People, Leave, 68; 2R. 1176

Master and Servant
Select Committee appointed, "To inquire into the state of the Law as regards contracts of Service between Master and Servant, and as to the expediency of amending the same" (*Lord Elcho*) *Mar* 22; And, on May 8, Select Committee nominated; List of the Committee, 816

Masters and Operatives Bill
(*The Lord St. Leonards*)
l. Presented; after short debate, read 1^{a} *Mar* 22, 717 (No. 59)

Maxwell, Sir William Stirling-, *Perthshire*
Supply—New Houses of Parliament, 926

Meath, Earl of
Ireland—Daunt's Rock, 1987

Meller, Mr. W., *Stafford*
Representation of the People, Leave, 187

Merchant Service—Qualifications of Masters and Mates
Question, Mr. Laird; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson *Mar* 23, 842

Metropolis
Finsbury Park, Question, Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens; Answer, Mr. Tite *April* 20, 1771
Leicester Square, Inclosure in, Question, Mr. Waldegrave-Leslie; Answer, Mr. Cowper *April* 10, 969
Metropolitan District Railway, Question, Mr. Crawford; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson *April* 19, 1646
Railway Bills affecting the City of London, Petitions, Question, The Earl of Carnarvon; Answer, Lord Redesdale *April* 19, 1640
Removal of Offal and Manure, Question, Mr. T. Chambers; Answer, Mr. Baring *Mar* 20, 577
St. Pancras Churchyard, Question, Mr. MacEvoy; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 26, 2073
St. Pancras Workhouse Infirmary, Question, Mr. Wilbraham Egerton; Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers *Mar* 20, 581
Street Accidents, Question, The Marquess of Westmeath; Answer, Earl Granville *Mar* 22, 721

Militia Pay Bill
(*Mr. Dodson, The Marquess of Hartington, The Judge Advocate General*)
c. Ordered * *Mar* 19

Mill, Mr. J. Stuart, *Westminster*
Hainault Forest, Inclosure of, 2012
Malt Duty, Res. 1524
Representation of the People, 2R. 1253, 1477, 2099

Miller, Mr. S. B., *Armagh City*
Court of Chancery (Ireland), 2R. 568
Ireland—Fatal Riot at the Election for Monaghan, 461;—Escape of Stephens, Papers moved for, 772
Railway Travelling (Ireland), 2R. 250

Moffatt, Mr. G., *Southampton*
Navy—East India Squadron, 553
Navy Estimates—Half Pay, 471, 554

Monk, Mr. C. J., *Gloucester*
Court of Probate—District Registries, 1505

Monsell, Right Hon. W. (Paymaster of the Forces and Vice President of the Board of Trade), *Limerick Co.*
India—Delhi Prize Money, 1769

Montagu, Lord R., *Huntingdonshire*
Cattle Plague, 972
Electoral Statistics, 871, 872
Public Health Acts, 1771
Representation of the People, Leave, 73; 2R. 1282
Victoria, Colony of—Papers moved for, 604, 623

Montrose, Duke of
Cattle Diseases Act—Extension of time, 569

More, Mr. R. J., *Shropshire, S.*
Malt Duty, Res. 1519

Morley, Mr. S., *Nottingham*
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, 2R. 118
Tests Abolition (Oxford), 2R. 710

Mortality of Troops (China)
Moved, That a Select Committee be appointed, "To inquire into the mortality in the Troops in China, the causes which led to it, and into the conduct of those Departments of the Government whose duty it has been to administer to the wants of those troops" (*Colonel North*) *Mar* 20, 644; after debate, Motion agreed to; List of the Committee, 649; Sir H. Verney, General Dunne *added April* 12

Mowbray, Rt. Hon. J. R., *Durham City*
Day of Humiliation—Committees, 507

Municipal Savings Banks
Question, Colonel Wilson Patten; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 13, 135

Mutiny Bill
(*Mr. Dodson, The Marquess of Hartington, The Judge Advocate General*)
c. Read 3° after short debate and passed *Mar* 12, 115
l. Read 1ª * (*The Earl de Grey*) *Mar* 13
Read 2ª * *Mar* 15
Committee *; Report *Mar* 19
Read 3ª * *Mar* 20
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 9]

Naas, Right Hon. Lord, *Cockermouth*
Ireland—Escape of Stephens, Papers moved for, 766

National Debt Reduction Bill
(*Lord Stanley of Alderley*)
l. Read 2ª * *Mar* 13 (No. 32)
Committee *; Report *Mar* 15
Read 3ª * *Mar* 16
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 11]

Naval Savings Banks Bill
(*Lord Clarence Paget, Mr. Childers*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 19 [Bill 114]

Navy
"*Bellerophon,*" *The,* Question, Sir John Pakington; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 19, 490
Board of Trade—Marine Department, Question, Mr. Laird; Answer, Mr. Cowper *April* 13, 1224
Captains' Pensions, Question, Admiral Erskine; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 19, 490
East Indian Squadron, Question, Mr. Moffatt; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 19, 553
Iron Clad Ships, Question, Mr. Graves; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 23, 839
"*Lord Warden,*" *The,* Question, Mr. Laird; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 23, 842
"*Octavia,*" *Small Pox on Board the,* Question, The Earl of Ellenborough; Answer, The Duke of Somerset *April* 24, 1975
Re-construction of the, Observations, Sir John Walsh; Reply, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 15, 315
Turret Ships—Captain Cowper Coles, Papers moved for (*Lord Dunsany*) *Mar* 12, 1; after debate, Motion agreed to
Whitworth Guns, Question, Mr. White; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *Mar* 23, 839
Widows of Naval Engineers, Question, Mr. Ferrand; Answer, Lord Clarence Paget *April* 19, 1646

Neate, Mr. C., *Oxford City*
Fellows of Colleges Declaration, Comm. 2047
Malt Duty, Res. Amendt. 1521, 1573
River Commission, 732
Tests Abolition (Oxford), 2R. 692
Thames Navigation, 2R. 1612

NEWDEGATE, Mr. C. N., *Warwickshire, N.*
Cattle Plague, Lords Amendts. 276
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, Comm. 291; *cl.* 1, 298, 300, 308; Schedule, 314; Consid. 480; *3R. 509
Representation of the People, 2R. 2172
Representation of the People—The Franchise, 734, 735

New Forest Poor Relief Bill
(*Viscount Enfield, Mr. Villiers*)
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 21 [Bill 57]
Referred to Select Committee *Mar* 21

New Writs Issued
Mar 13—*For* Louth, *v.* Right Hon. Chichester Samuel Fortescue, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland
For Tewkesbury, *v.* William Edward Dowdeswell, esquire, Chiltern Hundreds
Mar 14—*For* Worcester County (Western Division), *v.* Hon. F. Lygon, now Earl of Beauchamp
Mar 20—*For* Wigan, *v.* Major General the Hon. James Lindsay, Manor of Northstead
Mar 21—*For* Boston, *v.* Thomas Parry, esquire, not duly elected
Mar 22—*For* Bridgnorth, *v.* Sir John Emerick Dalberg Acton, not duly elected
Mar 23—*For* Ripon, *v.* Lord John Hay, Commissioner of the Admiralty
For Honiton, *v.* Frederic David Goldsmid, esquire, deceased
April 16—*For* Cambridge Borough, *v.* William Forsyth, esquire, void Election
April 23—*For* Helston, *v.* Adolphus William Young, esquire, void Election

New Members Sworn
Mar 7—Marmaduke Wyvill, esq., *Richmond*
Mar 21—Meaburn Staniland, esq., *Boston*
Mar 22—Henry Whitmore, esq., *Bridgnorth*
Mar 23—Sir Edmund Anthony Harley Lechmere, Baronet, *Tewkesbury*
April 9—Henry Arthur Herbert, esq., *Kerry*
April 10—The Right Hon. Chichester Samuel Fortescue, *Louth*
Nathaniel Eckersley, esq., *Wigan*
April 11—William Edward Dowdeswell, esq., *Worcester County* (*Western Division*)
April 12—Lord John Hay, *Ripon*
April 16—Julian Goldsmid, esq., *Honiton*
April 25—John Eldon Gorst, esq., *Cambridge Borough*

Mar 13 — *Dumbartonshire,* double Return — Return of James Stirling, esq., taken off the file

New Windsor Election
House informed, That Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of New Windsor. That Henry Labouchere, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of New Windsor. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election *April* 26, 2070

New Zealand—Bishoprick of Nelson
Question, Mr. Selwyn; Answer, Mr. Cardwell *April* 24, 1988
New Zealand, Division of, Question, Mr. Adderley; Answer, Mr. Cardwell *April* 24, 1989

NICOL, Mr. J. Dyce, *Kincardineshire*
Fisheries (Scotland) Act (1862), Comm. moved for, 588

NORTH, Colonel J. S., *Oxfordshire*
Army Estimates—Military Education, 473, 476
Army — Mortality of Troops (China), Comm. moved for, 644
Medical Officers, Army and Navy, 487
Navy Estimates—Half Pay, 469
Vaccination, Comm. 1111

NORTHCOTE, Sir S. H., *Stamford*
Army Estimates—Administration of the Army, 801
Electoral Statistics, 869
Exchequer and Audit Departments, Comm. *cl.* 1, 1863
Representation of the People, 2R. 1815
Schools, Public, 135
Tests Abolition (Oxford), 2R. Amendt. 671, 715

NORWOOD, Mr. C. M., *Kingston-upon-Hull*
Army Estimates — Military Education, Adj. moved, 473, 476

Nottingham Town Election
House informed, That Sir Robert Juckes Clifton, baronet, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Nottingham. That Samuel Morley, esquire, was not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Nottingham. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election *April* 20, 1766

Nottingham Town Election Petition—Contempt of this House
After short debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker ordered to issue his warrant that James Pringle be taken into custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms *April* 10, 968

O'BEIRNE, Mr. J. S., *Cashel*
Army — Rifled Ordnance, 489, 1225;—Surgeons in the Guards, 890
"London," Loss of the, 550
Navy Estimates—Naval Stores, 348

O'BRIEN, Sir P., *King's Co.*
Ireland—Fatal Riot at the Election for Monaghan, 451
Railway Travelling (Ireland), 2R. 251

O'DONOGHUE, The, *Tralee*
Court of Chancery (Ireland), 2R. 568
Ireland—Fenian Prisoners, 732, 733;—Armagh Roman Catholic Cathedral, 847;—Established Church, 1034, 1044

OGILVY, Sir J., *Dundee*
Cattle Plague, 497
Valuation of Lands, &c. (Scotland), 2R. 1091

OLIPHANT, Mr. L., *Stirling, &c.*
Army—Military Store Department, 578
Boroughs, Boundaries of, 1072
Business, Order of, 854

O'LOGHLEN, Sir C. M., *Clare Co.*
Bank Notes (Ireland), 2R. 1599, 1609
Exchequer and Audit Departments, Comm. *cl.* 18, 2009
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, Comm. *cl.* 9, 814
Public Money—Standing Orders, 601
Railway Travelling (Ireland), 2R. 243, 262
Supply — New Houses of Parliament, 914, 927
Transubstantiation, &c. Declaration Abolition, Leave, 641 ; 2R. 2008

ONSLOW, Mr. G. J., *Guildford*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1971

O'REILLY, Mr. M. W., *Longford Co.*
Army Estimates — Military Education, 473, 476 ;—Administration of the Army, 799, 807
Army—Indian Reliefs, 518 ;—Regiments in India, 1509
Ireland—Fatal Riot at the Election for Monaghan, 452, 453 ;—Drilling of Tenants, 488
Navy Estimates—Half Pay, 468
Papal States—Brigandage in the, 841

OTWAY, Mr. A. J., *Chatham*
Army Estimates — Military Education, 478, 479
Contagious Diseases, Comm. Schedule, 2178
Dockyard Franchise and the Ballot, 284 ;— Voters, 1508
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, Comm. *cl.* 4, 813
Navy Estimates—Half Pay, 468
Representation of the People, 2R. 2138

OVERSTONE, Lord
West Middlesex Water, Comm. 1978

Oyster Fisheries
Question, Mr. Stephen Cave ; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson *April* 26, 2075

PAGET, Vice-Admiral Lord C. E. (Secretary of the Admiralty), *Sandwich*
Contagious Diseases, 2R. 814 ; Comm. 15, 2177
Navy Estimates—Naval Stores, 326, 329, 331, 340, 344, 345, 347, 352 ;—Half Pay, 467, 470, 472, 555, 562, 563
Navy—Re-construction of the, 319, 321 ;—Captains' Pensions, 490 ;—The "Bellerophon," 491 ;—East India Squadron, 553 ;—Iron-Clad Ships, 839 ;—Whitworth Guns, 839 ;— The "Lord Warden," 842 ;—Widows of Civil Engineers, 1647

PAKINGTON, Right Hon. Sir J. S., *Droitwich*
Cattle Disease—Compensation for Slaughtered Cattle, 283, 496
"London," Loss of the, 524, 539, 540, 551
Navy Estimates—Naval Stores, 331, 337, 352, 354 ;—Half Pay, 469, 471, 472, 557
Navy—The "Bellerophon," 490
Representation of the People, Leave, 45

PALK, Sir L., *Devonshire, S.*
Electoral Returns, 1777
Members' Appropriation of Seats in the House, 1766

PALMER, Sir R., *see* ATTORNEY GENERAL The

Parliament
LORDS—
Conferences—Resolved, That the Lords are willing to receive from the Commons, by Message, without a Conference, any Communication desiring the Concurrence of this House to any Address to Her Majesty, under the Provisions of the Act Fifteenth and Sixteenth Victoria, Chapter Fifty-seven, to which the Commons may have agreed, unless at any Time the Commons should desire to communicate the same at a Conference : And a Message sent to the Commons, to acquaint them therewith (*The Chairman of Committees*) *April* 24
COMMONS—
Easter Recess, Order of Public Business, Question, Mr. B. Cochrane ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 23, 839 ; Statement, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 23, 856
Conferences—Lords Message [24th April] considered *April* 26
Day of Humiliation — Committees — Moved, "That no Select Committees do meet To-morrow, before One of the clock" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Mar* 19, 498 ; after long debate, A. 259, N. 112 ; M. 147 ;— Totnes, Great Yarmouth, Nottingham, and Bridgnorth Election Committees to meet at One of the clock *Mar* 19
Members' Appropriation of Seats in the House, Question, Major Stuart Knox ; Answer, Mr. Speaker ; short discussion thereon *April* 20, 1764
Public Money—Standing Orders, Resolutions (*Mr. Ayrton*) agreed to, after debate *Mar* 20, 591 ; Ordered, That the said Resolutions be Standing Orders of this House

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill
(*Sir G. Grey, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)
c. Moved, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair" (*Sir George Grey*) *Mar* 15, 289
Bill considered in Committee, and after debate reported
Considered as amended *Mar* 16, 480
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3°" (*Sir George Grey*), 509
Read 3° after long debate *Mar* 19 [Bill 13]

[*cont.*

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill—cont.
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl Russell*) *Mar* 20 (No. 54)
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *April* 16, 1322
Read 2ª after long debate
Protest against the second reading, 1354
Committee; Amendts. made *April* 19, 1616 (No. 76)
Amendts. reported; after short debate agreed to *April* 20, 1759
Read 3ª * *April* 23 [Bill 119]
c. After short debate, Lords' Amendts. agreed to *April* 26, 2176
Royal Assent *April* 30 [29 *Vict.* c. 19]

PATTEN, Colonel, J. W., *Lancashire, N.*
Municipal Savings Banks, 135
Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 653, 655

PEEL, Right Hon. Sir R., *Tamworth*
Ireland—Escape of Stephens, Papers moved for, 760, 761, 762;—Established Church, Res. 997
Tame Valley Viaduct, 140
Vaccination, Comm. 1105, 1106, 1111

PEEL, Right Hon. Lt.-Gen. J., *Huntingdon*
Army Estimates, 473;—Military Education, 473, 476, 479;—Administration of the Army, 797, 806, 808
Army—Royal Military College, Commission moved for, 437
Representation of the People, 2R. 1202
Smoke Nuisance, The, 1772
Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 651

PEEL, Mr. A. W., *Warwick*
Representation of the People, Leave, 179

PENNANT, Colonel Hon. E. G. Douglas, *Carnarvonshire*
Cattle Plague, 497
Turnpike Roads, 2R. 2064
Turnpike Trusts, 465

Pensions Bill (*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 12 (No. 47)

PHILIPS, Mr. R. N., *Bury*
Representation of the People, Leave, 178

PIM, Mr. J., *Dublin City*
Hop Trade, 2R. 1597
Railway Travelling (Ireland), 2R. 254
Representation of the People, 2R. 1186
Transubstantiation, &c. Declaration Abolition, Leave, 643

PLATT, Mr. J., *Oldham*
Electoral Statistics, 865

POLLARD-URQUHART, Mr. W., *Westmeath Co.*
County Infirmaries (Ireland), 2R. 241
Ireland—Established Church, Res. 1025
Malt Duty, Res. 1540
Navy Estimates—Half Pay, 468

Poor Law
Casual Poor—Clerkenwell Workhouse, Question, Lord Burghley; Answer, Viscount Enfield *Mar* 23, 846;—*Strand Union Workhouse*, Question, The Marquess Townshend; Answer, Earl Granville *April* 20, 1758; Observations, The Earl of Carnarvon; Reply, Earl Granville *April* 23, 1868
Expenditure—Motion, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that all items of Poor Law expenditure throughout the United Kingdom, not being in-maintenance or out-relief, or otherwise under the immediate control and direction of Boards of Guardians or Parish Officers, should become a National charge" (*Mr. Knight*) *April* 24, 2002; after debate, Question put, and negatived
Poor Law Board, Edinburgh, Question, Mr. H. Baillie; Answer, The Lord Advocate *April* 23, 1872
Poor Law Officers, Retiring Pensions to, Question, Mr. De Grey; Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers *Mar* 15, 286
Poor Relief (*Scotland*), Question, Mr. Crum-Ewing; Answer, The Lord Advocate *Mar* 13, 135
Religious Rights in Workhouses, Question, Mr. T. Chambers; Answer, Mr. Villiers *April* 19, 1643

Poor Law Officers Superannuation (Scotland) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir George Grey*
c. Read 1° * *Mar* 12 [Bill 66]
Read 2° * *Mar* 20

Poor Persons' Burial (Ireland Bill
(*Sir H. Bruce, Sir C. O'Loghlen, Mr. Peel Dawson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 22 [Bill 88]
Read 2° * *April* 10
Committee; Report *April* 17, 1577
Considered as amended * *April* 18
Read 3° * *April* 19
l. Read 1ª * (*The Earl of Belmore*) *April* 20
Read 2ª after debate *April* 26, 2069 (No. 77)

PORTARLINGTON, Earl of
Land Tenure and Improvement (Ireland), 1R. 837

Postmaster General Bill
(*Mr. Darby Griffith, Mr. Hadfield*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Darby Griffith*) *April* 11, 1077 [Bill 25]
Read 2° after debate *April* 11
Committee *; Report *April* 16
Considered as amended * *April* 17
Read 3° * *April* 18
l. Read 1ª * *April* 19 (No. 75)

Post Office, The General
Question, Mr. Crawford; Answer, Mr. Childers *April* 26, 2076

POTTER, Mr. T. B., *Rochdale*
Ireland—Established Church, Res. 999

Powell, Mr. F. S., *Cambridge*
Commons (Metropolis), Leave, 626, 629
Courts of Justice, Res. 786, 787
Supply — Patent Office, 945, 948; Report, 1074

Practice and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1853) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Whiteside, Mr. George*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 16 [Bill 76]

Prince Alfred's Annuity Bill
(*The Lord President*)
l. Committee*; Report *Mar* 12 (No. 40)
Read 3ª* *Mar* 13
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 8]

Princess Helena's Annuity Bill
(*The Lord President*)
l. Committee*; Report *Mar* 12 (No. 39)
Read 3ª* *Mar* 13
Royal Assent *Mar* 23 [29 *Vict.* c. 7]

Private Bills
Ordered, "That no private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a Second Time after *Friday* the 29th day of *June* next;" and other Orders (*The Chairman of Committees*) *April* 23, 1868

Probate, Court of
Question, Mr. Locke; Answer, Mr. Childers *April* 9, 889;—*District Registries*, Question, Mr. Monk; Answer, Mr. Childers *April* 17, 1505

Prosecution Expenses Bill
(*Mr. Goldney, Mr. Goddard*)
c. Read 2°* *Mar* 14 [Bill 28]
Committee; Report *April* 18, 1610
Considered as amended* *April* 20
Read 3°* *April* 24
l. Read 1ª* (*The Lord Chelmsford*) *April* 26 (No. 88)

Prussia and Italy—Alleged Treaty of Alliance
Question, Mr. W. B. Beaumont; Answer, Mr. Layard *April* 17, 1506
(see *Austria, Prussia, and Italy*)

Public Companies Bill
(*Mr. Darby Griffith, Mr. Robert Torrens*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Darby Griffith*) *April* 18, 1580
Read 2° after short debate *April* 18 [Bill 35]

Public Health Acts
Question, Lord Robert Montagu; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce *April* 20, 1771

Public Libraries Act Amendment Bill
(*Mr. W. Ewart, Mr. Dunlop*)
c. Read 2°* *April* 11 [Bill 44]
Committee*; Report *April* 16

Public Money—Standing Orders
Resolutions (*Mr. Ayrton*) agreed to, after debate *Mar* 20, 591; Ordered, That the said Resolutions be Standing Orders of this House

Public Offices (Site) Bill
(*Mr. Cowper, Mr. Childers*)
c. Report* *Mar* 12 [Bill 10]
Committee*; Report *Mar* 19 [Bill 62]
Read 3°* *April* 9
l. Read 1ª* (*The Lord Stanley of Alderley*) *April* 12
Read 2ª* *April* 24 (No. 67)
Committee*; Report *April* 26

Public Schools
Question, Sir Stafford Northcote; Answer, Sir George Grey *Mar* 13, 135

Pugh, Mr. D., *Carmarthenshire*
Cattle Plague, Lords Amendts. 267

Qualification for Offices Abolition Bill
(*The Lord Houghton*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" (*The Lord Houghton*) *April* 24, 1980
Read 2ª after debate *April* 24 (No. 41)

Railway Companies' Financial Arrangements of—Cork and Youghal Railway Bill
Observations, Lord Redesdale; Reply, Earl Russell *Mar* 23, 817
Moved, "That the Report from the Select Committee to whom the Cork and Youghal Railway Bill was referred, be printed" (*The Lord Redesdale*); Motion agreed to (*Parl. P.* No. 63) *Mar* 23
Railway Companies—see *Metropolis*

Railway Debentures, &c., Registry Bill
(*Mr. Scourfield, Mr. Hankey*)
c. Ordered; read 1° after debate *April* 17 [Bill 109]

Railway Travelling (Ireland) Bill
(*Sir C. O'Loghlen, Major Gavin, Capt. Stacpoole*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Sir Colman O'Loghlen*) *Mar* 14, 243 [Bill 2]
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Blake*); Question, "That 'now' &c.;" A. 83, N. 200; M. 117; words added; main Question, as amended, agreed to; Bill put off for six months

Railways Clauses Bill
(*Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. Monsell*)
c. Read 2°* *April* 11 [Bill 60]
Committee*; Report *April* 16

Railways (Guards' and Passengers' Communication) Bill
(*Mr. H. B. Sheridan, Mr. Hardcastle*)
c. Read 1°* *Mar* 20 [Bill 81]
Read 2°* *April* 11
Referred to Select Committee *April* 25

Rates on Government Property
Motion, "That, in the opinion of this House, Her Majesty's Government should consider the expediency of recommending to Parliament that all lands and buildings used and occupied for public purposes ought to be liable to local rates in the same manner as other property, and pay rates accordingly" (*Mr. Alderman Salomons*) *April* 24, 1990; after debate, Motion withdrawn

RAVENSWORTH, Lord
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, 2R. 1336
West Middlesex Water, Comm. 1977

RAWLINSON, Sir H. C., *Frome*
India—Russian March upon Bokhara, 421

READ, Mr. C. S., *Norfolk, E.*
Cattle Disease—Transit of Cattle by Railway, 580;—Slaughter of Cattle, 891
Cattle Plague, Lords Amendts. 275, 498
Church Rate Returns, 419
Malt Duty, Res. 1528

Real Estate Intestacy Bill
(*Mr. Locke King, Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Coleridge*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 13 [Bill 69]

Record of Title Office (*Ireland*)
Motion for Papers (*The Earl of Belmore*) *Mar* 22, 718; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Then, Copy of a Memorial from the Registration of Title Association and others, Inhabitants of Ireland, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ordered to be laid before the House (*The Earl of Belmore*)

REDESDALE, Lord (Chairman of Committees)
Railway Bills affecting the City of London, 1641
Railway Companies—Financial Arrangements of, 817
West Middlesex Water, Comm. 1976

Reigate Election
House informed, that the Committee had determined, That Granville William Gresham Leveson Gower, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Reigate. That the last Election for the said Borough is a void Election *April* 16, 1356

Representation of the People
Artizan Voters, Increase of, Question, Lord Elcho; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 23, 843
Boroughs, &c., Boundaries of, Observations, Mr. Oliphant; Reply, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 10, 1072
County Voters, Question, Mr. Du Cane; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 20, 581

[*cont.*

Representation of the People—cont.
Dockyard Franchise and the Ballot, Question, Mr. Otway; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 15, 284
Dockyard Voters, Question, Mr. Otway; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 17, 1508; Question, Mr. Ferrand; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 26, 2074
Elections, Corrupt Practices at, Question, Sir Arthur Buller; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 20, 579; Question, Major Dickson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 12, 1123
Elections, Expenses of, Question, Mr. Wentworth Beaumont; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 22, 731
Electoral Returns, Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to examine the Electoral Returns laid upon the Table with a view to the Changes they suggest as desirable or necessary in the Rights of Voting; and to inquire into the Conditions upon which the Occupation Franchise may be lowered with Advantage in Counties or in Boroughs of England and Wales" (*The Lord Campbell*) *April* 17, 1492; on Question, resolved in the negative; Question, Mr. Hunt; Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers; short debate thereon *April* 20, 1775
Electoral Statistics — Cities and Boroughs, Observations, Mr. Schreiber; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 15, 322; Observations, Mr. Banks Stanhope *Mar* 23, 856; Question, Lord Burghley;—Answer, Mr. C. P. Villiers *April* 19, 1644—(*Scotland*), Question, Sir James Fergusson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 12, 18
Franchise, The—Rating of Tenements, Question, Mr. Warner; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 19, 491; Question, Mr. Newdegate; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 22, 734
Harden, Petition from, Motion, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the circumstances connected with the preparation of the Petition from Harden [presented upon Thursday last], and into the genuineness of the signatures thereto" (*Mr. Ferrand*) *April* 19, 1750; Motion withdrawn
Irish and Scotch Reform Bills, Question, Major Stuart Knox; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 19, 1647
Re-distribution of Seats, Questions, Sir Henry Hoare; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 19, 486; Question, Mr. Marsh; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *April* 16, 1357
Voters (*Cities and Boroughs Contested Elections*), Motion for Returns, Mr. Darby Griffith; Reply, Mr. C. P. Villiers *Mar* 20, 582
Writs Registration (*Scotland*) *Bill*, Question, Mr. Craufurd; Answer, The Lord Advocate *Mar* 16, 422

Representation of the People Bill
c. Paragraphs in Queen's Speech at opening of the Session read
Motion for Leave (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Mar* 12, 18
After long debate, Debate adjourned
Debate resumed—Second Night *Mar* 13, 141

[*cont.*

Representation of the People Bill—cont.
After long debate, Motion, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Sir Rainald Knightley*) put, and negatived; original Question put, and agreed to
Bill ordered (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, Mr. Villiers*); read 1° *Mar* 13 [Bill 68]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *April* 12, 1124
Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People" (*Earl Grosvenor*), 1152
Question, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Debate adjourned
Debate resumed—Second Night *April* 13, 1227; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed—Third Night *April* 16, 1361; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed—Fourth Night *April* 19, 1648; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed—Fifth Night *April* 20, 1778; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed—Sixth Night *April* 23, 1874; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed—Seventh Night *April* 26, 2077; after long debate, Debate further adjourned

Ridley, Sir M. W., *Northumberland, N.*
Army—Woolwich Arsenal, 140
Cattle Plague, Lords Amendts. 276
Labouring Classes' Dwellings, 2R. 117; Comm. *cl.* 4, 812
Supply—Public Buildings, 905

River Commission, The
Question, Mr. Neate; Answer, Mr. Baring *Mar* 22, 732

Roebuck, Mr. J. A., *Sheffield*
London Gas, Comm. 889
Municipal Savings Banks, 137
Thames Embankment (North) Approaches, &c. Comm. moved for, 652, 658

Romilly, Lord
Qualification for Offices Abolition, 2R. 1984
Sale of Land by Auction, Comm. 2068

Rowe, William—Game Laws, Infraction of the
Question, Colonel Sykes; Answer, Mr. Childers *April* 12, 1118

Royal Academy, The
Question, Mr. Gregory; Answer, Mr. Cowper; *April* 17, 1506

Royston, Viscount, *Cambridgeshire*
Representation of the People, 2R. 2130

Russell, Earl (First Lord of the Treasury)
Children, Employment of, 1504
Day of Humiliation, 485
Electoral Returns, Comm. moved for, 1501
Ireland—State of, Comm. moved for, 413
Jamaica Government, 2R. 120
Land Tenure and Improvement (Ireland), 1R. 836
Parliamentary Oaths Amendment, 2R. 1322, 1324, 1330, 1346, 1351; Comm. *cl.* 1, 1620; *cl.* 6, 1627; Preamble, 1628; Report, 1760
Railway Companies—Financial Arrangements of, 829
Transubstantiation, Papers moved for, 1221

Rye Election
House informed, That Lauchlan Bellingham Mackinnon, esquire, is duly elected a Baron to serve in this present Parliament for the Town and Port of Rye *April* 24, 1987

"St. Abbs," Wreck of the Ship
Question, Mr. Baillie Cochrane; Answer, Mr. Layard *April* 10, 969

St. Leonards, Lord
Masters and Operatives, 1R. 717
Sale of Land by Auction, Comm. 2067

Sale of Land by Auction Bill
(*Lord St. Leonards*)
l. Committee (*on re-comm.*) *April* 26, 2067
Amendts. made (No. 93)
Committee* *Mar* 12 (No. 48)
Report* *Mar* 13
Committee* *April* 26

Salisbury, Marquess of
Cattle Plague Returns, 120

Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Bill
(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley*)
l. Read 2ª* *Mar* 12 (No. 42
Referred to Select Committee *Mar* 12; Select Committee nominated *Mar* 19, 485; Earl of Mansfield and Lord Polwarth *added Mar* 20
Report *April* 24 (No. 86)

Salomons, Mr. Alderman D., *Greenwich*
Government Property, Rates on, Res. 1990 2002

Samuda, Mr. J. D'A., *Tavistock*
"London," Loss of the, 546, 552
Navy Estimates—Navy Stores, 334

Sandford, Mr. G. M. W., *Maldon*
Commons (Metropolis), Leave, 632, 635, 639
Danubian Principalities, The, 1772
Members' Appropriation of Seats in the House, 1766
Representation of the People, 2R. 2174

Sat First
Mar 15—The Earl Beauchamp, after the Death of his Father
April 19—The Earl of Jersey, after the Death of his Grandfather

Schreiber, Mr. C., *Cheltenham*
Electoral Statistics—Cities and Boroughs, 322
Fellows of Colleges Declaration, Comm. 2045
Representation of the People, Leave, 183; 2R. 2151

Sclater-Booth, Mr. G., *Hampshire, N.*
Malt Duty, Res. 1564

Scotland
Electoral Statistics, Question, Sir James Fergusson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Mar* 12, 18
Fishery Act (1862), Motion, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Fishery (Scotland) Act (1862)" (*Mr. Henry Baillie*) *Mar* 20, 582; after debate, A. 58, N. 164; M. 106
Poor Law Board, Edinburgh, Question, Mr. Henry Baillie; Answer, The Lord Advocate *April* 23, 1872
Poor Relief, Question, Mr. Crum-Ewing; Answer, The Lord Advocate *Mar* 13, 135
Salmon Fisheries Bill [H.L.], Select Committee nominated; List of the Committeee *Mar* 19, 485
Writs Registration Bill, Question, Mr. Craufurd; Answer, The Lord Advocate *Mar* 16, 422

Scourfield, Mr. J. H., *Haverfordwest*
Army—Royal Engineers' Department, 842
Railway Debentures, &c. Registry, Leave, 1577
Turnpike Trusts, 465

Sea Fisheries Commissioners, Report of the—Oyster Culture
Observations, Mr. Hunt; Reply, Mr. Milner Gibson *April* 9, 891; Observations; Question, The Marquess of Clanricarde; Answer, Lord Stanley of Alderley *April* 20, 1753

Seely, Mr. C., *Lincoln*
Navy Estimates—Naval Stores, 331, 332, 338, 340;—Half Pay, 469

Selwin, Mr. H. J., *Essex, E.*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1274
Spain, Chile, and Peru, War between, 420

Selwyn, Mr. C. J., *Cambridge University*
Fellows of Colleges Declaration, Comm. 2049
New Zealand—Bishoprick of Nelson, 1988, 1989
Supply—Royal Parks, &c. 911

Seymour, Rear-Adm., G. H., *Antrim Co.*
Navy Estimates—Half Pay, 562

Seymour, Mr. H. D., *Poole*
Austrian Territory, Raid on the, 2076
Re-distribution of Seats, 486
Share Capital of Companies, 282
Supply—Public Buildings, 905, 906

Shaftesbury, Earl of
Children, Employment of, 1503

Shannon River
Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the manner in which the Drainage and Navigation of the River Shannon has been carried out under the direction of Her Majesty's Government, and to report what steps should be taken to complete the works for which a compulsory levy of £300,000 has been made on the adjoining counties;" List of the Committee *Mar* 19, 569
Report *April* 25 (*Parl. P.* No. 213)

Share Capital of Companies
Question, Mr. Henry Seymour; Answer, Mr. Milner Gibson *Mar* 15, 282
See *Railway Companies Financial Arrangements*

Sheep
Diseases in, Question, Mr. Baillie Cochrane; Answer, Sir George Grey *Mar* 20, 581
Importation of, into Ireland, Question, Mr. Cogan; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland *Mar* 16, 421
Rinderpest among, Question, Sir Andrew Agnew; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce *Mar* 12, 15; Question, Mr. Long; Answer, Mr. H. A. Bruce *Mar* 13, 137

Sheridan, Mr. H. B., *Dudley*
Courts of Justice, Res. 796
Fire Insurance, 491, 1873, 2007
Weights and Measures, 580

Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Bill
(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Adam*)
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 15 [Bill 56]
Committee *; Report *Mar* 19
Considered as amended * *Mar* 20
Read 3° * *Mar* 21
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 22 (No. 57)

Sherriff, Mr. A. C., *Worcester City*
Ballard, Emily Jane, Case of, 845

Simeon, Sir J., *Isle of Wight*
Representation of the People, 2R. 1399

Smoke Nuisance
Question, Sir Robert Peel; Answer, Sir George Grey *April* 20, 1772

Solicitor General, The (Sir R. P. Collier), *Plymouth*
Supply—Patent Office, 955

Somerset, Duke of (First Lord of the Admiralty)
Ireland—Daunt's Rock, 1986
Navy—Turret Ships, Address moved, 5, 13;—H.M.S. "Octavia," 1975

Spain and Chili and Peru, War between
Question, Mr. Selwyn; Answer, Mr. Layard *Mar* 16, 420

Speaker, The (Right Hon. J. E. Denison) *Nottinghamshire, N.*
Illness of, 14, 134, 241, 281, 419, 486, 576, 650, 729, 837, 888, 958, 967, 1077, 1576, 1580, 1749, 1763, 1870, 2012
Members' Appropriation of Seats in the House, 1765
Representation of the People, 2R. 1151, 2174

Stanhope, Earl
Street Accidents, 722

Stanhope, Mr. J. Banks-, *Lincolnshire, N.*
Electoral Statistics, 856, 873, 874
Representation of the People, 2R. 1212
Working Classes, Income of the, 971

Stanley of Alderley, Lord (Postmaster General)
Sea Fisheries—Report of Commissioners, 1757

Stanley, Right Hon. Lord, *Lynn Regis*
Day of Humiliation—Committees, 504
Representation of the People, 2R. 1163, 1173

Stanley, Hon. W. Owen, *Beaumaris*
Cattle Plague, 496
Representation of the People, 2R. 1151

Stansfeld, Mr. J. (Under Secretary of State for India), *Halifax*
India—Claims on Oude, 1507
India Office—Financial Department, 1122

State of Ireland
Moved, "That the House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the state of Ireland" (*Earl Grey*) *Mar* 16, 358; after long debate, resolved in the negative

Stradbroke, Earl of
Imprisonment for Debt, 484

Stratheden and Campbell, Lord, *see* Campbell, Lord

Street Accidents
Question, The Marquess of Westmeath; Answer, Earl Granville *Mar* 22, 721

Sullivan, Mr. E. (Solicitor General for Ireland), *Mallow*
Court of Chancery (Ireland), 2R. 566
Ireland—Fatal Riot at the Election for Monaghan, 455;—Escape of Stephens, Papers moved for, 769

Summary Procedure (Scotland) Bill
(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir George Grey*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 12 [Bill 64]

Sunday Lectures on Scientific and Religious Subjects
Question, Mr. Gregory; Answer, The Attorney General *Mar* 15, 288

Superannuations (Officers Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards) Bill
(*Mr. Harvey Lewis, Mr. Chambers*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Harvey Lewis*) *April* 10, 1076
Read 2° after short debate [Bill 52]
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(*Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. Monsell*)
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(*Mr. Esmonde, Mr. Murphy*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *April* 17 [Bill 110]

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Report of the Select Committee *Mar* 22, That John Pender, esquire, is not duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Totnes. That Alfred Seymour, esquire, is duly elected a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Totnes. That the last election for the said Borough, so far as regards the Return of John Pender, esquire, is a void Election; House further informed of certain Resolutions of the Committee, 735

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(*Sir C. O'Loghlen, Sir J. Gray, Mr. Cogan*)
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Ordered; read 1° *Mar* 20 [Bill 82]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Sir Colman O'Loghlen*) *April* 24, 2007; after debate, Motion withdrawn; second reading deferred

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(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir George Grey*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 12 [Bill 65]
Read 2°* *April* 16

Turnpike Roads Bill [Bill 39]
(*Mr. Whalley, Mr. Ayrton*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Whalley*) *April* 25, 2061; after debate (it being Six of the clock), Debate adjourned

Turnpike Trusts
Question, Mr. Whalley; Answer, Mr. Baring *Mar* 13, 139; Observations, Mr. Whalley; Reply, Mr. Baring *Mar* 16, 462; Question, Mr. Whalley; Answer, Mr. Baring *April* 12, 1118

Vaccination Bill [Bill 33]
(*Mr. Bruce, Mr. Baring*)
c. Moved, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair" (*Mr. Bruce*) *April* 11, 1093
Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "the Bill be committed to a Select Committee" (*Mr. Harvey Lewis*); Question, "That the words, &c.," put, and negatived; words added; main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to; Bill committed to a Select Committee
Committee nominated *April* 17; Mr. A. Egerton *disch.*, Colonel Gilpin *added April* 23

Valuation of Lands and Heritages (Scotland) Bill (*Mr. Dunlop, Colonel Pennant, Sir J. Fergusson, Mr. Baxter*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 14 [Bill 73]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Dunlop*) *April* 11, 1083
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c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 12 [Bill 63]
Read 2°* *April* 16
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END OF VOLUME CLXXXII., AND SECOND VOLUME OF THE SESSION 1866.

LONDON: CORNELIUS BUCK, PRINTER, 23, PATERNOSTER ROW.

K 26.231/10